COURSE DETAIL

LEL2D: CROSS-LINGUISTIC VARIATION: LIMITS AND THEORIES
Country United Kingdom - Scotland
Host Institution University of Edinburgh
Program(s) University of Edinburgh
UCEAP Course Level Upper Division
UCEAP Subject Area(s) Linguistics
UCEAP Course Number 100
UCEAP Course Suffix
UCEAP Official Title LEL2D: CROSS-LINGUISTIC VARIATION: LIMITS AND THEORIES
UCEAP Transcript Title CROSS-LING VARIATNS
UCEAP Quarter Units 8.00
UCEAP Semester Units 5.30

Course Description

The course introduces students to the variation observed in the languages of the world, to the analytical and theoretical challenges that such variation poses, and to responses that have been given to these challenges. The issues are first introduced from a "bird's eye" view; then actual examples are given and explored in detail in the areas of (morpho)syntax and phonology; and finally the course concludes with a module on the implications of cross-linguistic variation for our understanding of how language is acquired (and vice versa). There are four blocks of teaching: 1. The implications of variation (6 lectures): This block introduces the issue of cross-linguistic variation, shows why it is fundamental to our understanding of language, and presents and explores the responses that have been given by linguists, often from very different points of view. 2. Grammars and syntax (11 lectures): This block presents case-studies of cross-linguistic differences in syntax and explores how the syntactic theory that the students have already learned can account for these differences, and where it has to be extended or adapted. Students will both become familiar with a wider range of linguistics phenomena, and develop their understanding of the theoretical tools for explaining them. 3. Phonology (10 lectures): This block explores universals and variation in the module of phonology, covering phenomena from segmental phonology, tonal phonology, syllable structure, and stress. As in the previous segment, students will both be exposed to some important points of variation, and develop their understanding of the theories that have been developed to account for the topography of this variation. A theme that recurs throughout this and the previous segment is the constant tension in theory building between descriptive coverage and predictive power. 4. Language acquisition (6 lectures): Languages can vary from each other because some aspects at least of linguistic knowledge are not genetically determined; what is not genetically determined has to be learned. This final block sets out how the question of possible limits to variation have, in modern linguistic theory, become intimately intertwined with the question of how language is acquired, and explores how language acquisition has become central to linguistic theory. It will also look at how language development is shaped by the interaction of internal factors (language-specific and domain-general predispositions), external factors (quantity and quality of input), and children's developing processing

abilities.

Language(s) of Instruction
English

Host Institution Course Number
LASC08020

Host Institution Course Title
LEL2D: CROSS-LINGUISTIC VARIATION: LIMITS AND THEORIES

Host Institution Course Details

Host Institution Campus
University of Edinburgh

Host Institution Faculty

Host Institution Degree

Host Institution Department
School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences

Course Last Reviewed

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