

Syllabus: Analyzing speech sounds (HUM199H1S)

Instructor:	Dr. Alexei Kochetov
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Office Hour:	Wednesday 3-4 pm (or by appointment)
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Class session:	Thursday 10-12, Carr Hall Multimedia Lab

Course description

How is the way we produce and perceive speech sounds influenced by our native language background? What are acoustic correlates of English vowels and consonants; how do they vary from dialect to dialect, and how do they differ from acoustic properties of sounds of other languages? Why are some non-native sounds more difficult to acquire – produce and/or perceive – than other sounds? What can we learn about speech sounds and the language in general by analyzing our own speech production and perception?

In this seminar we will explore a range of theoretical and methodological issues in phonetic research through in-depth discussion and hands-on experimentation. The lab component of the seminar will involve designing a simple phonetic experiment, recording samples of speech, performing acoustic analysis, writing up experimental results, and discussing their implications for current issues in phonetic research.

Aims of the course

The specific aim of the course is to investigate the issues mentioned in the course outline, particularly focusing on English vowels – their acoustic, articulatory, and perceptual properties. The more general aim of the course, as with all First Year Seminar courses, is to introduce the students to “the excitement of discovery inherent in academic work” and help them develop their “ability to think analytically and to express ideas and logical arguments clearly and coherently”.

Readings

- Ladefoged, P. (2005). *Vowels and consonants: An introduction to the sounds of languages*. Oxford: Blackwell. (selected chapters)
- Hillenbrand, J. L, A. Getty, M.J. Clark, & K. Wheeler. (1995). Acoustic characteristics of American English vowels. *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 97, 3099–3111.
- Flemming, E. & S. Johnson. (2007). Rosa’s roses: Reduced vowels in American English. *Journal of the International Phonetic Association*, 37, 83–96.

There will be additional readings, to be announced in class.

Other useful sources (available on short term loan in Robarts library, fourth the 4th floor):

- Ladefoged, P. (2003). *Phonetic data analysis: An introduction to fieldwork and instrumental techniques*. Cambridge: Blackwell.
- Ladefoged, P. (1993). *A course in phonetics* (3rd Ed.)

Course Webpage

Access through *Blackboard* (<http://portal.utoronto.ca>). You will need your UTORid and password to log in. Announcements, handouts, sound files, and other materials will be posted here the day before the class session). Students are expected to download and print out handouts before coming to class.

Evaluation

<i>Item</i>	<i>% of total grade</i>
Project write-ups (4)	40%
Participation	20%
Term paper	<u>40%</u>
	100%

Projects and write-ups

Project-based learning is an essential element of this course. There will be four, partly collaborative, partly individual, projects. The work on the projects and discussion of the results will occupy much of the class time. The class will be divided into research groups working on some aspects of the project together. Each project will result in an individually submitted write-up, which should include the rationale for the project, the method employed, and a summary of the research findings. Unless specified otherwise, the reports will be written at the end of the class. A missed class is not an excuse for not submitting a report, or submitting it late. If you are unable to attend the class, you can hand in your report at any time before the class to the office of the Linguistics Department, where it will be stamped with the date. Please do not fax your reports to the department. Late reports will be penalized, and cannot be accepted after they have been discussed in class.

Term paper

At the end of the course, the students are required to write a term paper, a 10-page (double-space, font Time New Roman 12 points, 1" margin) report coherently presenting some of the course project results and discussing them in the context of methodological and theoretical issues discussed in class. The details of the term paper will be discussed later in the course. The due date for the paper is April 1, at the beginning of the class. No extensions will be given; papers turned in after the due date/time will lose one full letter point for each day late (e.g., B- → C-).

Participation

Regular attendance and active participation in class work and in-class discussion are essential to successful completion of this course. Note that participation will account for 20% of the final course grade (with 5% being based on attendance and the other 15% on participation proper).

Course Expectations

- Students are expected to attend all class sessions and to arrive on time. Students are expected to have read all assigned readings before class. Handouts will provide a skeletal treatment of the course topics; students are expected to take their own notes.
- If you have to miss two or more consecutive classes because of illness or injury, you are

required to provide an official *University of Toronto Medical Certificate* completed by a physician, specifying the date of your absence and the reason – within one week of the absence.

- *Students are expected at all times to do their own work.* Plagiarism – the act of claiming someone else’s work as one’s own – is a serious matter and will be dealt with accordingly. Any work submitted for course credit must be your own (or part of your official group work in case of project reports). If a student is found guilty of plagiarism or other form of academic dishonesty, the student will receive a grade of zero for the work in question. Additional penalties can include failure of the course and suspension from the university. See the ‘Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters’ in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Calendar 2009-2010.

Grading policy

The Department of Linguistics uses the “Refined Letter Grade Scale”, defined in section A.c.ii of the appendix to the University Grading Practices Policy. It should be noted that when numerical raw scores are used in marking, the numerical equivalents in the grade tables ‘are not to be used to translate a score to a grade directly’ (University Grading Practices Policy, Part 1, section 5).

Email Policy

- Because of the large number of email messages that I receive, it may be several days before I am able to reply to your message. Please also notice that I do not usually respond to messages late in the evening or on weekends. I will only respond to email regarding administrative questions/problems or requests of an appointment. Questions requiring replies longer than one or two sentences should be asked in class or during office hours or appointments.
- Before sending me an email, please check whether the Syllabus or the webpage contain the answer to your question.
- When sending me an email message, please make sure you have proof-read and signed it. Anonymous messages or messages sent from an account other than *utoronto.ca* will not be answered. Please make sure the Subject line contains the name of the course (“HUM199”).

Course schedule

Please note that the schedule may change if we need to spend more or less time on certain topics.

<i>Week</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Readings</i>	<i>Activities/Write-ups</i>
1	Jan. 7	Introduction, English vowels		
2	Jan. 14*	Audio recording	L2005: Ch. 3	Recording session 1 @ SS573A
3	Jan. 21	Acoustic analysis of vowels 1	L2005: Ch. 4	
4	Jan. 28		L2005: Ch. 5	Write-up 1
5	Feb. 4	Articulatory analysis of vowels	L2005: Ch. 12, L2003: Ch. 2	Palatography session, location TBA
6	Feb. 11			Write-up 2
7	Feb. 18	Reading Week		
8	Feb. 25	Acoustic analysis of vowels 2	Hillenbrand et al. 1995	
9	Mar. 4*		Flemming & Johnson 2007	Recording session 2 @ SS573A
10	Mar. 11			Write-up 3
11	Mar. 18*	Perception of vowels	TBA	Perceptual experiment, Write-up 4, location TBA
12	Mar. 25		TBA	
13	Apr. 1			Term paper

* Carr Hall Media Lab is unavailable on these dates.

L2005: Ladefoged's 'Vowels and consonants'; L2003: Ladefoged's 'Phonetic data analysis'.

Important Dates:

January 10 Last day to enroll in spring courses.

March 7 Last day to drop spring courses without academic penalty.