ANTH/LING 294: Klingon, Elvish and Dothraki:
The Art and Science of Language Creation

Professor Robin Shoaps
Spring 2017
(3+0+0)

Tu/Th 5:40-7:10
Location TBA

Professor Shoaps' Office Hours: TBA
Bunnell 305B
rashoaps@alaska.edu
907-474-6884

Catalog Course Description:

Exposure to linguistics and linguistic anthropology based on hands on experience with creating a "conlang," or invented humanoid language. Instruction will draw from examples of the range of human linguistic and cultural variation in order to address how to design a sound system, grammar, writing system and "mythology" or cultural context for the language.

Prerequisite: ENG 111, one semester of foreign language

Course Objectives :

- Collaboratively create a naturalistic human language
- Create an orthography or script for the language
- Create a basic dictionary of the language
- Create a "mythology" and (invented) cultural context
- Create and present "scene" in the language
- Create a document written in the language

Learning Outcomes:

- Familiarity with the range of variation in human languages along the following lines:
  - o Sound systems
  - o Writing systems
  - o Word structure
  - o Word meaning
  - o Sentence structure
  - o Communicative events and routines (greetings and leave-takings)
  - o Familiarity with the most investigated ways in which language can reflect culture
  - o Understanding of the steps involved in creating a conlang

Required Readings:

1

The following required books are available at the UAF Bookstore:

Peterson, David. 2015.*The Art of Language Invention : From Horse-Lords to Dark Elves, the Words Behind World-Building*

Rosenfelder, Mark. 2010. *The Language Construction Kit*. Yonagu Books.

Any additional assigned and recommended readings will be available on the course website (URL HERE).

Classroom Policies:
The best way to contact me is by email.
All homework assignments should be type
No texting or working on a laptop in class.
Attendance is 25% of your grade because it is crucial that you come to class in order to understand the nature of assignments and projects and to provide input on the collaborative conlang. Absences must be documented medical, sports travel or emergencies in order to be excused, but missing class regularly may seriously jeopardize your understanding of the course materials and thus affect your grade beyond the attendance calculation. Arriving to class more than 10 minutes late more than once counts as an absence.
I do not accept **late assignments** unless you have a documented emergency. Unless otherwise noted, assignments are due before class in your individual or Group Google Drive folder or as entries in the class Airtable database. If you must miss class due to a conflict in scheduling, you should still hand in the assignment on line.
File-naming conventions. You will be submitting homework assignments electronically (via Google Drive), please name your file according to the following convention:

Student last name_ Date

In the case of group assignments, put your group name instead of individuals' last names:

Group Name_Date homework is due

For example a homework due on 1/27 would have the following name:

Taylor_1-27

Do not use titles like "homework one." Failure to observe file naming conventions will result in the loss of a whole letter grade on the assignment.

Assignments & Requirements:

1. Attendance (250 points) (see policy above) Each student starts with 250 points and 9 points

will be subtracted for each absence. Tardiness of 10 minutes or more counts as an absence.

2. Individual Homework (160 points): There are twelve individual homework assignments, most worth 10 points each. Rubrics will be provided with the assignment. Assignments may test your familiarity with the linguistic structures of the class' Conlang and with linguistic concepts that have been discussed in class and the readings. You will also be asked to propose features of the Conlang or features of its associated world. These assignments will be turned in to me and shared on the class website so that we can collectively decide on which features we'd like to include in the Class ConLang and ConWorld. Individual and group homework (see below) instructions and specific requirements will be provided on the course website, brief summaries are provided in the tentative course schedule.

3. Word and Morpheme Creation (200 points) A ConLang requires extensive vocabulary (we aim for at least 1000 words in the lexicon/dictionary) and grammatical elements. We will organize and enter this into Airtable. Every student will be expected to generate a particular number of word stems, morphemes, assign gender to stems, etc. throughout the semester, in a structured way. I will meet with small groups of students to get you started with the process.

4. Group homework and projects: (250 points) Students will work in small groups to implement the creation of materials (grammar, dictionary and texts) in the ConLang. For example, the creation of vocabulary items, inflections, translation of texts, etc., will be distributed across small groups (and then divided among individual group members--see above). Small groups will also create proposals for some aspects of the ConLang, including orthography, literature, belief system, literature, etc.

5. Participation: (140 pts) you are expected to vote on collective decisions and to participate fully in your small group. The in class poll software/app that we are using will record who votes (but not their choice). I will ask students to anonymously evaluate each member of their small group's degree of participation and involvement in the group for each assignment according to the amount of effort they put in, knowledge of material and accessibility/initiative. Your classmates' anonymous evaluation of your participation will be 15% of each assignment.

Calculation of Grades:
All assignments, etc. will combine to form 1000 points. Grading rubrics for all assignments are posted on the course website. Your final course grade is based on the following:

Attendance (250 points)
Individual homework (160 points)
Word and morpheme creation in Airtable (200 points)
Participation (140 points)
Group Homework and Projects (250 points)

Grading is based on the following scale
950-1000 pts   A
900-949 pts   A-
860-899 pts   B+
830-859 pts   B

800-829 pts	B-
760-799 pts	C+
730-759 pts	C
700-729 pts	C-
660-699 pts	D+
630-659 pts	D
600-629	D-
590 and below	F

Note that students who wish to take this course for part of the requirements for their major must receive a C- (2.0) in order for it to count.

University Policies and Resources:

Academic Integrity:
Plagiarism is a form of cheating in which you use anyone else's ideas and/or words (both published or personally communicated) without proper citation of the source. Whether from a printed source, the Internet, a lecture or a friend or family member, you must cite the source properly, if you got the idea from someone else—and this is true even if you are not using the source's exact wording. Be aware of the University's policies on academic dishonesty.

When academic dishonesty is documented on any assignment or exam, you will receive a zero and the matter may be turned over to the Dean of Students for inquiry, with the recommendation of a failing grade in the course.

You should familiarize yourself with the Student Code of Conduct (http://www.uaf.edu/catalog/current/academics/regs3.html#Student_Conduct)

and the University statement on Plagiarism (http://library.uaf.edu/ls101-plagiarism).

For information on how to properly cite sources see: http://library.uaf.edu/ls101-citing

Support Services:
Student Support Services are available at UAF: http://www.uaf.edu/sssp
These services include: free tutorial services; academic advising, mentoring, and personal support; direct financial assistance to qualified low-income participants; use of laptop computers, labs, and other technology resources; and cultural and social engagement. The office is located at Gruening 512.

Disability Services:

The University of Alaska is committed to providing equal access for students with disabilities. If you have or believe you have a disability, you can contact the Disability Office at Whitaker Building, Room

Phone: (907) 474-5655
TTY: (907) 474-1827
Fax: (907) 474-5688
Disability Services E-mail: uaf-disabilityservices@alaska.edu

If you experience a disability and will need special accommodations, please contact me as soon as you can during my office hours. I will work with the Disability Office to provide reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities.

Title IX Protection

University of Alaska Board of Regents have clearly stated in BOR Policy that discrimination, harassment and violence will not be tolerated on any campus of the University of Alaska If you believe you are experiencing discrimination or any form of harassment including sexual harassment/misconduct/assault, you are encouraged to report that behavior. If you report to a faculty member or any university employee, they must notify the UAF Title IX Coordinator about the basic facts of the incident.

Your choices for reporting include:
1. You may access confidential counseling by contacting the UAF Health & Counseling Center at 474-7043;
2. You may access support and file a Title IX report by contacting the UAF Title IX Coordinator at 474-6600;
3. You may file a criminal complaint by contacting the University Police Department at 474-7721.

Tentative Schedule of Topics, Readings and Class Activities:

DATE	TOPIC	Readings & Assignments to be completed before class
Week One: What is a Conlang? What is a language?	Overview of Class Policies Introduction to Class Webiste What is a Conlang? What is a language (vs. a code)?	*New Yorker* article about conlangs (on website) Peterson, introduction
Week Two: Preliminary Linguistic and Cultural Considerations	Thumbnail sketch of the overall process of creating a Conlang Creating a world and speech community	Rosenfelder 17-26 Individual homework on world creation: basic cultural features--gender(s), social

	Introduction to the language/culture interface: which parts of language reflect culture and which are tools of culture? In class assignment: in small groups draft an origin myth	structure, environment, religion Group homework: Consult Ethnologue (URL) through the Rasmuson library website and select thee languages from three different continents and three different types of societies (urban, hunter-gatherer, pastoral/agricultural). Briefly summarize these geographic and social factors then look at the descriptions of the languages (you may consult wikipedia). Do the languages have any features in common? How do they differ or resemble each other?
Week Three: Sounds	Sounds: How to transcribe and describe sounds, possible sounds with the human vocal tract Overview of phonetics and the International Phonetic Alphabet Vote on basic cultural features Vote on creation myth	Peterson, 25-46 Individual Homework: Play "The Great Language" Game (URL) and write about which languages you were able to guess and which you weren't and choose one language that you like based on its phonological inventory. Explain what you like about the language you chose. Group homework: write a myth or folktale for the conworld. Consider who the cultural heroes are, what important cultural values exist.
Week Four: Sound systems	Exploring Phonology through sound profiles from around the world:	Peterson, 46-63, Rosenfelder 33-37, 46-49

	Menange (Tibeto-Burman) K'iche' (Mayan) Igbo (Niger-Congo) Ahtna (Athabaskan) Iñupiaq (Eskimoan) Tagalog (Austronesian) In class exercise: select a phonological inventory and assigning stress rules	Individual homework: Listen to the soundfiles of words in the various languages on the course website and describe which syllable the stress falls on. Then, listen to full sentences and 1) try to guess how many words there are in each sentence and 2) try to describe (in layman's terms) some of the sounds you hear.
Week Five: Syllables and stems	syllables and stress Words and their parts: roots, stems and affixes Phonological effects on words Swadesh list of basic vocabulary	Peterson, 66-72, Rosenfeldter 54-56 Individual Homework: Root generation assignment: each student will be given a set of vowels and consonants with which to generate roots. Of the roots you generate, randomly select 20 to add to Airtable.
Week Six: Nouns, verbs, inflection and conjugation	World building: parts of speech and creating types of words through "conjugation" Derivational vs. inflectional morphology Morphological typology—language profiles K'iche' (Mayan) Yup'ik (Eskimoan) Ahtna (Athabaskan) Tok Pisin (Austronesian) Chinese (Sino-Tibetan) Spanish (Romance) Does morphology relate to culture? In class vote on morphological	Rosenfeldter 57-60 Peterson 97-105 Individual Homework: Devise a plan for which morphological type of language you would like our Conlang to be. Consider how many syllables a root should be. Can you find examples of languages that have multisyllabic roots? Which languages can you find? Share with your group and brainstorm til you reach a consensus, to be shared in class. Word generation assignment: using Airtable match 10 roots each with assigned Swadesh list lexical items and assign

	type for class Conlang In class commentary on myths	noun classes to the nouns based on the criteria decided on in class.
Week Seven Making nouns	Nouns: Noun classes, Inalienable possession Examples from Mesquakie (Algonquian) and Gwich'in (Athabaskan) Person Vote on noun classification system Vote on marking for inalienably possessed nouns	Peterson, 106-119 Group Homework 1: Propose a noun class system and describe how noun class will affect morphology and syntax. Group Homework 2: Begin assigning classes to the noun stems in Airtable. Propose nouns that should be inalienably possessed
Week Eight Nouns and pronouns	Nouns, cont'd: case marking, number and pronouns Examination of pronouns in Sakapultek, Menange, Chinese and Gwich'in Copula and zero copula languages Pro-drop languages Class vote: selection of mass nouns and pronominal distinctions	Rosenfelder, 60-62; 72-75 Peterson 120-136, Individual Homework: Find a "grammar" of a less-commonly studied language (one that, with the exception of Alaska Native languages is not taught at UAF) and identify the pronouns used in the following types of expressions for each "person": 1. My house/object, 2. I kissed him, 3. She kissed me, 4. I woke up. Individual lexical generation: Continue adding nouns (10 per/person) and assigning classes to noun stems in Airtable.
Week Nine	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK
Week Ten Making verbs	What gets marked on a verb: different linguistic strategies	Rosenfelder 66-70 Peterson 136-139

	Verbal categories: Tense, Aspect and Modal Systems	Group Homework 1:
	Language profiles:	Group A—describe noun classes in Conlang; Group B—describe number marking in Conlang; Group C--describe possession in Conlang; Group D: describe possession in Conlang
	Pima Sakapultek Alquonquian French	
	Class vote: obligatory verbal categories in Conlang	Group Homework 2: Describe how mood, aspect and tense should be handled in the Conlang. Make one of these categories lexical (not marked on verbs). Propose affix types or morphological strategies for marking obligatory categories (prefixes, suffixes, infixes, etc)
Week Eleven Relationships between parts of speech	Class vote: Obligatory verbal categories in Conlang Verbs, cont'd Changing parts of speech with derivational morphology	Peterson, 139-148 Lexicon generation assignment: Enter inflection affixes into Airtable (these will be provided by Dr. Shoaps). Each student takes 10 verbs and creates/assigns them to stems in Airtable. Group Homework 2: Begin translating your myth into Conlang. What don't we know how to say yet?
Week Twelve Grammar—creating sentences	Basic word order Articles Adjectives Locatives (prepositions, postpositions)	Peterson 148-152 Group Homework 1: Group A propose morphemes for articles and decide which characteristics of a noun (definiteness, noun class, number) needs to be indicated

		by the article
	Language profiles: Gwich'in K'iche' Chinese Yup'ik Class vote: Word order	Group B propose a basic word order and translate a transitive sentence, an intransitive sentence and an attributive sentence into Conlang Group C propose a method for creating adjectives from verbs, specify morphemes
Week Thirteen Writing systems	Scribal culture Choosing an "orthography" Font design Class vote on type of writing system Class discussion of grammar (articles, sentence translation, adjectives) Consultation with instructional designer on font software	Peterson 209-222, 235-245 Group Homework: Work on your myth translation Individual Homework: devise an orthography and font

Week Thirteen
Semantics
	Kinship systems and kinship terms
	   Gendered kin terms
	   Taboo and joking relations
	
	Semantic domains
	
	Class vote on font/typography
		Rosenfelder 92-101
		
		Lexicon generation: Each group is assigned a semantic domain. Each student should create 10 lexical items, try to use morphology (change of word class, compound nouns, diminutives) and metaphor to create terms one half of your terms from existing stems.
		
		Group Homework: propose a description of kinship system and kin terms

Week Fourteen Pragmatics and Communicative Practices	Greetings and leave takings Speech Acts—oaths, promises,	Individual Homework: Design a greeting and a leave-taking sequence in Conlang with a

	commands	translation
	Politeness	Lexicon generation: each student to fill in gaps according to checklist
	Class vote on kinship system	
	Class vote on greetings/leave takings	
Week Fifteen	Catch up, Time for groups to work together on assignments	Group Homework: Each group write a short story or short piece of dialogue in Conlang and read aloud and record. Group homework: revise language descriptions and translations to publish on website
Finals Week	Dictionary to be published and conlang website made public	Group Assignment: Enter and edit material on website