

LING 411/611: The Na-Dene language family

McGill University

Winter 2023

Mon. & Wed., 10:00–11:30 EST (UTC –5)

1085 Penfold, room 002

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Office Hours: TBA

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Course requirements and evaluation

The work for this course includes of a mix of reading, writing, discussion, and research in published literature and unpublished materials about languages in the Na-Dene family. In particular, this course involves:

- . Presentation of one assigned reading
- . Posting discussions about weekly readings.
- . A final paper developed from a research question and bibliography.
- . An oral presentation in class about the final paper.

The final grade will be calculated according to the following percentages:

	L	L
Presentation of readings	%	%
Posting reading questions	%	%
Class participation	%	%
Research question (paper proposal)	%	%
Initial bibliography	%	%
Paper draft	%	%
Final paper and presentation	%	%

Presentation of readings: Each student will present one of the assigned readings to the class. Reading selections will be assigned during the first week of class. Presentations

should include a brief summary of the background, the goals and motivations for the paper, a sketch of the proposal and critical discussion of the arguments, connections to any relevant material and topics already discussed in class, and questions about terminology or other issues that are unclear to the student. Presentations should highlight a few salient points in the reading and should not attempt to review every example or claim; the intent is to summarize the reading, not to present every detail within it. Presentation length should be no longer than about 10 minutes.

Online reading discussions: Except for the first week, each student must post a short discussion about one of the assigned readings to the myCourses Discussion site the day before class (Sunday and Tuesday). These discussions help guide students who are presenting readings as well as in class discussion; because of this, late posts are not counted. Discussion posts may take the form of a question or comment either focusing on the reading itself, or relating the reading to other relevant material (e.g. other literature in class, other discussion, literature elsewhere). Clarification questions are welcome but

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people whose footsteps have marked this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.

Readings

All readings are either available online or on myCourses as PDFs. There are no textbooks or course packets to purchase for this course.

Adlam, Robert G. . The Northern Athabaskan survey of Edward Sapir and James A. Teit. *Anth. Linguistics* . :

Axelrod, Melissa . The semantics of time: Aspectual categorization in Koyukon Athabaskan. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.

Bar-El, Leora . Documenting and classifying aspectual classes across languages. In *Methodologies in semantic fieldwork*, M. Ryan Bochnak & Lisa Matthewson (eds.), ch. , pp. . Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press. doi

Saxon, Leslie. Dene Athabaskan. In *The languages and linguistics of indigenous North America: A comprehensive guide*, Carmen Dagostino, Marianne Mithun, & Keren Rice (eds), vol. 1, ch. 1, pp. 1-15. (The world of linguistics vol. 1). Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.

Tuttle, Siri G. & Sharon Hargus. Explaining variability in a x order: the Athabaskan areal and third person prexes. In *Working papers Athabaskan languages vol. 4* Gary Holton & Siri G. Tuttle (eds), pp. 1-15. Fairbanks, AK: Alaska Native Language Center.

Whorf, Benjamin L. The structure of the Athabaskan languages. Unpublished typescript; final paper for a class taught by Edward Sapir at Yale in 1937. ANLA [CA](#) [W](#) [b](#).

Willie, MaryAnn. Individual and stage level predication and the Navajo classificatory system. *Journal of Linguistics* 10.1 (1974): 1-15. doi:10.1017/S002226890000101

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Schedule

<i>Wk.</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Readings</i>	<i>Assignments</i>
1	04.Jan	Introduction; Review of the family	Jaker, Welch, & Rice ; Saxon ; Leer ; Krauss	personal language essay (p; no grade)
2	09.Jan 11.Jan	History of research on the family	Krauss ; Krauss ; Adlam ; Krauss	readings assigned
3	16.Jan 18.Jan	Phonetics	Hargus ; Wright, Hargus, & Davis ; Maddieson et al.	research ques. assigned
4	23.Jan 25.Jan	Tone and tonogenesis	McDonough ; Rice & Hargus ; Leer ; Kingston	
5	30.Jan 01.Feb	Verb template and a x ordering	Rice : ; Kari ; Crippen : ; Crippen, Déchaine, & Elfner	research question due initial bibliog. assigned
6	06.Feb 08.Feb	The classifier: Voice, valency, maybe state	Kibrik ; Kibrik ; Crippen : § , § , §	
7	13.Feb 15.Feb	Classificatory (quali- cational) verbs	Cook ; Willie ; Crippen :	initial bibliography due paper dra assigned
8	20.Feb 22.Feb	Stem variation	Crippen : ; Li ; Nater	