Space and Language
(LING 24090/34090, ANTH 27515/37515, CHDV 36252/26252)

Winter 2015; Mondays 9:30-12:20
Office hours: Thursdays 1:30-2:30pm in Foster 401 and by appointment
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Course description:
Over the past few decades, cross-linguistic and cross-cultural variation in the encoding of spatial notions has been the subject of intense debate, bringing together researchers working in lexical typology, psycholinguistics, and anthropological linguistics. What strategies do speakers of different languages use for describing spatial relations? Do the linguistic differences correspond to cognitive or cultural differences in perception and conceptualization of space? What does the use of spatial metaphor tell us about cognition? This course will survey several aspects of cross-linguistic diversity, such as differences in morphosyntactic and lexical means specialized for the encoding of spatial relations; the choice of a reference point for describing a spatial relation; differences in the use of spatial metaphor. Special attention will be paid to the different kinds of methods used to explore the linguistic encoding of spatial relations and their underlying representation, ranging from corpus methods to typological questionnaires, acquisition studies, and eye tracking experiments. In addition to reading and discussing important contributions to the field, students will conduct individual studies exploring one aspect of the encoding of spatial concepts in their language of choice.

Requirements and grading:
20% - Class attendance and participation in discussion;
20% - Presentation of two articles and discussion leading;
30% - Weekly submission of discussion questions (based on assigned readings) or summaries of the readings;
30% - An individual project presented in class (tentatively, on March 2) and turned in as a final paper (ca. 10-15 pp.).

Presenting an article and leading discussion:
Please try to make your presentations engaging; you may choose to address your audience with questions or suggest points for discussion. Instead of simply reporting the content of the article, try to present your own perspective on it, juxtaposing it with other articles we have read, raising additional issues or citing relevant data.

Submitting discussion questions or summaries:
Graduate students and Linguistics majors are expected to submit 3 questions/comments for each required reading. The questions should demonstrate familiarity with the content of the article; they should contribute to our discussion by assessing the study's methodology/implications, comparing the study to other research or by taking us beyond the study in interesting directions.

Please submit your questions/comments electronically by 6pm the day before each seminar meeting (normally, 6pm on Sunday); late submissions receive 50% of the grade if received up to 2 weeks after the deadline. You should also bring them to class, and be ready to discuss them.

Students presenting an article are exempt from this requirement (you do not have to submit your discussion questions/comments for the class in which you are presenting). Undergraduate students not majoring in Linguistics may choose to submit short summaries (1-2 pages) of required readings instead of discussion questions.

Individual project and final paper:
The project should explore an aspect of the encoding of spatial relations in a language of your choice, based on empirical data; the topic should be discussed with me before February 9 (and I encourage you to approach me with your topic earlier). Please note that the in-class presentation is intended to provide you with feedback on a project that is well underway, not help you narrow down on the topic. The deadline for submitting the final paper is March 16, 9pm; you are strongly encouraged to submit a short draft or a plan of your study beforehand (ideally, around March 2).

For your project, you may choose to explore a theoretical issue raised in class; to study an instance of variation in a particular language and look for factors involved in the choice of a linguistic expression; to run an experimental study involving a methodology discussed in class (or a modification thereof); to explore a pattern in an existing corpus (e.g., a corpus of a foreign language, a corpus of translations or language acquisition data).
I expect many of the final papers to be structured along the following lines:

1. Introduction: state the question you wish to explore, citing relevant literature, and describe why this question is important; describe your methodology; discuss possible results and their implications.
2. Results: describe in detail your procedure and the results you obtained; present your statistical analysis (if any); discuss any difficulties you faced; think of what should have been done differently.
3. Discussion: discuss the implications of your results. How should they be interpreted? Do they support your original hypothesis?
4. Conclusion: assess the study’s significance with respect to the question raised in the introduction; suggest further questions it raises and/or follow-up studies that could rely on it.

Course schedule and tentative list of readings:  
(Readings marked *** are recommended)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 19</td>
<td>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; no class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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**Goals and sources**  

**Encoding of motion**  

**Cross-linguistic variation**  

Feb. 16: **Acquisition of spatial language**  
**Early cognition**  

**Cross-linguistic variation**  

Feb. 23: **Extended meaning and metaphor**  
**Mental journey and fictive motion**  

**Time as space**  

March 2: **Individual project presentations**
<table>
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<th>March 9: Origin and development of spatial expressions; closing discussion</th>
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<td>Origin and development of spatial terms</td>
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