

## **HSS 311/611: An Introduction to the Study of Language (4 credits )**

### **Learning Objectives**

1. Primary objective: How can we describe varied aspects of linguistic organization, including structures of sounds, words and sentences?
2. Secondary objective: How is language processed by the mind/brain of native speakers?

### **Course Contents**

- Introduction: Nature of human language, Types of grammars (descriptive and prescriptive grammars)
- Language and the Brain: Brain structure and functions, Lateralization and Contralateralization, Autonomy and Modularity of language, Language and brain development, Types of aphasias (Broca's and Wernicke's aphasia), Critical period of language acquisition and brain plasticity, Wolf children
- Origin of language: Main debates about the origin and evolution of language: Adaptationist vs Nonadaptationist views
- Sociolinguistics: Language and society, Language vs dialect distinction
- Sounds and sound patterns: Basics of articulatory phonetics, Basics of consonant and vowel sounds using the IPA chart, study of sound patterns (phonological analysis,) Fundamentals of acoustic phonetics (physics of sound waves and spectral analysis of speech sounds)
- Structure of words: Inflectional and derivational morphology, Morphological analysis problems
- Structure of sentences: Basics of sentence structure, Creating sentence structure using grammar rules, Ambiguity in natural language
- Language processing: Speech perception, Lexical access and Processing lexical ambiguity, Psychological reality of syntactic structure, Information sources in structures building and Models of sentence processing.
- Languages of the Indian sub-continent: Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Tibeto-Burman, Austro-Asiatic and Andamanese language families in South Asia

### **Selected Readings**

- An Introduction to Language, 9th Edition by Victoria Fromkin, Robert Rodman and Nina Hymes, 2010
- Fundamentals of Psycholinguistics, Eva Fernandez and Helen Smith Cairns, WileyBlackwell, 2012
- Introduction to Psycholinguistics: Understanding Language Science, Matthew J. Traxler. John Wiley and Sons Ltd., 2012
- The Language Instinct: How the mind creates language. Pinker, Steven. First Perennial Classics Edition. Harper Collins. 2000.

- The Atoms of Language: The Mind's Hidden Rules of Grammar. Baker, Mark. First Edition. Basic Books. 2001.