

# Course syllabus

## *Linguistic Field Methods*

LING 336, Fall 2016, Reed College

**Instructor:** Sameer ud Dowla Khan  
**Email:** skhan@reed.edu  
**Phone:** ext. 4018 (off-campus: 503-517-4018)  
**Time & place:** Wed 6:10–9:00PM, in Eliot 216  
**Office hours:** Wed 11:30AM–1:30PM, Thu 3:30–4:30PM, and by appointment, in Eliot 101C

**Consultant:** Debra “Modi” Maduma, native speaker of Luo  
**Email:** debraduma@reed.edu

### Introduction

This course is an extensive exercise in learning how to document a language primarily by interacting with a native speaker of that language. By eliciting data from our consultant (Modi), systematically analyzing the data, engaging with theories to describe her language (Luo), and testing predictions, we will all have a chance to practice our skills as linguists, while also getting an intimate glimpse into a language previously unfamiliar to us. Moreover, this exercise will help highlight the value in language documentation for both scientific and cultural purposes.

### Requirements and grading breakdown

*Prerequisite:* Introduction to Linguistic Analysis (LING 211, **required**)

*Discussion (15%):* Your participation in-class discussion is an integral part of this course. This includes in-class elicitation at the board, short (5 min) summaries of your major findings since the last meeting, and our collaborative discussions of linguistic analysis. Thus, attendance is mandatory.

*Contributions (15%):* Every week, based on the data you collect with the speaker in class and in independent sessions arranged with Modi, you will contribute to the course’s shared documents on GoogleDrive, organizing the data into an elicitation database, a corpus of recordings, and a discussion board. Occasional readings will be assigned in conjunction with this work.

*Squibs (30%):* Three mini-papers will be due through the course of the semester: one on the language’s phonological system, one on its morphological system, and one on its syntactic system. This work will be largely descriptive, although each student will be asked to focus on a particular area of curiosity for each squib, open to initial theoretical discussion.

*Mini-grammar (20%):* On the last day of regular class meetings, you will submit a mini-grammar of the Luo language. This will be composed by compiling the updated findings of the three squibs.

*Research (20%):* You will conduct more substantial research on a topic of your choice in the later part of the semester, once you are given permission to access outside research on Luo. You will submit a short final paper and present your findings a conference-style talk during exam week. This may or may not be a significant extension of one of your areas of curiosity in a squib.

## Policies

I generally do not accept late work. I have zero tolerance for plagiarism. You must abide by the Honor Principle.

If you have a documented disability and will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Disability Support Services at (503) 517-7921 or [disability-services@reed.edu](mailto:disability-services@reed.edu) as soon as possible.

Until (about) the tenth week of the semester, we will work with our speaker only, and we will refrain from referring to books, articles, or other outside research on his language. Sameer will provide carefully-chosen material on Luo at selected points in the semester for us to read together. You may, however, refer to material on other languages, to get better insight into general linguistic theories and phenomena.

Most importantly, you must always exercise utmost respect towards our speaker Modi, her language, her culture, her experiences, and her expertise in these areas.

## Class schedule

R: reading assignment due, S: squib due

Week	Day	Date	Discussion topic(s)	Due before class
1	Wed	31 Aug	Introduction, contextualization of Luo Elicitation, data input	
2	Wed	7 Sep	Recording Segments: consonants and vowels	R: Bowerman ch. 1–5
3	Wed	14 Sep	Suprasegmentals: tone, stress, ATR, etc. Finalize practical transcription	
4	Wed	21 Sep	Noun inflection: gender, number, definiteness, possession...	S: Phonology R: Bowerman ch. 6–7
5	Wed	28 Sep	Basic predication	
6	Wed	5 Oct	Verb inflection: tense, aspect, mood, agreement, negation... Adpositions	
7	Wed	12 Oct	Basic word order Connected speech: Frog story	S: Morphology R: Bowerman ch. 9
Break	Wed	19 Oct	<b>NO CLASS:</b> Fall Break	
8	Wed	26 Oct	Yes/no questions Wh-questions	
9	Wed	2 Nov	Subordination Relative clauses	
10	Wed	9 Nov	Group activity Full exposure to outside material	S: Syntax
11	Wed	16 Nov	Areas of interest	
12	Wed	23 Nov	<b>NO CLASS:</b> Thanksgiving Break	
13	Wed	30 Nov	Areas of interest	
14	Wed	7 Dec	Areas of interest	S: Mini-grammar
Exam	Wed	14 Dec	Research presentations (1–4pm)	
Exam	Thu	15 Dec	Research papers due (4pm)	