Teaching Pronunciation: Theory and Practice
TESL 542, Spring 2012
Robin Barr & Shari Pattillo

Instructors

Robin Barr                      Shari Pattillo
Office Hours  McKinley 156, Tuesdays 8-9 p.m. or by appointment

Course Description

Teaching Pronunciation introduces the formal analysis of phonetics and phonology along with techniques for incorporating these into practical classroom instruction. This course places an emphasis on problem-solving strategies using data from many languages and contexts, and on effective techniques for instruction. The main project for this course involves working with a non-native English speaker to identify and address pronunciation issues relevant to the learner’s needs.
Prerequisite: TESL-500 (Principles of Linguistics).

Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Type of Grading</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 Problem sets @ 5%</td>
<td>Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phonetics quiz</td>
<td>Graded</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonology take-home quiz</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Tutoring Reflections @ 5%</td>
<td>Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials Adaptation</td>
<td>Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronunciation Project</td>
<td>Individual components will be graded separately. See project guidelines.</td>
<td>40%</td>
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Problem Sets

Four problem sets and answer keys will prepare you for the quizzes and your pronunciation project. You will collaborate with classmates on these assignments and turn them in individually. Late or incomplete assignments may not receive full credit. Problem sets will not be returned; please make a copy for yourself if you want to use them for study.

Quizzes

There are two quizzes: a short, in-class quiz on phonetic transcription and features, and a take-home quiz on phonology. There is no collaboration on exams.
**Tutoring Reflections**
More than a simple blow-by-blow account of what you have been doing with your pronunciation student, this assignment allows you to reflect on the practical applications of this course as experienced in your tutoring sessions and to share your experiences with your classmates.

Each reflection paper must include these three components:

- **Tutoring Update**: provide an update on your tutoring sessions followed by observations and/or any questions you may have about the instructional work you are doing with your subject.
- **Targeting Pronunciation**: reflect analytically upon a particular chapter or activity in your pronunciation textbook which you have found useful or otherwise remarkable with respect to your tutoring. Suggested topics: personalization, adaptation (for level or learning style), scaffolding.
- **Connections**: explore an idea, experience or discovery from your tutoring session that illustrates points emphasized in your readings and in class.

Each log will be ~500 words, emailed to pattillo@american.edu by the due date. We will discuss the reflections the following week.

**Materials Adaptation Assignment**
Starting from typical non-pronunciation instructional material, you will 1) identify opportunities for pronunciation instruction and practice, and 2) adapt material to reflect the specific needs (goals, interests, background, learning style, and level) of your tutee. This may involve personalizing content, omitting content or activities that do not match your tutees’ needs, and adding activities or smaller instructional steps that will benefit your tutees. You are encouraged to collaborate with others in the class whose tutees have similar needs; if so, a group may turn in a single project.

**Pronunciation Project**
Here, you will use the insights and skills that you are developing in this class to perform an in-depth assessment of your tutee’s pronunciation. See the Pronunciation Project Overview and additional handouts for more information. This task will include:

- finding a cooperative non-native English speaker who wants to improve his/her pronunciation
- recording interviews and making transcriptions of his or her pronunciation
- using this data to analyze and diagnose his/her pronunciation problems
- developing an individualized pronunciation syllabus and lesson plan for a hypothetical 12-week course that will improve your student’s intelligibility

**Required Texts (available in the AU bookstore)**

- *Avery, Peter and Susan Ehrlich. 2007. Teaching American English Pronunciation*
- *Miller, Sue F. 2006. Targeting Pronunciation, 2nd Edition* (with audio CDs)
- *Yavas, Mehmet. 2006. Applied English Phonology*

Additional required and supplementary readings will be available at the library, on e-reserves, or from the professors. Some homework will require use of software in the TESOL office. The following recommended texts (with CDs) have been ordered through the bookstore:

- *Gilbert, Judy. Clear Speech From the Start* (student edition). [if your subject is a beginner]
# Syllabus: Teaching Pronunciation

**TESL 542, Spring 2012**

## UNIT I: INTRODUCTION and SUPRASEGMENTALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Resources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jan 17</td>
<td><strong>Course Introduction: a suprasegmental approach</strong>&lt;br&gt;Introduction to the Project: first, catch your rabbit. Introduction to sociocultural issues. Practice diagnosis and phonetics review.</td>
<td>• Avery intro,1&lt;br&gt;• Yavas phonetics charts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Jan 24</td>
<td><strong>Pronunciation discovery stations</strong>&lt;br&gt;Introduction to Project Part 1. Introduction to suprasegmentals. (Note: Class held in TESOL seminar room in McKinley.)</td>
<td>• Avery 2, 4,16&lt;br&gt;• Ladefoged 5&lt;br&gt;• Yavas 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sunday</strong></td>
<td>Jan 29</td>
<td>AU TESOL Workshop: “Call ’em as you hear ’em”:&lt;br&gt;Eear training, brain stuff and transcription to improve teaching pronunciation. Led by Robin Barr. Butler Boardroom. 9am-2pm.</td>
<td>Mandatory and free to TESL-542 students. Breakfast/ lunch provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Jan 31</td>
<td><strong>I got rhythm:</strong> Suprasegmentals and sociocultural issues, continued.</td>
<td>• Problem Set 1 DUE&lt;br&gt;• Reflection 1 DUE&lt;br&gt;• Avery 5, 6&lt;br&gt;• Yavas 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Feb 7</td>
<td><strong>Songfest: the music of suprasegmentals.</strong> Using songs to teach pronunciation.</td>
<td>• Problem Set 2 DUE&lt;br&gt;• Readings: Avery 9</td>
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## UNIT II: SEGMENTAL PHONETICS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Resources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Feb 14</td>
<td><strong>You’re from a cow?!</strong> Linking, glottal stops and other rules your students don’t believe in. Syllable structure. Introduction to Project, Part 2.</td>
<td>• Project Part 1 DUE&lt;br&gt;• Avery 3, 11&lt;br&gt;• Yavas 3, 4, 5&lt;br&gt;• “Arthur the Rat” dialect variation</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Feb 21</td>
<td><strong>Rubber bands and Koosh Balls™:</strong> Vowel length and reduction. Introduction to phonology.</td>
<td>• Problem Set 3 DUE&lt;br&gt;• Avery 7, 8&lt;br&gt;• Yavas 2, 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Feb 28</td>
<td><strong>It’s not ‘sloppy,’ it’s efficient!</strong> Why linking, vowel length, and vowel reduction are necessary rules of English.</td>
<td>• Reflection 2 DUE&lt;br&gt;• Avery 2, 3, 4 (review)&lt;br&gt;• DARE excerpt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Saturday</strong></td>
<td>March 3</td>
<td>AU TESOL Workshop: “Principles and Practices of Teaching Pronunciation”&lt;br&gt;Led by Shirley Thompson. Butler Boardroom 9:00am – 2:00pm.</td>
<td>Free to all Teaching Pronunciation students, who are encouraged to attend for additional practice and review. Lunch is provided.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mar 6</td>
<td><strong>PHONETICS QUIZ</strong>&lt;br&gt;Metalinguistic attitudes. Which English do we teach? Video: “American Tongues.” Phonology and the Color Vowel Chart.</td>
<td>• Problem Set 4 DUE&lt;br&gt;• Ohio Files&lt;br&gt;• Halle &amp; Clements excerpts</td>
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Mar 11-18 **SPRING BREAK**
### UNIT III: PHONOLOGY: sound patterns, rules, and mental representations.

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<th>Week 9</th>
<th>Mar 20</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pigeonholes and phonemes - Finding the rules:</strong> how to describe linguistic patterns and systems. Introduction to Project Part 3. Discussion: Learner attitudes about dialect variation. <strong>PHONOLOGY QUIZ</strong> distributed (due Week 11).</td>
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| • Project Part 2 DUE  
• Sapir |

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<tr>
<th>Week 10</th>
<th>Mar 27</th>
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| **Syllabus Design and Lesson Plans:** planning effective pronunciation lessons. Introduction to Project Part 4 and Materials Adaptation.  
**Categorical Pizza:** how phonemic categorical perception develops. Led by Robin Barr. Mary Graydon Center 245. 8:10pm - 9:30pm. |
| • Phonology Take-Home DUE  
• Avery 13, 14  
*Free to all Pronunciation students, who are encouraged to attend. Pizza is provided.* |

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 11</th>
<th>Apr 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Your students’ phonologies:</strong> sound patterns in the classroom. What doesn’t happen in class: the pronunciation learner’s learning curve.</td>
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| • Project Part 3 DUE  
• Eimas  
• Menn 5, 9 |

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<tr>
<th>Week 12</th>
<th>Apr 10</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What goes on in your mind:</strong> Language processing. Lexical chunks.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
| • Materials Adaptation DUE  
• Reflection 3 DUE  
• Avery 10  
• Celce-Murcia 9 |

### UNIT IV: INTERACTION OF PHONOLOGY WITH OTHER AREAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 13</th>
<th>Apr 17</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pronunciation in the ESL/EFL Classroom:</strong> integrating pronunciation into daily instruction.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
| • Project Part 4 DUE  
• Avery 12 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 14</th>
<th>Apr 24</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What’s that in the road, a head?!</strong> General conclusions. Course evaluations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Yavas 9</td>
<td></td>
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**TESL 542 Supplementary Readings.** Note: Some of these will be required, others recommended or optional. These and other additional readings will be available at the library or from the professors.


Ohio State University. *Language Files: Materials for an Introduction to Language and Linguistics*.


