Descriptive Aspects of English Phonetics and Phonology

Through our readings, homework assignments, class discussions, and computer demonstrations, we will examine in detail the sound system of Modern English. This class will help you to uncover a subset of the linguistic knowledge that all native speakers of English possess. The topics to be discussed include: articulatory phonetics (how sounds are made in the mouth); acoustic phonetics (the study of the sound energy of speech); syllable structure (discovering how and why single sounds combine to form English-approved syllables); word stress (how we know which syllable takes relative prominence); segmental phonology (how the sounds in a word can change); and orthographic theory (how our spelling system is phonologically based). During many of these discussions we will be comparing and contrasting English phonetic and phonological structures with structures from other languages.

At the completion of this class, you will possess and be able to discuss a thorough knowledge of some of the most interesting surface phenomena of English phonetics and phonology. Equipped with this knowledge, you will be able to relate these English data to general phonological theory. Although this class will not concentrate on second language pronunciation teaching by advocating direct application of the theoretical constructs, you will nevertheless be able to draw indirect implications for classroom second language learning.

Requirements
You are responsible for the weekly reading assignments and should be prepared to discuss them in class. There will be frequent written homework problems assigned. These problems will allow you to analyze a set of English data and derive a descriptive generalization from them. Keep in mind whether or not these generalizations have any implications for applied concerns. You are allowed to discuss and work on these problems with your classmates, but I expect individual work to be handed in. Quizzes are to be done without any consultation.

For a special recording project, groups of students will seek out a non-native speaker of English and carefully record a specific set of data. The recording will be phonetically transcribed, analyzed, and presented to the class. Recordings will be placed on the internet for others to hear and analyze. See some of these examples in the Speech Accent Archive at: http://classweb.gmu.edu/accent

Final grades will be based on the following percentages:

- homeworks 20%
- quizzes (3) 50%
- recording project 20%
- class participation 10%

http://mason.gmu.edu/~weinberg
There are two required texts:

Optional text:

**Course Outline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEETING</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>READING</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>part I. phonetics</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>30 august:</td>
<td>introduction teaching pronunciation and phonetics</td>
<td><em>TP</em> ch. 1-2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>articulatory phonetics</td>
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<td></td>
<td>phonetic transcription</td>
<td><em>ACP</em> ch. 1-2</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 september:</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 september:</td>
<td>consonants of English</td>
<td><em>ACP</em> ch. 3</td>
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<td>20 september:</td>
<td>other languages’ consonants</td>
<td><em>ACP</em> ch. 6-7</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 september:</td>
<td>vowels of English</td>
<td><em>ACP</em> ch. 4</td>
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<td><strong>quiz 1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>4 october:</td>
<td>other languages’ vowels</td>
<td><em>ACP</em> ch. 9</td>
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<td>12 october:</td>
<td><strong>this is a tuesday class</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>syllables, stress, and intonation</td>
<td><em>ACP</em> ch. 5, 10</td>
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<td>18 october:</td>
<td>acoustic phonetics</td>
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<td>computer-assisted speech analysis</td>
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<td><strong>quiz 2</strong></td>
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<td><strong>part II. phonetics, phonology, and pronunciation teaching</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>25 october:</td>
<td>consonants of English: teacher knowledge</td>
<td><em>TP</em> ch 3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
1 november: vowels of English: teacher knowledge  
"TP" ch 4
8 november: stress, intonation, teacher knowledge  
"TP" ch. 5-6
15 november: connected speech  
"TP" ch. 7
22 november: morphology and phonology  
"TP" ch. 8
29 november: orthographic theory  
"TP" ch. 9
6 december: speech accent project reports

**quiz 3** (due at @ 5:00 pm 13 december)

**SUGGESTED READINGS**


**FILMS**
on the oral tract:
*The Singer’s Voice*. 1993. By Joan Wall and Robert Caldwell. Dallas TX: Pst... Inc. (23 min.) (on reserve)
on American dialects:

**SOFTWARE**
1. Signalyze. acoustic speech analysis software
2. A Course in Phonetics. articulatory phonetics software to accompany Ladefoged’s textbook of the same name. (on the cd you received)
3. Sounds of the World’s Languages. example sounds from over 100 languages.

All of this software is available for your use on a machines located in the computer lab in the English Department (Robinson a411)
There is more at [http://mason.gmu.edu/~weinberg](http://mason.gmu.edu/~weinberg)