



“Introduction to the Romance Phonetics”

SPAN 2956B/ITAL 2284B

Winter 2020

**Department of Modern Languages & Literatures
Western University**

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Lectures: Mondays 10:30 – 12:30
Wednesday 10:30 – 11:30
Office: UC 4305
Office hours: Wednesday 11:45 – 12:45 and by appointment
Location: TC 201

Description

What are the speech sounds of Romance languages? Which phonetic features do Romance languages share and how are they different? What types of movements and configurations of the vocal tract are used to produce these? These are some of the questions that the course aims to explore. Students will be introduced to the phonetics of Spanish, Italian, French, Catalan, and Portuguese. You will learn to produce and transcribe the sounds of Romance while learning about the some of the articulatory and acoustic characteristics of these sounds.

Goals and Objectives

The course aims to achieve the following:

1. To introduce students to the sounds of Romance languages including Spanish, Italian, French, Catalan and Portuguese.

2. To familiarize students to the articulatory and acoustic characteristics of the proposed five Romance languages' sounds.
3. To teach students transcription.
4. To enable students to compare and contrast the pronunciation of the most salient features of Italian, Spanish, French, Catalan and Portuguese.

Learning outcomes

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Recall the main phonetic characteristics of Romance languages.
2. Compare and contrast the main characteristics of the Romance languages.
3. Transcribe using the IPA.
4. Describe the sounds of the languages studied from an articulatory point of view.
5. Identify vowels and consonants on a spectrogram.

Grade Background

1. Participation, attendance, homework preparation	15%
2. Midterm (week 5)	30%
3. Mini Project Proposal (week 9)	10%
4. Mini Project Presentation (week 13)	15%
5. Final Mini Project (Friday, April 3 rd , 2020)	30%

- Participation, attendance, homework preparation (15%): It is the students' responsibility to show up every week for both lectures. Every week, students will be asked to read one article or case-study, individually or in small groups. Students are required to have read the assigned material(s) for each class prior to coming to class and to have prepared questions and/or comments for discussion.
- Midterm (30%): The Midterm is designed to assess student knowledge regarding Romance languages, classification of consonants and vowels, and transcription using the International Phonetic Alphabet. It will cover lectures and articles assigned as homework up to Week 5.
- Mini Project Proposal (10%): Students are required to write a two-page project proposal (Times New Roman, 12pt, 1.5 spaced), in which they will address a relevant topic of their

choice after consultation with and the approval of the course instructor. The subject of the project proposal will address the Italian and/or the Spanish sound system, while comparing it with another Romance language of their choice. The project proposal has to be seen as an outline of students' final paper that includes the main research question(s), hypotheses, and previous research on the topic. The project proposal should include at least 5 references. Students can decide to work together (no more than 3 students per group) for the mini final project proposal, upon instructor's approval.

- Mini Project Presentation (15%): Students will present their final papers in class. The project presentation will include the topic, the justification, the main research question(s), hypotheses, and previous research on the topic. The presentation can be supported by a Power Point, and it should not exceed 10 minutes. Students can decide to work together for the final project presentation, upon instructor's approval.
- Final Mini Project (30%): Students are required to write a final project, based on the proposal, and on the comments and suggestions the instructor addressed in the proposal. The final project should not exceed 10 pages (Times New Roman, 12pt, 1.5 spaced), excluding bibliography (at least 5 references). Students will be provided with a rubric and guidelines. Students can decide to work together upon instructor's approval. The final project is due on Friday, April 3rd, 2020 at 12pm. A Word version and a PDF version of the final project must be submitted to the instructor by email.

Week/Date	Topic	Readings & Assignments
Week 1 – Monday <i>January 6th</i>	Course Introduction and IPA	
Week 1 – Wednesday <i>January 8th</i>	Phonetics – vowels	Gregory (2005)
Week 2 – Monday <i>January 13th</i>	Phonetics – consonants	
Week 2 – Wednesday <i>January 15th</i>	Romance Languages	Rothman (2009)
Week 3 – Monday <i>January 20th</i>	<i>French</i>	Hambye & Simon (2004)
Week 3 – Wednesday <i>January 22nd</i>	<i>Catalan</i>	
Week 4 – Monday <i>January 27th</i>	<i>Portuguese</i>	Escudero, Boersma, Schurt Rauber & Boin (2009)

Week 4 – Wednesday <i>January 29th</i>	Review session	
Week 5 – Monday <i>February 3rd</i>	Midterm	
Week 5 – Wednesday <i>February 5th</i>	Midterm correction	
Week 6 – Monday <i>February 10th</i>	Introduction to the Italian Phonetics & <i>Italian vowels</i>	Bertinetto & Loporcaro (2005)
Week 6 – Wednesday <i>February 12th</i>	<i>Italian plosives</i>	
Week 7 <i>February 17th & 19th</i>	READING WEEK	
Week 8 – Monday <i>February 24th</i>	<i>Italian affricatives & fricatives</i>	Hall (1994)
Week 8 – Wednesday <i>February 26th</i>	<i>Italian trills</i>	
Week 9 – Monday <i>March 2nd</i>	<i>Italian nasals & laterals</i>	Recasens, Farnetani, Fontdevila & Pallares (1993)
Week 9 – Wednesday <i>March 4th</i>	Introduction to the Spanish Phonetics	Final Mini Project proposal due
Week 10 – Monday <i>March 9th</i>	<i>Spanish vowels and semi vowels & Spanish plosives</i>	
Week 10 – Wednesday <i>March 11th</i>	<i>Spanish trills</i>	Rafat (2008)
Week 11 – Monday <i>March 16th</i>	<i>Spanish affricatives & fricatives</i>	
Week 11 – Wednesday <i>March 18th</i>	<i>Spanish nasals & laterals</i>	
Week 12 – Monday <i>March 23rd</i>	Contrast between Italian and Spanish	Gili Fivela & Zmarich (2005)
Week 12 – Wednesday <i>March 25th</i>	Contrast between Italian and Spanish	
Week 13 – Monday <i>March 30th</i>	Conclusion	Final Mini Project presentations
Week 13 – Wednesday <i>April 1st</i>	Conclusion	Final Mini Project presentations

Mandatory Readings (will be available on OWL)

- Bertinetto, P. M., & Loporcaro, M. (2005). The sound pattern of Standard Italian, as compared with the varieties spoken in Florence, Milan, and Rome. *Journal of the International Phonetic Association*, 35(2), pp. 131-151.
- Escudero, P., Boersma, P., Schurt Rauber, A., & Boin, R. A. H. (2009). A cross-dialect acoustic description of vowels: Brazilian and European Portuguese. *Acoustical Society of America*, 126, pp. 1379-1393.
- Gili Fivela, B., & Zmarich, C. (2005). Italian Geminate under Speech Rate and Focalization Changes: Kinematic, Acoustic, and Perception Data. *Interspeech*, pp. 2897-2900.
- Gregory, A. E. (2005). What's phonetics got to do with language teaching? In N. Bartles (Ed.) *Researching Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching Education* (pp. 201-220). Berlino, GE: Springer Science & Business Media.
- Hall, R. A. (1994). Phonemes and Orthography. *Italica*, 21(2), pp. 72-82.
- Hambye, P., & Simon, A. C. (2004). The Production of Social Meaning via the Association of Variety and Style: A Case Study of French Vowel Lengthening in Belgian. *Canadian Journal of Linguistics*, 49(3), pp. 397-421.
- Rafat, Y. (2008). The Acquisition of Allophonic Variation in Spanish as a Second Language. Proceedings of the 2008 annual conference of the Canadian Linguistic Association.
- Recasens, D., Farnetani, E., Fontdevila, J., & Pallares, M. D. (1993). An electropalatographic study of alveolar and palatal consonants in Catalan and Italian. *Language and Speech*, 36(2,3), pp. 213-234.
- Rothman, J. (2009). Understanding the nature and outcome of early bilingualism: Romance languages as heritage language. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 13(2), pp. 155-163.

Recommended Readings

- Decker, D. M. (1999). *Handbook of the International Phonetic Association: A Guide to the Use of the International Phonetic Alphabet*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Harris, M., & Vincent, N. (1988). *The Romance Languages*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Hualde, J. I. (2005). *The sounds of Spanish*. Cambridge: CUP.

Course-specific policies

Class Management

- Students are expected to come to class regularly, having read the materials assigned and prepared to take part in pair and group discussions
- Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. It is your responsibility to contact me prior to or within the week of a missed course term test, or assignment.
- UWO's Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness:
(<https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>)
- Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC): <https://studentservices.uwo.ca> under the Medical Documentation heading
- Course materials and announcements: Lectures and announcements will be posted on OWL. Student must therefore set up an OWL account. The address for OWL is <http://owl.uwo.ca/portal>. In order to access OWL, you must have a UWO account. To log on the system will ask you to give your account name and your secret password.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a major academic offense (see Scholastic Offense Policy in the Western Academic Calendar). Plagiarism is the inclusion of someone else's verbatim or paraphrased text in one's own written work without immediate reference. Verbatim text must be surrounded by quotation marks or indented if it is longer than four lines. A reference must follow right after borrowed material (usually the author's name and page number). Without immediate reference to borrowed material, a list of sources at the end of a written assignment does not protect a writer against the possible charge of plagiarism. This also applies to work facilitated or written for students by third parties. The University of Western Ontario uses a plagiarism- checking site called Turnitin.com. Students are allowed to use their laptops and iPads during class lectures, but they are not allowed to use any electronic device during exam sessions. Ringers must be turned off and laptops, tablets, or other technology must only be used for class purposes. Unauthorized recording or photographing of the class, its members, community partners, and/or the people they serve is prohibited.

Support Services

The Web sites for Registration Services is <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca> and Student Support Services is <https://studentservices.uwo.ca> (including the services provided by the USC listed here: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>). The Student Development Services can also be reached at www.sdc.uwo.ca. Important Notice: Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Email Communication with the Course Instructor

- At times, the course Instructor may decide to send out important course information by email. To that end, all students are required to have a valid UWO email address. You are responsible for ensuring that your UWO email address is set up.
- Forwarding your UWO.ca email to a Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo or other type of email account is not advisable. In some cases, messages from UWO.ca addresses sent to Hotmail, Gmail or Yahoo accounts are filtered as junk mail, which means that emails from your course instructor may end up in your spam or junk mail folder.
- You are responsible for:
 - Ensuring you have a valid UWO email address
 - Checking your UWO email account on a regular basis
 - Appropriate use: e-mail correspondence should be used only for administrative matters (e.g. make-up tests due to illness)

All inquiries concerning course content including evaluations must be asked in class or discussed during office hours.

Response time: I will reply to all messages within 24 hours of receiving them. Please note that no correspondence will occur during weekends. If you do not receive a reply within this period, resend your message

Selected web-based resources

- IPA Fonts (Go to Fonts > SIL Encore IPA Fonts > DoulosSIL) <http://www.sil.org/>
- The sounds of Spanish, English and German: <http://www.uiowa.edu/~acadtech/phonetics/>
- The sounds of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA):
<http://www.sil.org/computing/speechtools/ipahelp.htm>
- IPA chart, IPA handbook, Online phonetics lab:
<http://web.uvic.ca/ling/resources/ipa/handbook.htm>

- Variation in Spanish: <http://www.uiowa.edu/~acadtech/dialects/> and <http://lab.chass.utoronto.ca/rescentre/spanish/>
- Information about the world's languages: <http://www.ethnologue.com>

Caveat

This syllabus is not etched in stone, and any information on this syllabus is subject to change at any time. Although we try to minimize change as much as possible, we may need to make some necessary adjustments (not, however, test, or assignment dates). Any changes will be announced in class and on the course webpage. Thus, it is your responsibility to be there, ask your fellow classmates or the instructor or check the course webpage to be informed of any such changes.