

# LINGUISTICS 15 : Languages of Africa

## 1. Course Description

The course is about the genetic classification of African languages, their characteristics, national and official languages, lingua francas and their contributions to linguistic theories.

## 2. Course Objective

To introduce students to African language families, their characteristics, and how they have contributed to linguistics, the science of language.

## 3. Course justification

One third of the 6000 world's languages are spoken in Africa. The study of African languages has also contributed significantly to linguistic theories especially in phonetics, phonology, morphology and syntax. There is also interest of students to learn African languages. This course will allow students to choose which one to learn.

## 4. Methodology

The course will consist of lectures, class discussions of assigned readings, students' presentations and videos.

## 5. Learning outcomes

- \_the major linguistic families of African languages
- \_the main linguistic characteristics of African languages
- \_contributions of African languages to linguistics
- \_language policy and politics
- \_the importance of preserving of endangered languages

## 6. Assessment strategies

The assessment will consist of both written multiple short essays  
two midterm and one final exam  
one oral presentation and a paper

## Textbook

Bernd Heine and Derek Nurse. 2000. African Languages : An Introduction. Cambridge University Press.

## Course Outline

Week One :and Two : African Language Families. Greenberg. Chap.3-5, Heine and Nerse  
Week Three : Characteristics of African Languages (class system).  
Week Four : Characteristics of African Languages (polysyntheticity and serialization)  
Week Five : Characteristics of African Languages (tone system). G.N. Clements, Chap. 6  
Week Six : Bantu Languages. pp.30-36; chap.7.  
Week Seven; African lingua francas. pp. 324.  
Week Eight : African pidgins and creoles. pp. 325  
Week Nine : Specialized languages (blacksmith language, hunting language, ritual language...)  
Week Ten : Language games. Chap. 12  
Week Eleven : Endangered languages and language preservation. Wolff, Language and Society,  
Chap. 12  
Week Twelve : African national and official languages. Chap. 12  
Week Thirteen: Linguistic problems and nation-building. Chap. 12  
Week Fourteen: African languages' contribution to linguistic theories. chap. 6, chap.7, chap. 8.  
Week Fifteen : Final exam

### Grading System

A : 100%-94%  
A: 93%-90%  
B+ :89%-87%  
B : 86%-83%  
A- :82%-80%  
C+ :79%-77%  
C : 76%-73%  
C-:72%-70%  
D+ :69%-67%  
D : 66%-63%  
D- : 62%-60%