“Introduction to the Romance Phonetics”  
SPAN 2956B/ITAL 2284B  
Winter 2020  
Department of Modern Languages & Literatures  
Western University

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Supervisor: Dr. Olga Tararova  
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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.

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<td>January 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>and IPA</td>
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<td>Escudero, Boersma, Schurt Rauber &amp; Boin (2009)</td>
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| Week 4 – Wednesday  
<sup>January 29<sup>th</sup></sup> | Review session |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| Week 5 – Monday  
<sup>February 3<sup>rd</sup></sup> | Midterm |
| Week 5 – Wednesday  
<sup>February 5<sup>th</sup></sup> | Midterm correction |
| Week 6 – Monday  
<sup>February 10<sup>th</sup></sup> | Introduction to the Italian Phonetics & Italian vowels  
Bertinetto & Loporcaro (2005) |
| Week 6 – Wednesday  
<sup>February 12<sup>th</sup></sup> | Italian plosives |
| Week 7  
<sup>February 17<sup>th</sup>& 19<sup>th</sup></sup> | READING WEEK |
| Week 8 – Monday  
<sup>February 24<sup>th</sup></sup> | Italian affricatives & fricatives  
Hall (1994) |
| Week 8 – Wednesday  
<sup>February 26<sup>th</sup></sup> | Italian trills |
| Week 9 – Monday  
<sup>March 2<sup>nd</sup></sup> | Italian nasals & laterals  
Recasens, Farnetani, Fontdevila & Pallares (1993) |
| Week 9 – Wednesday  
<sup>March 4<sup>th</sup></sup> | Introduction to the Spanish Phonetics  
**Final Mini Project proposal due** |
| Week 10 – Monday  
<sup>March 9<sup>th</sup></sup> | Spanish vowels and semi vowels & Spanish plosives |
| Week 10 – Wednesday  
<sup>March 11<sup>th</sup></sup> | Spanish trills  
Rafat (2008) |
| Week 11 – Monday  
<sup>March 16<sup>th</sup></sup> | Spanish affricatives & fricatives |
| Week 11 – Wednesday  
<sup>March 18<sup>th</sup></sup> | Spanish nasals & laterals |
| Week 12 – Monday  
<sup>March 23<sup>rd</sup></sup> | Contrast between Italian and Spanish  
Gili Fivela & Zmarich (2005) |
| Week 12 – Wednesday  
<sup>March 25<sup>th</sup></sup> | Contrast between Italian and Spanish |
| Week 13 – Monday  
<sup>March 30<sup>th</sup></sup> | Conclusion  
**Final Mini Project presentations** |
| Week 13 – Wednesday  
<sup>April 1<sup>st</sup></sup> | Conclusion  
**Final Mini Project presentations** |

**Mandatory Readings** (will be available on OWL)


**Recommended Readings**


**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.