

Stanford Continuing Studies | Fall 2017 | LIN 09 W  
**The Glamour of Grammar**  
Instructor: Dr. Asya Pereltsvaig

### Course Description:

*\*Please see course page for full description and additional details.*

### Grade Options and Requirements:

- No Grade Requested (NGR)
  - This is the default option. No work will be required; no credit shall be received; no proof of attendance can be provided.
- Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)
  - Score will be determined by student participation in online discussions and activities.
- Letter Grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass)
  - Score will be determined by student participation in online discussions and activities and the grade for the assignments.

*\*Please Note: If you require proof that you completed a Continuing Studies course for any reason (for example, employer reimbursement), you must choose either the Letter Grade or Credit/No Credit option. Courses taken for NGR will not appear on official transcripts or grade reports.*

### Tentative Weekly Outline:

**Week 1: Grammar vs. Grammar.** Prescriptive grammar vs. descriptive grammar.

**Week 2: The grammar of (English) words.** How are words made up? Why some words work in English while other are not possible? For example, why is there “stupidity” but not “smartity?”

**Week 3: The grammar of (English) word forms.** Why do we have so many irregular forms? Does language become more or less regular with time?

**Week 4: The grammar of (English) sounds.** How properties of sounds affect their use in words and expressions and our perception of such words and phrases? (For example: Why do we say “tip-top” and “zig-zag” and not “top-tip” or “zag-zig?”)

**Week 5: The grammar of (English) sentences.** How are words put together into sentences and how does the meaning of sentences arise from the way the words are combined?

**Week 6: The grammar of silence.** How do we interpret what is not said explicitly? Why are some words not pronounced in some sentences and how do we know that we mean them anyway? How do we read between the lines or manipulate other people with language?

**Week 7: The grammar of non-standard (English) dialects.** Are people who speak (non-standard) dialects just lazy/stupid/illogical? Where does double negation come from? Missing copulas, wrong auxiliaries and other peculiarities of non-standard English dialects explained.

**Week 8: How do children learn grammar?** How do children figure out all the intricacies of adult English and in such a short time? What are some of the difficulties that children run into while trying to figure out adult language? How do they resolve these difficulties?

**Week 9: How do adults learn grammar?** Does second language pedagogy help or hinder the learning? Can language lose (some of its) grammar? The so-called “Persian conversion”. Pidgins and creoles.

**Week 10: Are there “primitive” languages without grammar?** Grammatical complexity of tribal languages.