

*Approved by the Academic
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'Linguistic Theory and Language
Description'
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Syllabus
Functional Approaches to Natural Language
4 ECTS

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1. Course description

1.1 Title of a course

Functional approaches to natural language is a course for 1st-year students of the Master's programme "Linguistic Theory and Language Description" of the National Research University Higher School of Economics.

1.2 Pre-requisites

The following knowledge and competence are required to study the discipline:

- A good command of the English language.
- A basic knowledge of linguistic theory.

1.3 Course type (compulsory, elective, optional)

Functional approaches to natural language is a compulsory course for 1st-year students of the Master's programme "Linguistic Theory and Language Description".

1.4 Abstract

The course presupposes an introduction to functional and cognitive linguistics as opposed to formal approaches to natural language such as generative grammar. The course comprises several lectures on main tenets, methodological peculiarities and the most important domains of research in functional linguistics, as well as discussions of various case studies and seminal papers. Students enrolled in the course *Functional approaches to natural language* have to cope with several tasks before and in class: they write analytical and argumentative essays, go over the reading materials

that their instructor sends to them, prepare presentations of the given papers in small groups, and discuss problematic issues in class.

2. Learning Objectives

Learning objectives of the course *Functional Approaches to Natural Language* are to introduce students to:

- theoretical apparatus, key notions, history, heritage and main principles of functional and cognitive linguistics, the form vs. function controversy in modern linguistics;
- the mainstream branches and schools of functional and cognitive linguistics;
- methodological aspects of functional and cognitive linguistics;
- critical thinking and reasoning within and outside cognitive linguistics;
- the most salient papers (in English) on various aspects of functional and cognitive linguistics;

3. Learning outcomes

After completing the study of the discipline *Functional Approaches to Natural Language* the student should:

- understand the subject of cognitive linguistics, its fields, connections with other (cognitive) sciences;
- understand main conceptions of the most significant scientific cognitive linguistics schools;
- be able to understand, interpret and discuss papers (in English) on various aspects of functional and cognitive linguistics;
- be able to critically analyze various theoretical points of functional and cognitive linguistics;
- be able to collect empirical data and apply methodological principles to various theoretical tasks;
- be able to make empirical observations and theoretical generalizations;
- be able to make inferences based on collected data relying on theoretical principles of cognitive linguistics;

4. Course Plan

Topic	Form of Control
1. Introduction Functionalism and formalism as two main approaches in modern linguistics. FL and CL in the context of main trends in modern linguistics (structuralism, cognitive grammar, generative grammar) and their brief overview. Interaction between language and cognition as a fundamental principle of CL. History of FL and CL.	Essay (home assigned writing)

2. Main principles of CL Evolution of the main theoretical notions of FL and CL: walkthrough past and modern theories. Principal role of semantics in CL.	Discussion in class
3. Methodological issues Basic methods of collecting empirical data in general linguistics and in CL: introspection, observation (that leads to corpus research), and experiment (that leads to experimental linguistics). Experimental linguistics and CL. Corpus linguistics and CL. Role of statistics in corpus linguistics and in CL.	Discussion in class, essay (in-class writing)
4. Cognitive Models of Language Acquisition Models of language learning (L1 and L2). Heritage speakers. Learner Corpora.	Preparation of group presentations based on home reading
5. Beyond (spoken) language Sign language and sign languages. Co-speech gesticulation. Nonverbal communication and multimodal approach to language. Human language and animal communication.	Preparation of group presentations based on home reading

5. Reading List

5.1 Required

1. Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics.

By: Dąbrowska, Ewa; Divjak, Dagmar. *De Gruyter Mouton*. ISBN: 978-3-11-029184-1, 978-3-11-029202-2, 978-3-11-039380-4. – ЭБС: EBSCO eBooks 2015.

2. The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics.

By: Hubert Cuyckens; Dirk Geeraerts. *Oxford University Press*. ISBN: 978-0-19-514378-2, 978-0-19-973863-2, 978-0-19-803288-5, 978-0-19-989002-6, 978-0-19-994021-9. – ЭБС: Oxford Handbook Foundation Collection 2010.

3. Cognitive Linguistics: An Introduction

By: Evans, Vyvyan; Green, Melanie. *Edinburgh University Press*. ISBN: 978-0-7486-1832-3, 978-0-7486-2650-2, 978-1-280-50144-9. – ЭБС: ProQuest Ebook Central - Academic Complete 2006.

5.2 Optional

1. Handbook of Bilingualism: Psycholinguistic Approaches.

By: Kroll, Judith F; Kroll; Groot, A. M. B. de. *Oxford University Press*. ISBN: 978-0-19-515177-0, 978-0-19-537365-3, 978-0-19-028812-9, 978-0-19-803461-2, 978-1-280-83763-0, 978-1-4294-2039-6. Linguistics. – ЭБС: ProQuest Ebook Central - Academic Complete 2005.

2. Cognitive Grammar: A Basic Introduction (Oxford scholarship online)

By: Langacker, Ronald W. *Oxford University Press*. ISBN: 978-0-19-533195-0, 978-0-19-533196-7, 978-0-19-804419-2, 978-0-19-986820-9, 978-0-19-988720-0, 978-1-4356-3061-1. – ЭБС: ProQuest Ebook Central - Academic Complete 2008.

3. Continuum Companion to Systemic Functional Linguistics (Systemic Functional Linguistics)

By: Webster, Jonathan; Halliday, M. A. K. *Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd.* ISBN: 978-0-8264-9447-4, 978-0-8264-9448-1, 978-1-282-87397-1, 978-1-4411-3317-5. Literature & Writing (General). – ЭБС: ProQuest Ebook Central - Academic Complete 2009.

6. Grading System

Type of assignment	Characteristics
Essay 1	Individual home assignment: reading several papers and writing an analytical essay
Essay 2	Individual class assignment: writing an argumentative essay on a problematic topic
Oral presentation	Group home assignment: reading and presenting a paper or a case-study in a small group
Class participation	Discussing problematic issues in class

Final grading formula: Essay 1 (0.3) + Essay 2 (0.3) + Oral presentation in a group (0.2) + Class participation (0.2)

Essay 1 and Essay 2 are the two types of assignment that can be retaken if not submitted in time for a good reason. Essay 1 can be resubmitted within two weeks (if not specified otherwise by the instructor) after the first deadline. Essay 2 can be rewritten in class on the day agreed upon between the instructor and the students who intend to write it, but not later than ten days before the session.

There is no final examination and no blocking elements of control.

Table of Grade Accordance

Ten-point Grading Scale	Five-point Grading Scale	
1 - very bad 2 - bad 3 - no pass	no pass – 2	FAIL
4 – pass 5 – highly pass	pass – 3	PASS
6 – good 7 – very good	good – 4	
8 – almost excellent 9 – excellent 10 – perfect	excellent – 5	

The resultant grade for the course goes to the certificate of Master's degree.

6. Methods of Instruction

The following educational technologies are used in the study process:

- essay writing
- group preparation of presentations;
- group discussion and analysis of the results of home exercises and home reading;
- demonstration of cognitive linguistics effects and phenomena in a classroom;

7. Special Equipment and Software Support

The course requires a laptop, projector, and acoustic systems.