# General Linguistics

## Prof. Sara Cigada

***Text under revision. Not yet approved by academic staff***

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The aim of the course is to demonstrate the fundamental dynamics underlying verbal communication understood as the linguistic mediation of human interaction. The course will examine systems (sign systems of historical-natural languages; linguistic structures) as well as functional and pragmatic aspects of language (communicative and persuasive and arguing functions), including through the use of appropriate historical references).

At the end of the course, students will be able to read the course textbook and extract relevant information in reference to course content as a historical-cultural introduction to the subject. In terms of applying this knowledge, students will be able to recognise and describe the main lexical and morphosyntactic structures found in an Italian text and, in broad terms at least, in the two foreign languages in their individual study programme. Students will also be able to independently analyse a text (or speech) and understand the essence of the structure of the argument, assess its accuracy and appropriateness in relation to the context and participants present, as well as reveal any manipulative moves. These skills are fundamental to the development of communication skills, particularly understanding complex messages in Italian or in a foreign language as well as the independent production of writing and speech.

***COURSE CONTENT***

– Linguistics and communication; the constitutive factors of the communicative event; text / language / sense; persuasion and rhetoric. The constituent features of languages and linguistic signs.

– Essential structures of languages: lexis and word formation processes; morphology; syntactic procedures. Relevant aspects from a comparative point of view. The communicative functions of linguistic structures, or the “power” of words.

– An overview of languages. Elements of typology. Describing complex sounds.

– An introduction to syntax. Compositionality and congruity: the nature of meaning and predicate-argument structures.

***READING LIST***

Textbook:

Eddo Rigotti - Sara Cigada, *La comunicazione verbale,* ed. Maggioli, Santarcangelo di Romagna 2013. (parts; for student of Literature who borrow the 12 CFU course: all the text)

Reference grammar (only for consultation):

Lorenzo Renzi, *La Grande Grammatica Italiana di consultazione*, Il Mulino, Bologna 2001 (ried.), 3 voll.

Optional reading:

Sergio Cigada, *Della letteratura,* EDUCatt, Milan, 2010.

*La geopolitica delle lingue*, edited by G. Del Zanna, ed. Maggioli, Santarcangelo di Romagna 2018.

The reading list will be expanded during the course, with details given in lectures and published on the lecturer’s web page.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course will be delivered primarily in lectures.

Students are advised to register in good time on the course Blackboard page.

Attending students can, if they wish, to carry out individual or group analyses regarding some of the course topics.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Students will be informed in due course of the requirements for any interim exams. On the official exam dates, assessment may be written or oral.

Assessment will be based on the level of students’ knowledge acquired during the course (accuracy and completeness of answers; clarity and accuracy of presentation; mastery of language and use of specialised terms from general linguistics), as well as the level of personal development in the application of notions, in equal measure. A level of excellence can be reached by demonstrating originality in the analysis (students’ choice of material and observations).

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Essentials prerequisites for attending the course include a good level of Italian, basic knowledge of Italian grammar and grammatical terminology (parts of speech, concept of inflection and conjugation, grammatical description of words in Italian) as well as fundamental notions regarding historical, political and physical geography.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.