Task
Select a language to study. This language should have a reasonable amount of phonological research literature (that is, at least a few sources), but not be extensively studied such as English, Dutch, German, Japanese, Korean, Russian, etc.

Write a paper consisting of roughly two equal parts: (1) a brief review of the basics of the phonology of the language, outlining the principal topics of interest; (2) a discussion of how data from this language could be made to bear on any issues taught in this course or in the Phonology 1 course. The finished paper should be between 8,000 and 12,000 words.

The idea is to have an exercise in alternating your attention between typical theoretical discussion (often with idealized, carefully selected data) and the detailed data from empirical studies (which almost always involve complication).

Part 2, the theoretical part, can either focus on just one issue (and thus constitute the core of a research paper), or can cover several, as you please.

Schedule
To keep things moving along (and to avoid Incompletes), I’m asking you to adhere to the following due dates:

Mar. 8: Assignment #1. Have your language selected and do a literature search. Hand in a list of references. It is a good idea to come to my office hours or make an appointment to meet with me during weeks 2 or 3 and show me a couple of the references to see if you are on the right track.

Mar. 22: Assignment #2. Provide (basic) phonological description of the language (phonemic and surface inventories, syllable structure, main processes, etc.)

Apr. 19 Assignment #3. Write a short paper describing one or more sets of data and provide a phonological analysis. Explain why this data is interesting. E.g. is it a problem for a particular approach? Is one analysis more insightful than another?

May 10,12,17 Assignment #4. Present your research to the class. Presentations should last between ten and fifteen minutes.

May 27: Papers are due at 9am (Friday of finals week).

You are encouraged to visit with me prior to these deadlines to discuss your language and your ongoing work.
Term Paper Assignment #1
Due: March 8, 2011

Provide the following basic information about the language you are looking at.

1. Language
2. Where is language spoken?
3. How many speakers?
4. What language family does it belong to?
5. Provide a list of sources. Good sources are grammars, dictionaries and dissertations. Original data sources are a must. If your only sources are theoretical papers which regurgitate language data from earlier sources, that’s trouble! Please also indicate whether the sources are currently in your possession or not.

If you are having trouble choosing a language come see me. Generally it is a good idea to pick languages that are not super well-studied like English or Japanese, or ones with little resources (like Simbo (Austronesian)). This leaves lots of good options: languages of Africa and native American Indian languages offer plenty of good choices, as well as Austronesian languages. If you are having trouble finding good sources are uncertain if a particular source is worth it, see me.

Do not wait until the last minute!!
Term Paper Assignment #2
Due: March 22, 2011

Provide the following information about the language you are looking at.

1. Basic Facts
   (a) Provide the phonemic and surface inventories for consonants. Be sure to use a standard chart and IPA symbols.
   (b) Present any special or unusual consonant sounds and/or distributional patterns present (e.g. geminates, clicks, etc.).
   (c) Provide the phonemic and surface inventories for vowels. Be sure to use a standard chart and IPA symbols.
   (d) Present any special/unusual vowel sounds and/or distributional patterns present (e.g. contrastive vowel length, nasalization, etc.).

2. Syllable Structure
   (a) Provide a list of the syllable types found in the language, with an example of each.
   (b) Comment on any distributional restrictions on the segments in the onset, nucleus and coda positions.
   (c) If there are clusters in the onset or coda, comment on the extent to which they observe the Sonority Sequencing Principle. Be sure to provide illustrations of your points.

3. Phonological Processes
   (a) Provide a phonological alternation involving consonants and provide examples of it.
   (b) Provide a phonological alternation involving vowels and provide examples of it.
   (c) Describe some other phonological process (such as stress, tone, syllable structure, etc.) and give examples of it.
Term Paper Assignment #3
Due: April 19, 2011

Consider one or more of the phonological processes you examined in Assignment #2. In a short paper, provide one or more analyses of this process (for example with SPE-style ordered rules, or with OT).

Your paper should:

1. Present the relevant facts coherently
2. Present the relevant generalizations that are being subject to analysis
3. Present the issues the facts and generalizations bear upon. What are the challenges. Why are they interesting?
4. Present an analysis.
5. Evaluate the analysis. What are its strengths? What are its weaknesses? How would an analysis in OT be better or worse than this one (if your analysis used SPE-style rewrite rules)? How would an analysis along the lines of SPE be better or worse than this one (if your analysis used OT)?

This report should be between 2,500 and 5,000 words.
Term Paper Assignment #4

Due: May 10, 12, 17, 2011

Present your research in 10-15 minutes for the class. The presentation should focus on an interesting phonological process in your language, and some discussion of why it is interesting. E.g. is it a problem for a particular approach? Is one analysis more insightful than another?

It is a good idea to prepare a handout or slides and practice beforehand. Remember Pullum’s 5 golden rules: