

Introduction to African Linguistics (A005296)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 5.0

Study time 150 h

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2026-2027

Offering	Language	Location	Teaching Method	Hours
A (semester 1)	English	Gent	seminar	15.0h
			lecture	30.0h
B (semester 1)	English	Gent		

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Goes, Heidi	LW21	staff member
Pacchiarotti, Sara	LW21	lecturer-in-charge
Maselli, Lorenzo	LW21	co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

Programme	crdts	offering
Bachelor of Arts in African Languages and Cultures	5	A
Virtual Mobility	5	B
Exchange Programme African Languages and Cultures	5	A
Linking Course Master of Arts in African Studies	5	A
Preparatory Course Master of Arts in African Studies	5	A
Elective Set African Studies	5	A
Elective Set Linguistics	5	A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

African languages, African linguistics

Position of the course

This introductory course provides an overview of the main language phyla in Africa, their defining features and the methods used for their classification. Then, it dives into foundational concepts in linguistic analysis (phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax) and applies them to African languages.

Contents

This course first provides a general overview of language classification in Africa. Then, it focuses on foundational concepts and analytical methodologies in linguistics and applies them to African languages. Students learn what is a phone, a phoneme, a toneme, a morpheme, a syntactic constituent, and a grammatical relation. They learn how to identify these units by applying a specific methodology to datasets of African languages. In short, this is a class where students learn the basics of linguistic analysis and then apply it to African languages.

Initial competences

No specific preliminary knowledge required

Final competences

1 To have good knowledge of the main language families of Africa, including their features, classification and geographic extent.

2 To have good knowledge of the foundational units of linguistic analysis and the methodologies that allow linguists to identify these units in a dataset.

3 To develop problem-solving, analytical skills applied to datasets on African languages.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'

Conditions for exam contract

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

Teaching methods

Seminar, Lecture, Independent work, Peer teaching

Extra information on the teaching methods

Lectures will not be recorded.

Study material

None

References

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Course content-related study coaching

Classes, office hours and e-mail for feedback and problems.

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Written assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Written assessment

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Oral assessment, Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible

Extra information on the examination methods

Students are required to hand in weekly homework exercises, which count for 20% of the final grade. Students are required to give a presentation, which counts for 10% of the final grade. The remaining 70% consists of the final exam. A minimum of 10/20 for both periodical and non-periodical evaluation is required. Non-periodical evaluation cannot be repeated in the second exam period. Students who repeat the periodical examination keep the same grade for the non-periodical evaluation.

Calculation of the examination mark

70% periodical (exam), 30% non-periodical (homework exercises and presentation)

Facilities for Working Students

1. Attendance is mandatory.
2. Possible rescheduling of the examination to a different time in the same academic year
3. Feedback can be given by email, telephone or during an appointment during or after office hours

For more information concerning flexible learning: contact the monitoring service of the faculty of Arts and philosophy