Course Description:

Oneida Morphology: As an Introduction to the Oneida Language Acquisition

Ever wondered about the word “Oneida”. Probably not, but then again maybe you have. It’s the name of an North American Indigenous nation belonging to the Iroquoian Linguistic / Cultural family. In English it gets interpreted as “Standing Stone” and is often accompanied by a description about why it is named as such. Unfortunately it is spelled in a very anglicized fashion making it almost unintelligible to a native speaker of the language. The Oneidas write it as “Oná’yote’” in short with the full form being “Onayote’á·ka’”. Now to the English eye there seems to be no way to figure out how it could mean what it does in Oneida. Well, that has a lot to do with the lack of understanding concerning how the Oneidas organize their language. Its organization is morphological, that is, it consists of prefixes, infixes, suffixes, word roots, and particles, and a variety of rules telling how it must be organized and pronounced to become meaningful.

Oneida has a very complex organization, like all of the languages in the Iroquoian linguistic family, which is considered to some of the most complex languages on the planet. Now keep in mind, Oneida is complex, not complicated. Once you know what to look for and the rules governing its organization, you will find that the language can be very regular and predictable. The rules make it easier learn.

So, here you are, a student, who has decided to tackle a complex language. Good for you, and it won’t be as difficult as you may imagine. The whole process is a matter of putting pieces of language together in order to express something meaningful. In a way, it is not unlike building a
house. First you must envision the house to be built, i.e. by listening to the language being spoken actively allowing yourself to become acquainted with the cadence of active speech, and then gather the materials you will need to build the house, i.e. by beginning the process of collecting the various root words and language features you will need to describe activities, events, and things. Next you will create the foundation for your house, for this is where you will begin attaching prefixes and suffixes to create meaningful units of description upon which you will build the language. Once the foundation is ready then you build the floor. On the floor you will raise the walls as here you will begin the process of creating temporal and spacial descriptions. Once the walls have gone up you can now put up the roof, for here you will begin the process of organizing descriptions to create compound and complex statements and sentences. Once the roof is on you are now ready to finish the interior, i.e. practice speaking the language, and finally move in, i.e. converse actively in the language on various topics.

So now when someone says “what does Oneida mean”, you will be able to tell with confidence and even tell them the constituent parts of the word.

**Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of this course you, the student, will be able to recognize an Oneida word, take it apart and put it back together, and to manipulate the various shapes taken by prefixes, suffixes, infixes, word roots, and particles inherent in the language. You will also acquire appropriate pronunciation for vocabulary and the application of the rules controlling pronunciation and the shape of the morphological pieces making up the language.

**Course Materials/Required Text(s):**

The course materials will center around two texts: Oneida Morphology, a text describing all of the various prefixes, infixes, suffixes, and particles, and word roots making up the language, and an Oneida Teaching Grammar, a useful language learning text, accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation of the text complete with audio, showing how the morphology comes into play in active language situations.

**Method of Evaluation:**

Language Acquisition Assessment: 20%

The student will be provided a weekly opportunity to assess their vocabulary acquisition and their skill at using it correctly in accordance with the material introduced. This will be accomplished through question/answer exercises provided in a written form at which will be completed by the student outside of the class and then handed into the professor for evaluation.
Language Skills Assessment: 15%
The student will also be provided with the opportunity to assess their language acquisition and usage skills upon completion of a selected section of the text materials provided for the course.

Summer Term Language Assignment I: 25%
The student will choose fifty root words indicating some state or event (i.e. running, singing, etc…) and proceed to apply the various prefixes indicating the event as it applies to different individuals and various numbers of individuals. Upon the completion of this aspect of the assign the student will then produce an audio version of their work to the professor for pronunciation assessment.

Summer Term Language Assignment II: 25%
The student will choose fifty words indicating some state or event (i.e. running, singing, etc…) and proceed to apply the various suffixes indication the state or event as it occurs at different times (i.e. sing, sang, sung, will sing, would sing, have sung, had sung, etc…). Upon completion of this aspect of the assignment the student will then produce an audio version to accompany their work to then be delivered to the professor for pronunciation assessment.

Attendance and Participation: 15%

PLEASE NOTE: There will be no Final Exam for this course as the total evaluation will be based on the Exercises, Chapter Testing, and both of the Summerm Term Assignments.

Attendance and Participation
Regular attendance to a course like this is very important. Missing one class, especially the two-hour session can very quickly put you far behind. Arriving late, unless you have a valid reason or have previously informed the instructor of such can be disruptive to the class. The instructor takes regular attendance and arriving on time reflects a desire to learn the language and as respect for the course, the other students and the Professor. Remember, you have chosen to attend this course and it is up to you to maintain good attendance and participation.

Important Policies

A Note on Plagiarism:
Students must write the assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence (the Scholastic Offence Policy can be viewed in the Western Academic Calendar).
Plagiarism Checking:

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licencing agreement, currently between the University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (www.turnitin.com).

Policy on Laptops and other Electronic/Phones in Class: (“clickers”, if used)

Laptops are permitted in class but if it is observed that students are on social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter, they will be told to close the lid and they will not be permitted to use it for the remainder of the class. Be sure that all cell phones are turned off at the beginning of class.

Policy on Accomodation for Medical Illness

Western’s policy on Accomodation for Medical Illness can be found at www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accomodation_medical.pdf.

Students must see the Academic Counsellor and submit all required documentation in order to be approved for certain accommodation: http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/medical_accomodation.html

Accessibility Options:

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 519-661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accomodation. Information regarding accomodation of exams is available on the Registrar’s website: www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated_exams.html

Scholastic Offenses

Scholastic offensves are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site: www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Mental Health

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html) for a complete list of options on how to obtain help.