

SEL8205: Issues in Phonological Theory II Issues in Optimality Theory

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Meeting: Monday 13-15, Daysh 2.5;
Thursday 16-17, CLB Library SR

Over recent years, Optimality Theory (OT) has emerged as perhaps the most important mainstream theory of phonology. This module will examine Optimality Theory in depth, beginning with an examination of OT as a model of phonology. Along with working through the central textbook on OT, Kager (1999), we will consider some of the primary literature addressing problems that have been identified with the model.

Particular emphasis will be given to so-called opacity - phonological phenomena which are difficult to account for using a phonological theory that operates at the output level. Simply put, the problem is this: OT is a surface-oriented model; its constraints must be satisfied or violated at the surface. However, there are lexical relations in the world's languages, particularly in the area of morphophonology, which give the appearance of arising through the serial application of phonological rules. In the absence of such rules, OT is left with the challenge of accounting for the effects of 'counterbleeding' and 'counterfeeding'.

The set-text for the module is Kager (1999), which will provide the conceptual basis for Optimality Theory, as well as providing the necessary overview, contextualisation and basics.

This is *not* a lecture-based module. Rather, students will be expected to read the assigned readings before each meeting and be PREPARED TO DISCUSS them. Each student will also lead discussion of at least one of the readings during the semester. The readings - apart from Kager - will be available on BlackBoard.

ASSESSMENT is by 5,000 word essay due at the end of Semester 2. For the essay you will be expected to do one of four things, a) to present an OT analysis of some set of data related to your postgraduate work, b) to critically compare a derivational analysis of some set of data with an OT analysis, c) to write about some opaque phonological data and how the data can be analysed or why the data resist OT analysis, or d) to critically compare two optimality accounts of some set of data from the literature. In each of these cases the essay topic will be subject to approval by the lecturer.

DEADLINES: A *preliminary* title, including brief summary and provisional reading list, is to be submitted by 16 March 2009; an outline is to be submitted no later than 27 April. The essay is due on 15 May 2009.

REFERENCES:

☞ Kager, René. 1999. *Optimality Theory*. Cambridge: CUP. [*set text*]

Benua, Laura. 2000. *Phonological relations between words*. New York: Garland.

Bermúdez-Otero, Ricardo. (forthcoming) *Stratal Optimality Theory*. (Oxford Studies in Theoretical Linguistics) Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Green, Antony D. 2004. Opacity in Tiberian Hebrew: Morphology, not phonology. *ZAS Papers in Linguistics* 37, 37-70.

Idsardi, William J. 2000. Clarifying opacity. *The Linguistic Review*, 17, 337-350.

Kiparsky, Paul. 2000. Opacity and cyclicity. Ms. Stanford University.

McCarthy, John J. 2008. *Doing Optimality Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell. [textbook]

McCarthy, John J. 2002. *A thematic guide to Optimality Theory*. Cambridge: CUP. [textbook]

McCarthy, John J. 1999. Sympathy and phonological opacity. *Phonology* 16, 331-399.

MODULE TIMETABLE

Date	Topic	Reading
26/01/09	Optimality Theory: Intro & Background	
02/02/09	Conflicts in grammar	Kager, Ch. 1
09/02/09	Structural changes in OT	Kager, Ch. 2
16/02/09	Syllables in OT	Kager, Ch. 3
23/02/09	Stress in OT	Kager, Ch. 4
02/03/09	Correspondence in reduplication	Kager, Ch. 5
09/03/09	Output-Output correspondence	Kager, Ch. 6
16/03/09	Opacity: OT's Achilles heel?	Kager, Ch. 9 (pp. 374-400)
	Essay title due!!	
EASTER VACATION		
20/04/09	Sympathy	McCarthy (1999)
27/04/09	Stratal OT	Kiparsky (2000), Bermúdez-Otero <i>forthcoming</i> , Ch. 2
04/05/08	Essay surgery - any remaining problems?	
11/05/08	Opacity: phonology or morphology?	Green (2004)

ESSAY DUE 15 MAY 2009