

Middlebury College

INTD0112A: Introduction to Linguistics

Fall 2009

Instructor: Usama Soltan

General guidelines for answering questions on assignments

Before attempting to answer the questions on each assignment for this course, please take some time to read the following guidelines.*

The goal of these assignments is to test your understanding of the materials we covered in class and in the textbook, as well as your ability to apply this understanding to new problems using the same logic and method of analysis presented and discussed in class. Therefore, it makes sense that you go over the materials (if you haven't done this already) *before* you attempt to answer the questions. If you try to answer these questions without having a full understanding of the issues at hand, it's quite likely that you will misunderstand the question and therefore answer it incorrectly. *So, guideline #1: Read the parts of the textbook we covered, the slides on the website, and the notes you took in class before you try to answer the questions on assignments.*

Second, and most importantly, while I might have some answer for each of the questions in mind, more often than not, for some of the questions, *there is really no right answer*. I'm more interested in you showing me the logic you used to arrive at your answer, than in you giving me the answer I have in mind. In fact, I'll be more impressed if you surprise me with an innovative answer that I haven't thought of before. *So, guideline #2: Do not think about these questions in a rigid way.* There are often different ways of answering some of the questions, hence different solutions. For me, what matters is the way you think about the problem and the way you support your solution with evidence from the data. If you do that, you'll get full credit for your work, even if I happen to disagree with your solution.

* Notice that these are guidelines for how to answer questions. For issues relating to grading, policy on delay in turning in assignments, and possibility of collaboration with your classmates on assignments, please see the relevant page on the course website: <https://segue.middlebury.edu/?&site=intd0112a-s07§ion=16297&page=70781&action=site>

And did I say “*Start working on the assignment early*”? Waiting till the last minute very often hurts your chances of getting a good score. These are not the kind of questions that you will be answering simply by repeating materials from the textbook or class notes. You’ll have to spend some time thinking about these questions, and maybe reach one answer only to revise it again upon further thinking. Some questions also require watching a movie or reading an article, so, give yourself enough time to work on these problems by starting early.

Best of luck to all.