

LING 301: The structure of Wakashan languages
syllabus

1. Basic course information

- instructor Adam Werle
- contact werle-at-uvic.ca
- office hours by appointment only
- dates 2026 Jan 5 – Apr 2
- times Mon, Thu 11:30–12:50
- location uvic.zoom.us/j/88074624454
- webpage kwistuup.net/waw/301

2. Course Description. We will study selected topics in the structure and history of Wakashan languages, including sound systems, sound change, word and sentence structure, oral and written literature, cultural practices, and language revitalization in Wakashan communities.

3. Assignments. There are four written assignments. Students will submit two summaries and two papers during the term. A summary gives the main idea and supporting details from one of our readings. A paper addresses a topic in Wakashan linguistics. Sample topics follow.

- Compile a set of illustrative words, and explain their structure and teachings.
- Develop and explain a cognate set that illustrates a sound change.
- Take a generalization from Jacobsen (1979), Werle (2010), Inman & Werle (2025), or other technical paper, and provide concrete examples to illustrate the pattern.
- Analyze a language pattern using linguistic theory.
- Find and present evidence to support or refute claims made about a pattern.
- Develop a learning resource to help a layperson learn and understand a pattern.
- Develop and present an interlinearization of a previously unanalyzed text.

Please format written assignments as follows. I prefer that you submit them as pdfs, in 11-12 points, single-spaced, but other layouts are acceptable if you have a good reason. Either in-text references or a bibliography is essential. You may not interview anyone for your papers, because our course does not have human ethics approval, but useful information from other people can be acknowledged as personal communications (pc.). I am interested in your opinions, if you would like to express them, but you should be mainly objective and factual.

The summaries and paper 1 should be about 1–2 pages single-spaced, or 500–1,000 words. The final paper should be longer, roughly 2–4 pages or 1,000–2,000 words. These are not strict requirements. The appropriate length will depend on your topic, layout of data, and so on. Please include page numbers and a wordcount. However, I will mark quality over quantity.

You may volunteer or be invited to present one of your papers during our final week. But these presentations are strictly voluntary, and not required.

4. Calendar. Mondays will be lectures, and Thursdays discussions. Written assignments are due on Mondays (see below). Please come on Thursdays ready to discuss the week's readings.

- week of 1/5: Wakashan languages. Read Jacobsen 1979.
- week of 1/12: Wakashan sounds. Read Werle 2010.
- week of 1/19: Sound change. Read Boas 1890: 10-11, 126-127, Sapir 1911.
- week of 1/26: Wakashan literature. Read Boas & Hunt 1902: 3-4, Berman 1994.
- week of 2/2: Wakashan literature. Read Sapir & Swadesh 1939: 9-19. Summary 1 due.
- week of 2/9: Writing workshop. Read Boas & Hunt 1902: 86-93.
- week of 2/16: Reading Break
- week of 2/23: Wakashan sentences. Read Inman & Werle 2025: 14-20, 28-30. Paper 1 due.
- week of 3/2: Wakashan glossing. Read Inman & Werle 2025: 1-5, 84-85.
- week of 3/9: The wolf ritual. Read Sapir & Swadesh 1939, text 41.
- week of 3/16: The Kwakwakawakw winter ceremonial. Selections from umistapotlatch.ca.
- week of 3/23: Chinuk Wawa. Read Robertson 2020.
- week of 3/30: Wakashan texts. Selected presentations. Summary 2 due.

5. Grading. Your grade is based on discussions (20%), summaries (40%), and papers (40%). Summary 1 is due on Feb 2, paper 1 Feb 23, summary 2 Mar 30, and paper 2 Apr 13. Summaries and papers will be marked out of ten, and participation in discussions out of 4. If you present your work, I will mark this under discussions, or as extra credit.

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| • | 4 | 10 | 100% | 4.0 | A | exceptional mastery |
| • | | 9 | 90% | 3.6 | A | learning beyond expectations |
| • | 3 | 8 | 80% | 2.7 | B | good comprehension and skills |
| • | | 7 | 70% | 1.7 | C | meeting basic expectations |
| • | | 6 | 60% | 0.7 | D | meeting minimal expectations |
| • | 1-2 | 1-5 | 10-50% | 0.0 | — | failing |

6. Resources. All materials are electronic, and accessible through the course webpage, including the syllabus, readings, course notes, links, and other resources. There is no textbook.

7. Academic integrity. All work submitted must be your own. You are encouraged to discuss readings and written assignments with the instructor and with each other, but you must write your assignments alone. Data and quotations must be clearly marked, and ascribed to their sources. Plagiarism and copying will not be tolerated. Please see UVic's full policy on academic integrity, which is linked from the course webpage.