Human Language and Animal Communication Systems

Linguistics 333 • E. Moreton
Spring 2013 • MWF 1-1:50

Linguistic theory asks how come human language is the way it is, and not some other way. This course explores a range of “other ways” found in nature. We will compare language with the communication systems used by other animals, with special focus on vocal communication in humans, human ancestors, non-human primates, and songbirds. Topics include

- Anatomy and acoustics of vocal communication.
- Reconstructing the vocal capabilities of extinct human relatives (e.g., Neanderthals)
- Phonology, syntax, and semantics across species
- Innateness and acquisition of communication systems

There will be a significant lab component, including studio recording of humans, field recording of birds, and use of the Praat software for acoustic analysis.

- *Quantitative Intensive* • *Evolution cluster* • *Social Science*