

Study guidelines for Jonah Katz's phonology comps

The general form of the test will be a menu of 5-7 questions, of which you will answer 3-4 (I can't be more specific than that yet). Each of these questions will address a major topic that we focused on for an extended period during 411 or the first half of 611. The scope and difficulty of the questions will be similar to your homework assignments for 411, although not necessarily on the same topics as those assignments. The answers are likely to require a mix of analysis and prose, although this may vary depending on the topic. Here are some topics that are very likely to appear:

1. **Phonetic classification and distinctive features**
Reading and writing IPA; describing consonants and vowels in terms of their place and manner of articulation; using distinctive features and understanding predictions about natural classes
2. **Distributions and constraints**
Identifying various types of phonological distributions and contrasts; understanding which information must be specified in underlying representations; reranking general and specific markedness and faithfulness constraints to analyze various distributions; common assimilations and neutralizations that were studied in class
3. **Underlying representations (URs) and alternations**
Identifying alternations and using them to reason about URs; understanding (phonological) predictability and unpredictability in distributions; understanding the difference between URs and isolation/surface forms (abstractness)
4. **Syllables and stress**
Onsets, codas, and syllabification; the relationship between consonant clusters in the middles of words and at the edges; syllable weight and stress; phonological rules, processes, and constraints in particular syllable positions
5. **Tone and autosegments**
Identifying and analyzing common tonal processes; understanding what makes tone look fundamentally autosegmental; basic mechanics of autosegmental representations; problems posed to the autosegmental, compositional analysis of tones by Asian languages.

Each of these topics is discussed at length in the slides/handouts for 411 and 611; most of them are also addressed in textbook readings that were assigned during the classes. I suggest you focus more on the slides and homework assignments than on the readings, as the questions on the exam are likely to be similar to things we looked at in class or on P-sets.

An important note: you will be **given a copy of the IPA chart and feature worksheet** to use during the exam. That said, if you need to look up every segment and feature used in the problems, you will **certainly not have time to finish the exam**. You should have a substantial part of both documents memorized.