Topics for the Mid-term

The first, and most obvious is that you should have mastered the structure of the IPA, and the terms it uses. All transcription systems have three components: 1) the physical object of transcription, 2) the system itself, and 3) the shorthand conventions (orthographic symbols) used to indicate the event being transcribed within the system used to classify it. The transcription exam this week will get at the relationship between 1) and 2) & 3). The mid-term will get at your understanding of 2 and mastery of 3.

So, you should know all of the classificatory terms used in the IPA, not including ones associated with suprasegmentals or peculiar airstream mechanisms or voice qualities (since we haven’t covered this yet). You should also understand what the terms refer to. This means that you should be able to label anatomical structures in a sagittal section, as well as vocal tract spaces. Finally, you should be able to produce an appropriate symbol that is shorthand for a particular classificatory description.

In addition, we have discussed various aspects of speech along the way, so you should be able to answer reasonably probing but short questions concerning the following:
- What is phonetics?
- What are the three areas of phonetics?
- What is the traditional function of transcription in the process of ‘doing linguistics’?
- What is acoustics?
- What is a waveform, and what does it have to do with speech?
- What is a spectrogram and what does it have to do with speech?
- What is analysis-by-synthesis, and what does it have to do with transcription?
- What does it mean that transcription is impressionistic?
- What is categorization, and what does it have to do with transcription?
- What two dimensions does transcription require you to categorize speech in?
- What’s the difference between active and passive articulators and how does this affect the terminology used in the IPA?
- How is consonant transcription different from vowel transcription?
- According to the IPA, what is a consonant?
- According to the IPA, what is a vowel?
- What are cardinal vowels, and how do they work?
- What are the principles of the IPA?
- What is a diacritic, and how is it different than a symbol?
- What is the fundamental distinction between different degrees of narrowness in transcription? What are the identifiable levels of narrowness?
- What does lexical contrast have to do with transcription?
- What is the difference between ‘possible sounds’ for which the IPA does not provide a simple character, and ‘impossible sounds’?
- What’s the difference between a primary articulation, a double articulation, and a secondary articulation?
- What do syllabic and non-vocalic diacritics have in common?
- What is the basic relationship between volume, pressure and flow, and how is it involved in speech production?
- How do the lungs function with respect to speech?
- What are the primary anatomical structures and muscular groups used in controlling the lungs and larynx?
- How do each of the muscle groups function in the lungs and larynx function in the production of various kinds of speech sounds?

Kd