

Psychology 3240: The Psychology of Language
Autumn 2011

Class meetings: MWF 13:00-13:50, UH C640
Office: C876, University Hall
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Professor: Fangfang Li
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Course description: This course provides an introduction to psycholinguistics and to some of the important issues in the study of language processing and language acquisition. Topics will include: How does the human mind process sounds, words, and sentences? How do children learn language? What is the biological basis for language?

Course objectives: This course will acquaint you with the primary theoretical and experimental issues involved in the study of natural language and the brain, and will provide you the opportunity to learn how to evaluate and discuss these issues in a critical and coherent manner. It will also increase your awareness of the importance of human language and add to your understanding of human beings as language speakers.

Textbook:

David W. Carroll (2008) *Psychology of Language. 5th Edition* Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

Coursework and grading: Your final grade will be based on the total number of points you accumulate during the semester. There will be no curving. Points are earned in the following ways and correspond to the following scale.

Points:

In-class activities	15 pts
Presentation	5 pts
Midterms	40 pts
Final	40 pts
Total	100 pts

Grading scale:

A+	100 – 90	B+	77 – 80	C+	67 – 70	D+	55 – 60	E	0 – 50
A	85 – 90	B	73 – 77	C	63 – 67	D	50 – 55		
A-	80 – 85	B-	70 – 73	C-	60 – 63				

Course Requirements:

Readings: Readings include both the textbook and other relevant journal articles. Electronic copies of additional readings will be available on Moodle. Readings should be completed in advance. Since the major format of this class is in-class discussion of these readings, it is crucial for you to complete readings ahead of time. You should bring the textbook and other supplementary readings to class every day as handy references.

In-class Activities: There will be a number of in-class activities throughout the semester, which count 15% towards your final grade. In-class activities can only be completed in class. No missing activity can be made up. The whole class will be divided into 10 groups of 6 to 7 students in each group. For each in-class activity, each group only hands in one answer sheet for grading. Only those students who attend classes and contribute to the completion of the answer sheet get credits.

Group presentations: Each student will participate in a group presentation which involves reading of a particular article and then presenting it to the class. The articles are listed on the weekly schedule. However, your initiative is encouraged: Any supplementary material relevant to your presentation will be greatly appreciated. Just make sure you stick to the time limit given for each presentation. A PDF version of the articles is available on Moodle. You are expected to choose an article at the second class session. A detailed description of how to present the articles will be distributed. Each presentation group will also be responsible for creating the in-class activity related to the article to be presented. Evaluation will be based on the presentation content, organization, clarity, timing, etc, as well as the quality of the designed in-class activity. Your peer students will evaluate your presentation performance and you will share the same final presentation score with your team members.

Exams: The final exam and the midterms are cumulative in the traditional sense: questions will be based on the entire course. The exam questions will test things discussed in class, including all the readings, lectures, in-class activities, and presentations. No make-up midterm or final exam will be given without a valid medical note or other official documentation.

Quizzes: You will be given informal quizzes from time to time during the entire semester. These quizzes are designed to test your understanding of the critical course materials covered in lectures or readings. Quizzes will NOT be graded and therefore are NOT counted towards your final grade.

Course website: All course materials will be posted to Moodle. You can log on to Moodle course using your U of L computer account.

Students with Special Needs: If you have any special needs that require accommodation, it is your responsibility to contact Counseling Services to acquire an official letter concerning your situation. Accommodations will only be given upon receiving the official notification from that office.