

Psychology 3850 : The Psychology of Language
Autumn 2010

Class meetings: MWF 13:00-13:50, C640
Office: C876, University Hall
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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	35 pts
Presentation	10 pts
Midterm	20 pts
Final	35 pts
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Total	100 pts

Grading scale:

A+	100 – 90	B+	77 – 80	C+	67 – 70	D+	55 - 60	F	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 will mainly be assigned from the textbook. Additional readings are either available on the class website or will be distributed in class. Readings should be completed in advance. Some of the materials will not be covered in class. However, in-class discussions will assume that you have read the assigned chapters. You should bring the textbook to class every day as a handy reference.

In-class Activities: There will be a number of in-class activities throughout the semester, with each worth 1% to 4% of your 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 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 WebCT. You are expected to choose an article at the next 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 several presentation components, including 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 your final presentation score will be calculated by averaging individual scores from your peers.

Exams: The final exam and the midterm are cumulative in the traditional sense: questions will be based on the entire course. The exams will include questions about the group presentations. No make-up midterm or final exam will be given without a valid medical note or other official documentation.

Course website: All course materials will be posted to webCT. You can log on to the webCT 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.

Experimental Research Participation (Bonus): In addition to the foregoing, this course is designed to provide students with an opportunity to participate in the active research projects of faculty members. Calls for volunteers to assist in these projects will be made during the semester, in class or via e-mail. If you are asked to volunteer, and you accept, each project usually requires one hour or less of your time, but this will vary. In recognition of the value of your time, and in recognition that you are learning something about the discipline of psychology, beyond what you would in the normal classroom environment, an extra credit of 1 to 2% for each study in which you participate will be added to your total grade to a MAXIMUM extra credit of 2%. Note that there is no guarantee that all students will be able to achieve the maximum extra credit. These extra credits are added only after all grade cutoffs have been established such that students who choose not to participate are not disadvantaged.

Tentative weekly schedule

Month	Date	Day	Topic	Reading
Sep	8	W	Introduction	
	10	F	The evolution of Language	379-392
	13	M	Linguistic Principles I: Phonetics and phonology	71-78
	15	W	Linguistic Principles II: Morphology; Semantics, syntax	17-44
	17	F	Sound symbolism	Nuckolls (1999)
	20	M	<i>Presentation 1</i>	Nettle (1995); MacNeilage (2000)
	22	W	Psychological mechanisms I: Information processing mechanisms	47-53; 60-65
	24	F	Psychological mechanisms II: Language processing mechanisms	54-60
	27	M	<i>Presentation 2</i>	Gupta (2005); Boutela (2004)
	29	W	Language comprehension I: Perception of isolated speech segments	78-85
Oct	1	F	Language comprehension II: Perception of isolated continuous speech	85-90
	4	M	<i>Presentation 3</i>	McMurray (2002); Tanenhaus (1995)
	6	W	Language comprehension III: Perception of written language	91-100
	8	F	<i>Presentation 4</i>	Tzeng (1979); Coderre (2008)
	11	M	<i>Holiday – No class</i>	
	13	W	The internal Lexicon I: Dimensions of word knowledge	103-110
	15	F	The internal Lexicon II: Organization of the internal lexicon	111-118
	18	M	The internal Lexicon III: Lexical access	119-129
	20	W	Sentence comprehension	130-156
	22	F	<i>Presentation 5</i>	Schafer (2000); Matlock (2003)
	25	M	Review	
	27	W	Midterm	
	29	F	Language Production I: Slips of the tongue; Formulating linguistic plans	193-206
Nov	1	M	Language Production II: Implementing linguistic plans; Insights from sign language	207-223
	3	W	<i>Presentation 6</i>	Houde (1998); Frisch (2002)
	5	F	Language acquisition I: Speech development	250-265
	8	M	<i>Presentation 7</i>	Kuhl (1992); Saffran (1996)
	10	W	Language acquisition II: Lexical development	265-271

	12	F	Language acquisition III: Syntactic development	271-281
	15	M	<i>Presentation 8</i>	Imai (2008); Glenwright (2010)
	17	W	Processes of language acquisition I: The linguistic environment	326-334
	19	F	Processes of language acquisition II: Cognitive processes; Innate mechanisms	335-351
	22	M	<i>Presentation 9</i>	Senghas (2004); Kaplan (1999)
	24	W	Biological Foundations I: Brain mechanisms and language	354-367
	26	F	Biological Foundations II: Lateralization of language processes	367-379
	29	M	<i>Presentation 10</i>	Joanisse (2007); Helmuth (2001)
Dec	1	W	Language, culture, and cognition I: Whorf hypothesis, lexical influence	395-411
	3	F	Language, culture, and cognition I: Grammatical influences on cognition	411-419
	6	M	<i>Presentation 11</i>	Gordon (2004); Samulson (2002)
	8	W	Review	
	13	M	Final exam	