

PSYCHOLOGY C143 / LINGUISTICS C146 *Language Development*

Spring 2019

Professor: TBD

GSI: TBD

Class Meetings: TBD

Course Description

Language is one of the core properties of what it means to be human, and in many ways separates us from other animals. Language also provides a unique window onto many other aspects of human cognition and perception, including how we process information and discover patterns, read the intentions and mental states of others, and structure and relate different ideas together. As such, the study of language provides an ideal entry point into the study of the mind more generally.

This class will explore how children acquire different aspects of language – ranging from the basic sounds of a language to its grammatical rules and semantic structure. We will touch on a number of topics, including how nature and nurture interact in language acquisition, whether children are better at learning a language than adults, how language may have evolved and whether other animals are capable of using language, what clinical developmental disorders tell us about the nature of language development, how language reveals and may even shape how we think, how mastering language may depend on an ability to reason about the intentions of others, and the consequences of learning multiple languages.

The class will blend together classic and contemporary work, and will include weekly lectures and a discussion section. Through the class, you will learn about the many different methods developmental psychologists use to probe young children's abilities and knowledge. Thus, the course will offer a broad introduction, not only to language development, but also to developmental science more generally.

Format

In lectures, I will primarily present material and answer questions. The lectures will go beyond what is covered in the readings, and thus are important to attend. Lectures will also allow us to build a common base of knowledge so that the weekly sections

will be fruitful. Lectures will be webcast, to give you an opportunity to review material outside of class hours.

In sections, you will make connections between material presented in lectures and readings. **Please come prepared to share your thoughts. Section attendance is mandatory. Section grades will be based on participation in discussion, and the completion of section assignments.**

Readings

One feature of the course is that you will read original, scientific research papers. Although this can be challenging, it is a useful skill to cultivate: I recommend reading the QALMRI handout and the Roediger and Gallo paper posted on bCourses early in the semester. If you are unfamiliar with linguistics terms or concepts, you can also consult this glossary: <https://glossary.sil.org/term> and/or watch helpful videos on youtube at thelingspace (<https://www.youtube.com/user/thelingspace>).

All course readings will be provided on the course website in **bcourses** as pdf files. The schedule on the syllabus (which will also be posted on the website) tells you the readings for each lecture. I will update it if new readings are added or deleted. Readings that are italicized are optional: You can read them if you would like to learn more about a particular topic, but you will not be tested on them (beyond how they are described in lecture). **It is your responsibility to complete all of the readings for a particular class prior to the date of that class and before the next week's section. The exams will cover material from both lectures and readings.**

Learning Objectives

After taking this course, students should be able to:

- Read and discuss original research on language development by distinguishing and describing key hypotheses and debates.
- Understand available methods for testing children's linguistic and cognitive knowledge and ability.
- Gain proficiency in critical reading of media reporting on scientific results
- Walk away with a well-thought-out proposal for a new study in language development.

Grading

To calculate final grades, I will take a weighted average of your scores from each of the below categories (the weights are shown as percentages) to calculate your final score. If needed, I will then curve the final scores so that at least 75% of students receive either an A or a B. Below is the grading breakdown:

- ❖ Experiment participation credit (RPP): 3%

- ❖ Section participation: 15%
- ❖ Experimental Study Proposal: 15%
- ❖ Midterm exam 1: 20%
- ❖ Midterm exam 2: 20%
- ❖ Final exam: 27%

Experimental Credit

To develop understanding of research in experimental psychology, you will participate in 3 hours of psychological studies conducted through the Research Participation Pool of the Department of Psychology. For each hour you participate, you will earn 1% toward your final grade.

In order to know how to participate in studies through RPP, **please read completely the document, "RPP Information for students" which has been posted on bCourses** (Starting Fall 2016, RPP moved to a new platform called Sona, so even if you have done RPP before, please read the new information to understand how to use the new system.) Then, set up a Sona account as instructed. I recommend doing this as soon as possible. If you have any questions, you can contact RPP at rpp@berkeley.edu. Please also see the deadlines listed on the RPP webpage (link pasted below). **If you do not allocate your experimental credits to this course before the RPP deadline, you will not receive credit.**

<http://psychology.berkeley.edu/students/undergraduate-program/research-participation-program>

Midterm and Final Exams

The exams will ask you to synthesize **material from the lectures, readings and our discussions**. You will not be required to know the minutiae of each experiment we consider, but rather to understand the big picture. You should be prepared to explain the importance of the questions that we explore; to understand how these questions have been (or could be) answered; to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the evidence which bears on those questions; to describe different theoretical approaches; and to apply your knowledge to new questions.

All exams will be **in-class** (with the final exam during finals week), **open-book** (you can use your laptops to access readings/notes, but not the internet), and will include multiple choice and short answer questions.

Experimental Study Proposal

You will write a paper, outlining a research proposal for a new experimental study in the field of language development. The paper should be at least 1500 words long (maximum 1700 words, not including reference list). This should come out to about

6 double spaced pages in 12 pt. font. You are welcome to design a follow-up study to one of the studies we read in class, or to choose a new topic that you are interested in. The paper should be in APA format, and should have the following parts (this will be reviewed in section):

- I) Abstract
- II) Background & Significance
- III) Methods
- IV) Proposed Experiment(s)
 - A. Hypotheses tested
 - B. Experimental Design
 - C. Possible Results
 - D. Limitations

Important Dates

- ❖ **Midterm Exam 1:** TBD (Covers all material from beginning of course through the unit for the week)
- ❖ **Midterm Exam 2:** TBD (Covers all material from the unit for February 25th through the unit for the week)
- ❖ **Experimental Study Proposal Due:** TBD
- ❖ **Final Exam:** TBD (Covers all course material, with more emphasis on units from after Midterm 2 onward)

Office Hours. I will be holding my office hours in the new Berkeley Way West building, located at the intersection of Berkeley Way and Shattuck Ave. Please come to the 3rd floor Psychology department and I will be in one of the booths to the east of the atrium. The location for these office hours is a public setting; If you would like to discuss anything personal or confidential, please email me and we can set up a time to do so.

Appealing grades. If you believe an assignment or exam has received a grade in error, you may submit an appeal. To do so, write a cover letter explaining your concern, and deliver it to the instructor or a GSI along with the assignment or exam in question. **An appeal must be submitted within 48 hours after the graded assignment, paper, or exam is returned to the class.** Please note that documents submitted for an appeal will be regraded in their entirety. As a result your grade may increase, but it can also decrease.

Missed exams. Alternative accommodation for missed exams will only be made under exceptional circumstances, such as a medical emergency, and will require documentation. If you will miss an exam due to religious observance or extra-curricular activities, please see the policies that follow.

Accommodation of disabilities. If you need accommodation for a physical, psychological, or learning disability, please see the instructor or GSIs during office hours or by appointment to make any necessary arrangements. **Please discuss this with the GSIs or instructor as soon as possible, and no later than 2 weeks before an exam for which accommodation will be required.**

Accommodation of religious creed. In compliance with Education code, Section 92640(a), it is the official policy of the University of California at Berkeley to permit any student to undergo a test or examination, without penalty, at a time when that activity would not violate the student's religious creed, unless administering the examination at an alternative time would impose an undue hardship that could not reasonably have been avoided. Requests to accommodate a student's religious creed by scheduling tests or examinations at alternative times should be submitted directly to the faculty member responsible for administering the examination by the second week of the semester. Reasonable common sense, judgment and the pursuit of mutual goodwill should result in the positive resolution of scheduling conflicts. The regular campus appeals process applies if a mutually satisfactory arrangement cannot be achieved. The link to this policy is available in the [Religious Creed](#) section of the Academic Calendar webpage.

Conflicts between extracurricular activities and academic requirements. The Academic Senate has established Guidelines Concerning Scheduling Conflicts with Academic Requirements to address the issue of conflicts that arise between extracurricular activities and academic requirements. These policies specifically concern the schedules of student athletes, student musicians, those with out-of-town interviews, and other students with activities (e.g., classes missed as the result of religious holidays) that compete with academic obligations.

The guidelines assign responsibilities as follows:

-It is the instructor's responsibility to give students a schedule, available on the syllabus in the first week of instruction, of all class sessions, exams, tests, project deadlines, field trips, and any other required class activities.

-It is the student's responsibility to **notify the instructor(s) in writing by the second week of the semester of any potential conflict(s) and to recommend a solution**, with the understanding that an earlier deadline or date of examination may be the most practicable solution.

-It is the student's responsibility to inform him/herself about material missed because of an absence, whether or not he/she has been formally excused.

The [complete guidelines](#) are available on the Academic Senate website.

Additionally, a [checklist](#) to help instructors and students comply with the guidelines is available on the Center for Teaching and Learning website.

Academic honesty. Cheating, plagiarism, and academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. Any evidence of cheating or plagiarism will result in a zero on

that assignment/exam. Plagiarism or cheating on the exams will result in an 'F' for the course. Any breaches in academic honesty will be reported to Student Judicial Affairs, which may administer additional punishment. If you have uncertainty about whether an action constitutes academic dishonesty, consult your GSI.

(See Next Page for Class Schedule)

Schedule and Readings

This schedule is subject to change. Any updates will be posted on the bcourses webpage and announced during lecture

Date	Topic	Readings
		<i>Italicized readings are optional: you will not be tested on their content except for how they are presented in lecture</i>
	Introduction to the study of language acquisition and brief history; overview of class topics and syllabus	- Cattell (2001), 30-42, 61-76
Section begins during week 2		
	The typical course of language development	- Pinker (1995), 265-301
	The maturational hypothesis and the role of the environment in language development	- Gleitman & Newport (1995) - Cattell (2001), 103-115, 123-127 <i>-Petitto et al, (2001)</i>
Section 2		
	The resilience of language: Language learning in deprived environments	-Goldin-Meadow & Mylander (1998) - Senghas et al. (2004) <i>- Coppola & Newport (2005)</i>
	The role of negative evidence in language learning and effects of child-directed speech on language outcomes	-Pinker (1995), 146-157 -Weisleder & Fernald (2013) <i>- Cartmill et al. (2013)</i>
Section 3		
	Is there a critical period for learning a language?	-Hoff, 61-69 - Senghas & Coppola (2001) <i>-Newport (1990)</i>
	Is language unique to humans? What counts as language and do animals have it?	- Hoff, 72-83 <i>- Hockett (1959)</i>
Week 5– No Section (Go to Midterm Review Office Hours instead!)		
	Holiday (No Class)	
	Midterm 1	

Section 5		
	Theories of language evolution and domain specificity	- Pinker (2003) - Tomasello (2003), 8-28
	Insights from developmental disorders about domain specificity	- Hoff, 384-406 - <i>Karmiloff-Smith (1998)</i>
Section 6		
	Speech perception in infancy 1	- Hoff, 136-142, 148-157 - Vouloumanos & Werker (2007) - <i>Eimas et al. (1971)</i>
	Speech perception 2: Becoming a native listener and functional re-organization	- Kuhl (2004) - <i>Werker (1995)</i>
Section 7		
	Word learning 1: Finding words, identifying possible referents	- Saffran, Aslin, Newport (1996) - Tomasello (2001) - <i>Smith & Yu (2008)</i>
	Word learning 2: Constraints on word meaning and the origins of these constraints	- Markman (1990) - Bloom & Markson (1998)
Week 9 – No Section (Go to Midterm Review Office Hours instead!)		
	Word learning 3: The nature of early word meanings	- Smith (2001) - <i>Diesendruck et al. (2003)</i>
	Midterm 2	
	Spring Break (no class)	
Section 9		
	Syntactic bootstrapping and understanding trajectories of vocabulary change	- Gleitman & Gleitman (1992) - Snedeker, Geren & Shafto (2007)
	The Whorfian hypothesis and the relation between linguistic and conceptual development	- Wolff & Holmes (2011) - Hespos & Spelke (2004)
Section 10		
	Words and Rules: Learning morphological structure	- Pinker (1994), 119-143

	Words and Rules: Symbolic and connectionist models	- Pinker (1991)
Section 11		
	Syntax: Characterizing syntactic structure in adults	- Pinker (1994), 74-118
	Learning syntax: Competing accounts of syntactic development and infants' learning abilities	- Hoff, 250-266 - Gomez & Lakusta (2004) - Marcus <i>et al.</i> (2007)
Section 12		
	Learning syntax: The abstractness of toddler's knowledge of syntax	- Tomasello (2000) - Gertner <i>et al.</i> (2006) - Lidz <i>et al.</i> (2003)
	What do you mean by that? Pragmatic development	- Nadig & Sedivy (2002) - Stiller, Goodman & Frank (2015)
Section 13		
	Topics in bilingual language development	- Byers-Heinlein & Werker (2009) - Kovacs & Mehler (2009)
	Course Review; Experimental Study Proposal Due (by 11:59 PM)	
	Reading Period Week (no class or section)	
	Final Exam	