

Language and Cognition

LING 4316/18094, cross-listed with PSYC 4316/18164;
Fall 2016, the University of Texas, El Paso

Monday and Wednesday 12:00-1:20 in
Undergraduate Learning Center 336

Professor:

Dr. Carla Contemori

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Office: 218 LART

Office Available Hours: by appointment

Course Description:

This course provides a general introduction to the study of human language. The question that this course will address is: *What makes human language special?* What is the relationship between language and thought? How does human language differ from other systems of communication systems? Why are people able to speak, understand, and learn the sounds, words, and sentences of language so easily?

Course Objective:

The goal of this course is to develop skill in thinking about, discussing, developing, and presenting current findings and theoretical issues in language and cognition.

Required Materials:

Traxler, M. 2011. *Introduction to Psycholinguistics: Understanding Language Science*, 1st edition. Wiley-Blackwell. Print: ISBN-10 1405198621, ISBN-13 9781405198622.

New copies available through Amazon affiliate from \$41 (+ \$4 shipping). Used copies from \$26 (+ \$4 shipping)

eText: ISBN-10 1118296885, ISBN-13 9781118296882

Kindle version: available for \$47.

Course-smart rental (iPad, Mac or PC): semester rental for \$12-13.

Additional readings on Blackboard

Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard

Learning materials policy:

- 1) It is highly recommended that you use a copy of the textbook (see above). The book contains most of the material covered in the course.
- 2) I will provide additional materials (papers, articles, videos, website links) that will be posted on Blackboard or sent by mail at due time.

Course Requirements

Total class points 100 (100%)

1. Active class participation (10 pts of the final grade) (10%)

You must come to class consistently and promptly, ask thoughtful questions, listen attentively, and be prepared by having done the readings and assignments for that day. NB!!! The information that is given in class is extremely important for you to understand the materials and succeed in the exam. It is in your own interest to come to class. **Sleeping, texting, checking Facebook or other social network sites, packing up early, etc. will hurt your participation grade.** If I will notice that you are texting in class, or chatting I will also ask you to come see me during my office hours.

2. Tests (exams) (75 pts total; 25 pts each test) (25% each = 75% total grade)

There will be 3 tests, one at the start of the term, one towards the middle of the term, and one towards the end of the term. Material for the exams will be taken from *lectures, readings, assignments, documentaries* we will watch in class and *discussions*.

NB! Tests will be comprised of short answers (i.e., exercises that require reasoning and solving linguistic problems), and open questions (small essays in which there will be space for you to answer. In those open questions, I will evaluate the knowledge you have on the topic and your reasoning).

3. Assignments (15 pts of the final grade) (15%).

Weekly assignments will be posted on Blackboard. Check Blackboard frequently and remember to submit the assignments on time. No late submission will be accepted.

4. Extra credit (5 pts) 5% (only once)

You may earn extra credit in this course in three ways (choose one of your choice). The extra-credit should be completed by November 25th.

- 1. Giving a 5 minute presentation at the beginning of class on a recent media report on a topic related to the focus of this course.** These presentations should be cleared with me a week in advance of your presentation. We'll talk in class about appropriate sources of material. You may give one presentation during the semester for *5 pts of extra credit*.
- 2. Participating in an experiment on language processing.** There are researchers here at the University of Texas, El Paso who are conducting experiments on different aspects of language learning and language processing.
- 3. Read a research paper related to language and psycholinguistics.** You may earn 5% of extra credit reading a research paper among a list of papers that I will provide. After reading the paper, you will be required to write a two pages summary describing the main points of the lecture. These extra credit write-ups are due week 15 (Wednesday Nov 25).

Exam policy:

If you know that you will miss an exam, you must inform me *at least* one week before the exam and make arrangements to take the exam *early*. **If you miss an exam** due to an unavoidable and unforeseen circumstance, you may be allowed to make it up if you:

- **Notify me (by email) at least 4 hours before class starts**
- **Provide a valid and excellent excuse for missing the exam**
- **I will probably ask for corroborating evidence for your excuse (such as a doctor's note, or an obituary note in case of a funeral.)**

Illness, serious injury, family crises, and religious observances may be considered valid excuses. Sleeping in or needing to work on an assignment for another class will not.

NB! I will **not** meet students during office **hours 48 hours before the exams**. If you need help, you should ask an appointment in due time.

Grading: Your grades will be assigned with the following scale:

- at least 90% - A
- 80% to 89% - B
- 70% to 79% - C
- 60% to 69% - D
- At most 59% - F

There will be no rounding up of grades. I will not respond to emails which ask for adding or rounding points to the final grade, and I will not grant the opportunity for extra assignment for extra credit outside the options outlined in the syllabus

Blackboard: I will use Blackboard and/or the course email as means of posting assignments, handouts, readings, schedule updates, and grades. I will try to make all announcements in class, but you should check Blackboard once or twice a week to stay up-to-date.

Please note that I will be able to answer emails within 24hours. I usually do not answer during weekends.

Readings Assignments: *All readings should be completed before the start of class on the due date.* The page numbers on the schedule below indicate the last subsection that you are required to read for the given class. Whole numbers mean that you should read the entire page. When in doubt, just read more!

Attendance Policy: Class participation and attendance is critical (see **Active class participation** above). Much of the course content will come through in-class demonstrations, activities, and discussions. You do not need to discuss any of your absences with me unless you miss an exam. Having a large number of missed attendance questions will hurt your participation grade, regardless of the reason for the absences. As I will not post the PowerPoint slides from the class, I strongly encourage you come prepared to take notes. Also, if you miss class, I strongly encourage you to get notes from a friend.

Technology Policy: Please do not use cell phones in class. You could use a laptop to take notes, but it probably will not be very helpful for most of the course materials. Checking email, texting, *etc.* is distracting for you, me, and others around you. If you believe your situation warrants an exception to this policy, please talk to me individually.

Academic dishonesty: Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another person's as ones' own. And, collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions.

Academic dishonesty is an assault upon the basic integrity and meaning of a University. Cheating, plagiarism, and collusion in dishonest activities are serious acts which erode the University's educational and research roles and cheapen the learning experience not only for the perpetrators, but also for the entire community. It is expected that UTEP students will understand and subscribe to the ideal of academic integrity and that they will be willing to bear individual responsibility for their work. Materials (written or otherwise) submitted to fulfill academic requirements must represent a student's own efforts. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions.

Access: The University of Texas, El Paso welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu, or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For further information, please visit the Office for Disability Services Web site at <http://sa.utep.edu/cass/> .

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE (NOTE THAT SLIGHT CHANGES MIGHT APPLY. CHANGES WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN CLASS AND/OR POSTED ON BLACKBOARD! STAY TUNED.)

Week	Dates	Main topics	Activities, readings and assignments Readings are due on the posted date
1	Monday Aug 22	Introduction to the course! Introduction: what is language?	
1	Wednesday Aug 24	Introduction: Biological basis of language	Traxler 1-18
2	Monday Aug 29	Introduction: How is language organized?	-Pinker, chapter 4 “How Language Works”
2	Wednesday Aug 31	Introduction: How is language organized? Language and thought	-Pinker, chapter 4 “How Language Works”
3	Monday Sep 5	Labor day—no class	
3	Wednesday Sep 7	Language and thought	Traxler 18-29
4	Monday Sep 12	Speech production: production errors and models of language production	Traxler 37-54
4	Wednesday Sep 14	Speech production: production errors and models of language production	Garrett (2001). Psychology of speech errors.
5	Monday Sep 19	Speech production & review	Schriefers & Vigliocco (2001). Psychology of speech production.
5	Wednesday Sep 21	FIRST TEST	FIRST TEST <i>Topics and format: TBA</i>
6	Monday Sep 26	Speech perception	Traxler 54-78
6	Wednesday	Speech perception	Traxler 54-78

	Sep 28		
7	Monday Oct 3	Semantic networks	Traxler 79-97
7	Wednesday Oct 5	Semantic networks & Models of lexical processing	Traxler 97-104
8	Monday Oct 10	Models of lexical processing	Traxler 97-104
8	Wednesday Oct 12	Models of lexical processing & Sentence processing	Traxler 141-187
9	Monday Oct 17	Sentence processing	Traxler 141-187
9	Wednesday Oct 19	Sentence processing	Traxler 141-187
10	Monday Oct 24	Sentence processing	Traxler 141-187
10	Wednesday Oct 26	SECOND TEST	SECOND TEST <i>Topics and format: TBA</i>
11	Monday Oct 31	Sentence processing & Pragmatics	Traxler 305-312
11	Wednesday Nov 2	Pragmatics & Bilingualism	Traxler 415-440
12	Monday Nov 7	Bilingualism	Traxler 415-440
12	Wednesday Nov 9	Bilingualism	Traxler 415-440
13	Monday Nov 14	Bilingualism	Traxler 415-440

13	Wednesday Nov 16	BBC documentary “Why do we talk?” Language acquisition	Chapter 1, Bénédicte de Boysson-Bardies (1999). <i>How Language Comes to Children: From Birth to Two Years</i> by. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
14	Monday Nov 21	Language acquisition and language impairment	Chapter 2, Bénédicte de Boysson-Bardies (1999). <i>How Language Comes to Children: From Birth to Two Years</i> by. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
14	Wednesday Nov 23	Brain and language	Traxler 479-508
15	Monday Nov 28	Brain and language & review	Traxler 479-508
15	Wednesday Nov 30	THIRD TEST	THIRD TEST <i>Topics and format: TBA</i>