

Psychology of Language I
PSYC 336, Section 001, 3 Credits, Term 1, 2007-2008
T TH 8:00 – 9:30 am, EOS Building Room 135
Instructor: Dr. Laurel Fais

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Web Page: www.psych.ubc.ca/~lfais/psy336/336CourseOutline.htm
login: psyc336; **password:** language

Required Readings

Text: Ray Jackendoff. 2002. *Foundations of Language: Brain, Meaning, Grammar, Evolution*. Oxford University Press.

Available from UBC Bookstore; a copy will also be kept on reserve at Koerner Library.

Articles: Supplementary articles will also be assigned; these will be made available through the course website; copies of the articles will also be available at Koerner Library.

Daily expectations

Take responsibility for learning. If you don't ask a question, I will assume that all of the material assigned for that class is clear to you. Having said that, I will also try to be as accessible and as helpful as I can to students who make a concerted effort to learn.

Be on time to class. As you will see below, this will not only ensure that you don't miss a single important word, but also that your weekly assignment is credited.

Bring paper and a writing implement. It is up to you whether you take notes, but you may be asked to write down information to be given to me or to the TA at various times during the term.

Pay attention.

Participate by contributing in a constructive way to the entire class's understanding of the topic at hand.

Assignments

Weekly: On the first class day of a topic (usually a Tuesday), your standing assignment is **one question** about the material you have read for that week or about the lecture covering that material. These questions are to be:

- written *legibly* on a sheet of paper,
- with the question on one side of the paper
- and your name, student number and the date on the other side of the paper.

They are to be handed in **before** the start of class, and **will not be accepted after that time**. They will be marked 0, 1, or 2 points depending upon the level of understanding they demonstrate; they can only receive 1 or 2 points if they are readable. You can get feedback on the marking of your questions by checking the file posted on the website. These questions are meant to give you the opportunity to show that you can think critically and creatively about the material covered. Questions that simply address content will receive 0 points; these kinds of questions should be addressed to Dr. Fais or the TA, preferably in class.

One or two particularly insightful or interesting questions will be selected for discussion during the Thursday class. The student(s) who turned in those questions will receive an extra 1% added to his/her grade (up to 2%). The TA will make the selection anonymously (since names will be written on the back and not visible; if the name or student number is written with the question, that question cannot be selected).

Language sample: Due Tuesday, September 11. You are required to bring in a detailed, written transcription of an actual conversation between at least two people. The conversation should consist of:

- at least four turns per person (do NOT use real names),
- of which at least two turns per person have more than two utterances.

In addition, you should describe in extensive detail the context of the conversation: setting, time, etc.

Bring in **two copies** of this sample: one to be handed in at the beginning of class, and the other to be shared in group discussion. The original recording can be made in video or audio recording, or by written transcription. If at all possible, video recordings are preferred; they will provide better information for your work with this language sample later in the term.

Group work and presentations: On the second day of class, we will form small groups. On our first discussion day, September 13, the groups will examine the language samples brought in by each member of the group. They will choose one sample (worth an extra 1% to the student who brought in that sample) that will be the focus of the group discussions for the rest of the term. This means that the groups should choose the most in-depth and interesting sample to use in these discussions. On discussion days, groups will analyze their language sample from the point of view of the week's topic. One person will be chosen to present the ideas of the group regarding that sample to the rest of the class. In addition, that student will turn in a one-page written summary of the ideas of the group, due the following class day. The person will change each time

until every member of the group has had a chance to present. **This presentation and write-up are a requirement of the course.** The write-up is an opportunity to practice the skills needed to do the final project paper, and to get feedback on how well you can analyze your language sample.

Language sample essay: On the last day of class, November 29, you will have an essay about YOUR OWN language sample due. This is an individual assignment. You may choose any aspect of the course that you have found interesting and discuss it with respect to your language sample. Further details about the essay will be made available after the midterm.

Course Requirements and Grading

Mid-term examination. This will be worth 30% and will consist of short answer/essay questions. The exam will be held in class on October 11.

Final examination. This will be worth 35% and will also consist of short answer/essay questions. The final will be held during the December examination period; it will test material covered throughout the term (i.e., it will be cumulative).

Project. This will be worth 20%; it will be due on the last day of class, November 29. The project will consist of your own analysis of some language data, based on approaches and issues covered in class. More details will be given in class as appropriate.

Assignments. These will include weekly assignments (10%) as well as one write-up of an in-class presentation (5%).

Additional Information

Course format. At least one class a week will be in lecture format, though your comments and questions are strongly encouraged. The second class of the week will often contain structured discussion time as well. Throughout the course, your active participation is an advantage.

Lecture notes. I will make every effort to have lecture notes posted on the course materials web page before each topic has been covered in class; they will certainly be posted by a day or two after. They will be linked to the topics listed in the syllabus at the end of this document. Reading these notes can in no way substitute for attending lectures.

Review sessions. Review sessions will be held before each exam, outside of class time. No new material will be presented during these sessions, but they will provide an opportunity for questions and discussion.

Psychology Department's Policy on Grade Distributions and Scaling. In order to reduce grade inflation and maintain equity across multiple course sections, all psychology courses are required to comply with departmental norms regarding grade distributions. According to departmental norms, the mean grade in a 300-level class is

70 for a good class, 68 for an average class, and 66 for a weak class, with a standard deviation of 13. The corresponding figures for 100- and 200-level Psychology courses are 67, 65, and 63, with a standard deviation of 14. **Scaling** is likely to be used in order to comply with these norms; grades may be scaled up or down as necessary by the professor or department.

Missed exams. You must inform Dr. Fais in advance if an exam is to be missed (e-mail: lfais@psych.ubc.ca) and produce a medical certificate or *documentation* of family emergency upon returning to class; otherwise, a grade of 0 will be assigned.

Psychology Department's Position on Academic Misconduct. Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct are very serious concerns of the University, and the Department of Psychology has taken steps to alleviate them. In the first place, the Department has implemented software that can reliably detect cheating on multiple-choice exams by analyzing the patterns of students' responses. In addition, the Department subscribes to *TurnItIn*—a service designed to detect and deter plagiarism. All materials (term papers, lab reports, etc.) that students submit for grading will be scanned and compared to over 5 billion pages of content located on the Internet or in TurnItIn's own proprietary databases. The results of these comparisons are compiled into customized "Originality Reports" containing several, sensitive measures of plagiarism; instructors receive copies of these reports for every student in their class. In all cases of suspected academic misconduct, the parties involved will be pursued to the fullest extent dictated by the guidelines of the University. Strong evidence of cheating or plagiarism may result in a zero credit for the work in question. According to the University Act (section 61), the President of UBC has the right to impose harsher penalties including (but not limited to) a failing grade for the course, suspension from the University, cancellation of scholarships, or a notation added to a student's transcript.

All graded work in this course, unless otherwise specified, is to be original work done independently by individuals. Do **not** use Google/Yahoo/MSN Search/etc. to find articles for assignments in this course. **Do** use any of the indexes and databases listed under Indexes and Databases, Subject Resources, OneSearch or Metasearch on the Library's website at <http://www.library.ubc.ca>. (Not sure which index to use? Click HELP on the library homepage at www.library.ubc.ca or try Subject Resources.)

If you have any questions as to whether or not what you are doing is even a borderline case of academic misconduct, please consult your instructor. For details on pertinent University policies and procedures, please see Chapter 5 in the UBC Calendar (<http://students.ubc.ca/calendar>).

Course Outline

We will cover the following topics in the order listed. I expect that you have done the reading listed for the week BEFORE you come to the lecture. Lectures and discussions cannot substitute for having read the material. All readings are **required** except where noted. **It is possible that there will be changes to the list of required readings. It is your responsibility to listen in class and check the course materials web page for any updates.** Readings are available for downloading from the course website.

September 4, 6: Crucial Understandings, Psychology of Language, Psychology, Linguistics, Psycholinguistics, and Language
Jackendoff, Chapter 1 and p. xiii-xv

September 11, 13: The structure and substance of language

Required: From D. Carroll, *Psychology of Language*, p. 20-28.

Required: From N. Bernstein Ratner and J. Berko Gleason, *Psycholinguistics*, p. 11-29.

Required: Excerpt from S. Goldin-Meadow, *The Resilience of Language*, p. 3-12.

Optional: Excerpt from D. Bolinger, *Aspects of Language*, p. 13-33.

September 13: Language sample due

September 18, 20: Situating language in the mind

Jackendoff Ch. 2

Sabourin, L. & Stowe, L. A. (in press) Neurobiology of language learning.

September 25, 27: Situating language in the mind

Garrod, S. & Pickering M. J. (2004). Why is conversation so easy? *TRENDS in Cognitive Sciences* 8(1). 8-11.

Ventureyra, V. A. G., Pallier, C., & Yoo, H.-Y. (2004). The loss of first language phonetic perception in adopted Koreans. *Journal of Neurolinguistics* 17, 79-91.

October 2, 4: Combinatoriality

Jackendoff Ch. 3

October 9: Combinatoriality

Fitch, W. T. & Hauser, M. (2004). Computational constraints on syntactic processing in a nonhuman primate. *Science* 303, 377-380.

Hauser, M. D., Newport, E. L., Aslin, R. N. (2001). Segmentation of the speech stream in a non-human primate: statistical learning in cotton-top tamarins. *Cognition* 78, B53-B64.

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October 11: Midterm

October 16, 18: Universal Grammar
Jackendoff Chapter 4

October 23, 25: Universal Grammar

From Ralph Fasold and Jeff Connor-Linton, *An Introduction to Language and Linguistics*, various pages.

From Susan Goldin-Meadow, *The Resilience of Language*, p.185-198

Optional: Hawkins, R. & Chan, Y.-h. (1997). The partial availability of Universal Grammar in second language acquisition. *Second Language Research* 13(3), 187-226.

October 30, November 1: Universal Grammar

Required: Maratsos, M. & Metheny, L. (1994) Language specificity and elasticity: Brain and clinical syndrome studies. *Annual Review of Psychology* 45, 487-516.

Required: Choose ONE of the following:

Roy, N., Bless, D. M. (2000). Personality traits and psychological factors in voice pathology: A foundation for future research. *Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research* 43, 737-748.

Hillis, A. E. & Heidler, J. (2002). Mechanisms of early aphasia recovery. *Aphasiology* 16(9), 885-895.

Snowling, M. J. (2001). From language to reading and dyslexia. *Dyslexia* 7, 37-46.

Sommer, M., Koch, M. A., Paulus, W., Weillor, C., Büchel, C. (2002). Disconnection of speech-relevant brain areas in persistent developmental stuttering. *Lancet* 360, 380-383.

Zurif, E., Swinney, D., Prather, P., Solomon, J., & Bushell, C. (1993). An online analysis of syntactic processing in Broca's and Wernicke's aphasia. *Brain and Language* 45, 448-464.

November 6, 8: Processing Language
Jackendoff, Chapter 6

November 13, 15: Processing Language

MacDonald, M. C. & Christiansen, M. H. (2002). Reassessing working memory: Comment on Just and Carpenter (1992) and Waters and Caplan (1996). *Psychological Review* 109(1), 35-54.

November 20, 22: Processing Language
Jackendoff Chapter 7

November 27, 29: Processing the World

Whorf, Benjamin Lee. (1956). The relation of habitual thought to language, and Science

and linguistics, both from *Language Thought and Reality, Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*, John B. Carroll, ed. MIT Press: Cambridge.

Boroditsky, L. (2001). Does language shape thought?: Mandarin and English speakers' conceptions of time. *Cognitive Psychology* 43, 1-22.

November 29: Language sample essay due