



Psychology of Language

PSYC 336, Section 901, 3 credits, Winter 2020, Term 1
Web-oriented course

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appointment

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Course Objectives

Welcome to Psychology of Language! In this course, we will discuss how language is learned, processed and produced by the human brain. After taking this course, you should be able to:

- 1) Discuss major themes of psycholinguistics, including language acquisition, speech perception and production, and word and sentence processing
- 2) Critically think about the cognitive and neural processes underlying language use
- 3) Discuss and design basic psycholinguistic experiments

Required readings

Language in Mind: An introduction to Psycholinguistics, Second Edition, Julia Sedivy. The physical textbook is available through the UBC bookstore, or you may rent the e-book through VitalSource.

Course Format

We will have one synchronous class to introduce the course: **Wednesday, September 9th, at 5 p.m.** Other than that, this course is *asynchronous*, which means that we will not be meeting online at specific times each week. Instead, you are free to engage with the course material at your own time. Nonetheless, I highly recommend that you keep up with readings according to the schedule. To help you stay on track, there are several timing expectations for discussions and exams (see *Assessments* and *Class Schedule*).

Since the class was originally assigned for Wednesday at 5-8 p.m. PDT, that will be the start of our week. Each week, you will be assigned some reading. Every Wednesday at 5 p.m. PDT, I will post a few lecture videos which will focus on key theories and principles described in the assigned readings.



Class Schedule

Dates	Topic	Readings	Discussion
09-Sep	Introduction to class		
16-Sep	Introduction to language sciences	Ch 1, 2	
23-Sep	Language and the brain	Ch 3	Post 1 (Due: 23-Sep)
30-Sep	Learning sound patterns	Ch 4	Response to P1 (Due: 2-Oct)
7-Oct	Learning words	Ch 5	
14-Oct	Word recognition	Ch 8	Post 2 (Due: 14-Oct)
21-Oct	Exam 1		Response to P2 (Due: 23-Oct)
28-Oct	Speech perception	Ch 7	
4-Nov	Speaking: from planning to articulation	Ch 10	Post 3 (Due: 4-Nov)
11-Nov	No class		Response to P3 (Due: 13-Nov)
18-Nov	The social side of language	Ch 12	
25-Nov	Language diversity	Ch 13	Post 4 (Due: 25-Nov)
2-Dec	Class review		Response to P4 (Due: 4-Dec)

Exam 2: to be determined, during Finals period



Assessments

1. Discussion posts (3 x 10% = 30%) and responses (3 x 5% = 15%):

A central component of this course is the discussion. Every two weeks, you will be asked to write discussion posts from a set of prompts related to course material from the preceding two weeks. You will have four opportunities to submit discussion posts, but only your top 3 grades will count towards your final grade. Likewise, you will also be asked to respond to other students' discussion posts. You will also have four opportunities to respond to these discussion posts, but only your top 3 grades will count towards your final grade. More information about how discussion posts will be graded is available in another document.

2. Exam 1 (30%) on October 21st, 2020:

Multiple choice, short answer, and short essay questions covering material from September 9th to October 14th, 2020. The exam will cover both lecture and textbook material. The exam will be conducted on Canvas. It will be open-book, but there is a time limit. More details will be provided closer to the date.

3. Exam 2 (25%) during exam period:

Multiple choice, short answer, and short essay questions covering material from October 28th to December 2nd, 2020. The format will be similar to Exam 1.

4. Optional weekly quizzes:

Every week, I will post short weekly quizzes (multiple choice). These are completely optional. You will be graded automatically, so you will receive a score, but this score will NOT count towards your final grade. To encourage you to take them in a timely fashion, I will close each quiz at the end of the week. Please do not ask me to re-open them for you (unless you have a good excuse). The purpose of these quizzes is to support your learning, and to help you stay on track. I know that the temptation to procrastinate is much higher during online learning, so I hope these weekly quizzes can act as milestones for you. I highly encourage you to take these quizzes, as some of the questions may appear on the exams.

Online tools

Canvas (www.canvas.ubc.ca) will be our classroom for the next four months. Discussion posts and exams will be done on Canvas. I also encourage you to use the Discussion Threads in Canvas to ask questions, as other students may share the same questions. The TA and I will regularly monitor these discussion threads and will answer these questions as soon as possible.



Grading on a curve

As most of you know by now, all courses in the psychology department are graded on a curve. This is done in order to reduce grade inflation and maintain equity across different courses. This means that I may need to adjust your grades up or down to hit a set average (~68) and standard deviation (~13). I will do my best to provide assessments that will naturally produce these set grades, but please be prepared for grade adjustments as well. When looking at your grades through the term, it is probably a good idea to compare your grade to the class average, so that you are not surprised at the end of the term. I have never needed to adjust grades in the past, but I will let you know through the term if I am expecting any grade adjustments.

Missing an exam or assignment

Assignments (discussion posts and replies) have deadlines, and I fully expect you to meet these deadlines. Similarly, examinations will only be given on their respective dates. I will only provide exceptions in cases of medical problems and emergencies. In these cases, there will be no penalties. Please contact me as soon as possible if you foresee yourself missing an assignment or the exam.

- If you do not contact me within 1 week of the assignment or exam, I will assign a grade of “0” on the exam.
- If you are unable to meet an assignment deadline (for a non-emergency reason), I will deduct 10% for any extra day that you are late.
- If you are unable to write the exam (for any reason), you will be given an alternative time to write the exam. In certain circumstances, I may change the exam such that it will be short essays only (no multiple choice).

Communication

Communication is key to a good learning environment. If you have any questions about the course material or format, please feel free to e-mail me at aorena@psych.ubc.ca or visit me during office hours. I will do my best to answer you within 48 hours (not counting weekends). Further, I will compile all broad questions from students every week, and I will post my answers to them in the discussion boards so that everyone has access to them.

Requests for letters of references

After the course, you may be applying for a graduate program or for a research job or exchange, and you may require a letter of reference or recommendation. I will try my best to accommodate these requests, but please note that I will only write *good* letters of recommendations for those students who go above and beyond in engaging in the course material. I need to know who you are in order to write you a good letter of recommendation. This could mean visiting me during office hours or participating a lot during class discussion. You also need to be in good standing in the course (>75%). Please think about whether you meet these criteria before e-mailing me.



Issues for students studying abroad and remotely

During this pandemic, the shift to online learning has greatly altered teaching and studying at UBC, including changes to health and safety considerations. Keep in mind that some UBC courses might cover topics that are censored or considered illegal by non-Canadian governments. This may include, but is not limited to, human rights, representative government, defamation, obscenity, gender or sexuality, and historical or current geopolitical controversies. If you are a student living abroad, you will be subject to the laws of your local jurisdiction, and your local authorities might limit your access to course material or take punitive action against you.

UBC is strongly committed to academic freedom, but has no control over foreign authorities (please visit <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,33,86,0> for an articulation of the values of the University conveyed in the Senate Statement on Academic Freedom). Thus, we recognize that students will have legitimate reason to exercise caution in studying certain subjects. If you have concerns regarding your personal situation, consider postponing taking a course with manifest risks, until you are back on campus or reach out to your academic advisor to find substitute courses. For further information and support, please visit: <http://academic.ubc.ca/support-resources/freedom-expression>

University policies

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions.

Details of the policies and how to access support are available on the UBC Senate website: <https://senate.ubc.ca/policies-resources-support-student-success>



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 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. If you have any questions as to whether or not what you are doing is even a borderline case of academic misconduct, please consult me or your TA. For details on pertinent University policies and procedures, please see Chapter 5 in the UBC Calendar (<http://students.ubc.ca/calendar>) and read the University's Policy 69 (available at <http://www.universitycounsel.ubc.ca/policies/policy69.html>).