PSYCHOLOGY OF LANGUAGE, FALL 2014
21:830:346
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 2:30 – 3:50 pm, Hill 103
William Graves, PhD, Assistant Professor of Psychology

Office Hours: Tuesdays 4 – 5:30 pm, or by appointment. 337 Smith Hall. The best way to reach me is by email (william.graves@rutgers.edu) or in person right after class.

Course Overview: The psychology of language, often referred to as psycholinguistics, was one of the first areas of study in what would become experimental, and later cognitive, psychology. The field arguably started with Wilhelm Wundt in Germany and his American trainee James Cattell in 1886. Today it is a vibrant and transdisciplinary field encompassing not only experimental and cognitive psychology, but also linguistics, developmental psychology, and cognitive neuroscience. The topics listed in the course schedule closely follow the textbook, starting with an overview of the field, the origins of human language, how it is implemented in the brain, then moving from individual sound patterns to words, sentences, and conversation.

Learning Objectives: Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to
  • Describe the theoretical differences between nativist and empiricist approaches to language.
  • Define the basic information components of language (phonology, semantics, syntax) and explain the ways in which they combine.
  • Distinguish the basic methods used in the psychology of language and critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each.
  • Analyze the relationship between models of language processing and describe the empirical evidence used to evaluate them.

The required textbook, available from the campus book store, is:
Language in Mind: An Introduction to Psycholinguistics by Julie Sedivy, published by Sinauer Associates, Inc., 2014.

Course website: Lecture notes, syllabus, etc. will be available on Blackboard, http://blackboard.newark.rutgers.edu. I will try to make slides available before class. However, they often will not be available until after class.

We will also be using software from Top Hat to enhance the interactivity of the course. The site for this course in Top Hat is here:
https://app.tophat.com/e/600782
Use of this service requires a portable electronic device. This means at least a mobile phone, but preferably a smart phone. Although there is a fee for this service, it is considerably less than the other available options.

Course Requirements:
  • Reading assignments should be completed before the associated lecture.
  • Class attendance is mandatory and will help to ensure full participation credit. Anything from the assigned reading and the lectures may appear on the exams. I will also sometimes tell you in class what material from the lectures will not be on the exams, so attendance will make studying easier.

- Participation: Students will occasionally be called upon and expected to answer questions in class. Whether there is a single correct answer or not, answering these questions is part of earning participation credit.
- Four exams: Three in-class exams and one final exam will be given.

Course Policies:
- You are responsible for completing the assigned readings from your textbook <u>before</u> the corresponding session.
- All students are encouraged to participate fully in class sessions, including through questions and the interactive activities.
- <u>Use of mobile electronic devices is allowed ONLY for interactive class activities.</u> Students using these devices for other purposes will lose class participation credit.
- If you miss class, <u>you are responsible for getting notes and announcements from another student.</u> I am happy to go over material and answer specific questions, but I will not repeat a lecture/session for you.

Assessment:
Your final grade will be calculated as follows:
Class participation (including attendance):   10%
Two midterm exams @ 30% each   60%
Final exam   30%

Exams: A total of four exams will be given. Grades for <u>three</u> of the four exams will count toward your final grade. <u>The lowest of the first three exam grades will be dropped.</u> The final exam grade will not be dropped. The exams are designed to test your understanding of the material. None of the exams will be cumulative. Each will cover only the material since the previous exam.

Missed Exams: Exam dates are listed on the syllabus. <u>No make-up exams will be given</u>. If you miss an exam, this will count as your dropped exam grade. Any student who misses more than one exam will receive a <u>zero</u> on that exam.

Psychology of Language in the Media: Throughout the semester, you may bring in articles from the popular press that discuss current research and/or thinking on the psychology or cognitive neuroscience of language so we can discuss them. This will help you to become a more sophisticated consumer of research in the media than you were at the start of the semester.

You will earn <u>1 extra credit point</u> (up to a limit of 3 total points) added on to your final grade for each item you bring in for discussion.

Academic Integrity:
Students are expected to <u>do your own work at all times.</u> Those caught cheating, or who give the appearance of cheating, will be dismissed from class. The University and I take cheating very seriously. Students caught cheating may be suspended or expelled. To help you avoid this situation, please familiarize yourself with the University policy on academic integrity outlined here: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu.

Notes:
- The deadline to drop a course without penalty is <u>September 9, 2014</u>.

- The deadline to withdraw from a course with a W grade is <u>November 3, 2014</u>.
- If you need accommodation for a learning disability, I will need to see an official Letter of Accommodation from Disability Services (http://robeson.rutgers.edu/studentlife/disability.html). This helps me know the best way to help you.

<u>Anticipated Course Schedule:</u>

		Topic	Chapter
Sep	2	Introductions; What is "Psychology of Language"	1
	4	Origins of human language	2
	9	Origins of human language	2
	11	Language and the brain	3
	16	Language and the brain	3
	18	Learning sound patterns	4
	23	Learning sound patterns	4
	25	Review and discussion	1-4
	30	**Exam 1 covers 9/2-9/23**	1-4
Oct	2	Learning words	5
	7	Learning words	5
	9	Learning the structure of sentences	6
	14	Learning the structure of sentences	6
	16	Word recognition	7
	21	Word recognition	7
	23	Review and discussion	5-7
	28	**Exam 2 covers 10/2-10/21**	5-7
	30	Understanding sentence structure and meaning	8
Nov	4	Understanding sentence structure and meaning (<u>Election day!</u>)	8
	6	Speaking: From planning to articulation	9
	11	Speaking: From planning to articulation	9
	13	*No class: SfN meeting*	None
	18	Discourse and inference	10
	20	Review and discussion	8-10
	25	**Exam 3 covers 10/30-11/18**	8-10
Dec	2	The social side of language	11

| 4 | Language diversity | 12 |
| 9 | Language diversity | 12 |

Final Exam: Dec 18, 11:45 am - 2:45 pm   **covers 11/25-12/9**   **11-12**

Grading Scale:

A: 100-90

B+: 89-86

B: 85-80

C+: 79-76

C: 75-70

D: 69-62

F: 61 and below