

Psycholinguistics (LING/PSYC 27010)

Autumn, 2016 // University of Chicago

BASIC COURSE INFO

instructor	Timothy Leffel	timleffel@uchicago.edu
teaching assistant	Diane Rak	dkr@uchicago.edu
course website	lefft.xyz/psycholingAU16	
lecture	T/R 1:30-2:50pm	Cobb Hall 102
office hours	Tim: Tues 3-4pm & by appt.	Rosenwald 205G
	Diane: day and time TBA	SSRB 005A

ABOUT THE COURSE

This course is an introduction to psycholinguistics – a hybrid scientific field that integrates techniques and concepts from cognitive psychology with modern theoretical linguistics. Through lectures, discussion, and assignments, we will explore topics including the mental and biological structures underlying human language; methodology and experimental paradigms in psycholinguistic research; major theoretical debates and key results within the field; language-related disorders; how language develops in individuals and in societies; and just who this Noam Chomsky character is and why he seems to be so polarizing.

There will also be a hands-on lab component of the course, which will take place during the 8th and 9th week. The lab sessions and lab report are meant to give you an idea of what it's like to do real scientific research on some aspect of the human language system – from hypothesizing to experimental design to data collection to (very basic) data analysis.

I would appreciate regular feedback about which aspects of the course you find interesting, which you find dull, whether there are topics not on the current syllabus that you'd like to spend some time talking about, and so on. Course content is flexible (within limits), and I'd rather adapt the lectures to the class's interests than to the textbook's structure.

READING MATERIALS

Reading assignments will be drawn from a variety of sources, including pop science books, academic journals, and the official textbook. All non-textbook readings will be posted online.

Here is the textbook info, along with its (very cool!) companion site:

official textbook: Sedivy, Julie. 2014. *Language in Mind: An Introduction to Psycholinguistics*.

companion site: sites.sinauer.com/languageinmind/

You'll be able to buy a copy of the textbook from the bookstore by the second week of the quarter. You can also buy a digital version from the publisher's website, or save some cash by renting it. In the meantime, I'll find a way to make the first reading available electronically. There will also be a desk copy available at the Regenstein Library (free to use, of course).

Another book we'll be reading from a bunch is:

recommended: Pinker, Steven. 1995. *The Language Instinct: How the Mind Creates Language*.

You can get this one from Amazon on the cheap, which I recommend you do. All required chapters will be posted online, but still: it's a great book and well worth owning. One of those rare school books you won't ever throw away or sell.

HOMEWORK, EXAMS, AND LAB

Homeworks will be assigned periodically throughout the quarter (four HW's in total). They will draw mostly on concepts from lecture/readings and general problem-solving skills. The first homework is just free prose, and you get 100% as long as you put forth reasonable effort. For the fourth homework, you can either write a small literature review, design and write up a proposed experiment, or do something else. More details when we get there.

A note on working in groups: You are encouraged to work on the homeworks in groups, *as long as you write up your responses on your own* and indicate who you worked with.

Exams will contain a mix of multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, short-answers, etc. The usual suspects. There will be a review session in class and outside of class (if there's demand for it) for both the midterm and the final exam.

Lab Reports are where you describe what happened during the lab session, why you think things happened the way they did, what else you might expect to happen given what you learned in the session, etc. More specific instructions will be released later in the quarter.

Research Awareness Credit can be fulfilled in a number of ways – more on that later.

LECTURE POLICIES

Speak up! Lecture is going to be discussion-driven. The more everyone participates, the more enjoyable the class will be. I promise. If you have something to ask or say during lecture and I'm not currently in the middle of a sentence, then just say it out loud (just don't interrupt anyone)! If this system gets chaotic, we may switch to the traditional hand-raising protocol.

Computers. No computers open during lecture! (unless otherwise indicated)

Attendance. Bottom line: you will not do well if you do not come to class. Attendance will be taken randomly at lecture a few times throughout the quarter; your attendance grade is determined mostly by whether you were at lecture during those dates. I am reasonable about exceptional circumstances that might cause you to miss class here and there.

FINAL GRADES

The following weights are used to calculate final grades:

50%	homeworks
15%	final exam
10%	midterm exam
10%	lab session
10%	attendance and participation
5%	research awareness credit

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism is representing someone else's idea or piece of knowledge as your own. It can happen accidentally, and it is a gradient concept. So be careful if you are googling and writing at the same time. Always cite the sources you use. Wikipedia should be used primarily as a place to look for links to primary research articles (in the references section at the bottom). Deliberate plagiarism is cheating.

If you cheat, you get a zero on that assignment. If you cheat again, paperwork gets filed.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

If you have a documented disability and require accommodations of any kind, just let Tim or Diane know and we will make sure you have what you need.

COURSE SCHEDULE (TENTATIVE, SUBJECT TO MINOR CHANGES)

Notes:

- more detailed version online soon, with clickable links for readings
- always consult online version for most current info
- make sure you come to lecture to hear which readings are the most important!
- abbrevs: *tLI* = *The Language Instinct*; *LiM* = *Language in Mind*

week	day	date	topic	to read before class	things assigned	things due
1	T	sept 27	intros; background	–	hw #1	–
	R	sept 29	language processing; ambiguity	<i>tLI</i> Ch7; <i>LiM</i> Ch2-3	–	hw #1
2	T	oct 04	language acquisition	<i>tLI</i> Ch1-2+9; Cowie (2010)	hw #2	–
	R	oct 06	speech production and perception	<i>tLI</i> Ch6; <i>LiM</i> Ch4	–	–
3	T	oct 11	lexical access	<i>tLI</i> Ch4; <i>LiM</i> Ch5+7; Rastle (2004)	hw #3	hw #2
	R	oct 13	syntactic processing – part 1	<i>LiM</i> Ch6+8; Frazier (1987)	–	–
4	T	oct 18	language and audio-visual processing	Tanenhaus et al. (1995)	–	hw #3
	R	oct 20	syntactic processing – part 2	<i>LiM</i> Ch6+8; Bever & McElree (1988)	–	–
5	T	oct 25	semantic/pragmatic processing	<i>LiM</i> Ch10-11; article TBD	hw #4	–
	R	oct 27	neuroling/language disorders	<i>LiM</i> Ch3; article TBD	–	–
6	T	nov 01	interim recap; midterm review	–	–	–
	R	nov 03	midterm exam	–	–	–
7	T	nov 08	TBD	TBD	–	–
	R	nov 10	experimental methods	review article to be posted	–	hw #4
8	T	nov 15	lab session	–	lab report	–
	R	nov 17	lab discussion and presentations	–	–	–
9	T	nov 22	bilingualism and L2A	review article to be posted	–	–
	R	nov 24	no class – Thanksgiving!	–	–	lab report
10	T	nov 29	bonus topic! – chosen by class	–	–	–
	R	dec 01	course recap; exam review	–	–	–
finals	TBA	TBA	final exam	–	–	–