Psycholinguistics (LING/PSYC 27010)

Autumn, 2016 // University of Chicago

RESEARCH AWARENESS ASSIGNMENT	(due friday, dec 2)

Motivation

The goal of a research awareness requirement is for you to get a glimpse of how the ideas we have discussed in class are employed in a professional research environment. For two reasons, the research awareness credit for this course will be a bit broader than is typical:

Reason 1: lab component We are already having a lab session, which is intended to mirror the scientific research process (though time constraints demand significant shortcuts)

Reason 2: recent concerns ("WEIRD") There is increasing concern among social scientists that research awareness credits are turning into research-subject-recruiting campaigns, which limits the generalizability of experimental results. Currently, the degree to which sampling from a mostly college-student population harms research integrity is unknown.

(nb: I have directly benefitted from this practice in the past, and I do believe that participating in experiments can provide extremely valuable intellectual experiences)

An important note!

You *must* let Tim or Diane know what you plan to do for this requirement before you do it! Just send one or both of us an email and we will likely just respond "sounds good."

Ways to satisfy the requirement

Here is a list of ways that you can satisfy the research awareness requirement for this course.

1. **Participate in an experiment** being run by researchers in the Linguistics or Psychology department. For many such studies, being a native speaker of English is required, so be sure to check before signing up. Here are two studies that you might be interested in:

   - *Reading and Language*: see note below about SONA
   - *Bilingual Word-Pair Rating*: email Diane for more information
     (for this one, native monolingual English speakers AND native Spanish speakers who grew up in a predominantly Spanish-speaking country may participate)

   You can make an account in the SONA system, and browse currently active studies. Once you log in, select "LING/PSYC 27010 Psycholinguistics" in the course listings and find a study with open time slots. Note that there are separate systems for linguistics and psychology studies, so spend a few minutes figuring out how to navigate the sites.

2. **Attend a talk** — that is, an academic researcher presenting their work to a crowd of other academic researchers — in either the Linguistics or the Psychology department. Talks in other social science departments are also acceptable (again: confirm with us that what you've found is acceptable. You can find talks on various deparment websites. Here are a few upcoming linguistics talks:

   - *Linguistics Colloquium*: Jim McCloskey (UCSC), topic TBA
     Thursday, December 1st at 3:30pm.
   - *Language Variation and Change Workshop*:
     - Nicole Rosen (U Manitoba), Nominal contact in the Michif language
       Friday, November 11th, 3:30pm in Cobb 116
     - Jacob Phillips (U Chicago), topic TBA
       Friday, December 2nd, 3:30pm in Rosenwald 301

   *If you choose this option, **you must write a brief paragraph** about the experience*. Three things to include in your paragraph: (*i*) a summary of the research (in a sentence or two, say what they are looking at and, if you can, why); (*ii*) the method of research (was it experimental? did it involve field work? speaker judgments? mathematical modeling? etc.); and (*iii*) something you learned at the talk (a new way of presenting data, etc.).

3. **Read this paper and this article** about the practice of using predominately "WEIRD" subjects for behavioral experiments, and then come **talk to Tim or Diane about it for 15 minutes**, in office hours or by appointment. We will discuss the questions of whether, when, and to what extent using college students as research subjects is a problematic methodological practice. To look deeper into the debate, check out the full/long version of the short required article.

4. **Attend an hour-long tutorial session** in which Tim will present the very basics of programming and data manipulation/analysis using the language R. If you choose this option, you must **come with a laptop**, and you must **do the following** *prior to the tutorial*:

   - install R and RStudio (see this guide for step-by-step instructions)
   - make an attempt to install the following packages (aka "libraries") from RStudio (see this nice explainer on installing and loading packages)

     ```
     plyr, dplyr, reshape2, ggplot2
     ```

   You will also get more out of the session if you spend some time beforehand looking at online tutorials, explainer webpages, etc. There are literally thousands of them about R nowadays. Not required, just a suggestion.

   Let Tim or Diane know ASAP if you are going to choose this option. We will need to set up a time during which all participants can get together very soon.