

Experimental Methods in Linguistics (LING 4410/6410) – Fall 2025

Prerequisites: LING 3060, LING 3150, or LING 3150W

Course information

Class meeting time: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:35 am – 10:50 am

Class meeting location: Psychology 304

Google Drive folder:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1p7a4fLUF13gUKiLY9rcDJS8jNM9qOpG>

Instructor information

Instructor: Prof. Steven Foley

Email: srfoley@uga.edu

I will respond to emails within 24 hours

Office hours: Mondays, 2:00–4:00 pm
and by appointment
Gilbert Hall 240

Website: <https://stevenrfoley.github.io/>

Course description and details

This course introduces major experimental methodologies used in linguistic research, including acceptability judgement studies, self-paced reading, eyetracking, and neurophysiological techniques. Sentence comprehension and experimental syntax will be the focus, but we will also cover methods used in sentence production, laboratory phonology, L1/L2 acquisition, field psycholinguistics, and sociolinguistics. Students will gain firsthand experience designing behavioral experiments and interpreting experimental data.

Learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course you should be able to:

- Classify experimental methods as off-line or on-line/real-time, and explain their advantages and disadvantages
- Evaluate experimental designs of published research, and propose novel designs for their own research
- Interpret behavioral and neurophysiological data in light of theoretically motivated research questions

This course also fulfills the following University-wide learning outcomes:

- Students will be able to express ideas in writing with clarity and fluency
- Have the ability to express, manipulate, and apply mathematical information, concepts, and thoughts using appropriate mathematical forms, including numeric, graphical, verbal, and symbolic forms for solving a variety of problems
- Explain how knowledge is constructed in the sciences using the scientific method

- Locate and evaluate reliable sources of scientific evidence to construct arguments, to apply scientific knowledge, and to critically assess real-world issues
- Express and manipulate quantitative information, concepts, and thoughts in verbal, numeric, graphical, computational, and symbolic form to frame and devise a solution to a problem
- Evaluate conclusions drawn from or decisions based on quantitative data

Course topics

- Judgement studies (categorizations, Likert scale tasks, magnitude estimation)
- Reading time techniques (self-paced reading, the Maze)
- Eyetracking (during naturalistic reading, or in the Visual World paradigm)
- Electrophysiological (EEG, MEG) and hemodynamic techniques (fMRI)
- Experimental methods appropriate for research on child populations, or small/underresourced language

Required course materials

There is no text book. All readings will be posted on eLC.

Assessment and grading

Course assignments and requirements

<i>Paper presentations</i>	20%	Prepare a handout to give an overview of an experimental paper during lecture, twice during the semester — once during the ‘Role Processing Bonanza’ (10/2–10/9), and one other time. Students enrolled in LING 4410 present in pairs; those enrolled in LING 6410 present solo.
<i>Homework</i>	20%	Short written assignments tasking you with synthesizing concepts from lecture.
<i>Labs</i>	25%	Create materials, recruit participants, analyze data, and write up results for two experiments: a reading time study, and an acceptability judgement study.
<i>Final paper</i>	20%	A 8-15 page research paper proposing an experiment. Students enrolled in LING 6410 will also give a presentation of their final project on the last days of class.
<i>Participation and attendance</i>	10%	Regular attendance and active participation are the best way to keep up with the material. UGA policy allows you two unexcused absences. If you cannot make it to class or if you know you will be late, please email me beforehand.
<i>Office hours</i>	5%	Attend office hours at least once during the semester.

See eLC for more information about each assignment.

Missed exams, late assignments, and regrading requests

All homeworks and lab components are due at 11:59 pm ET on their respective due dates, unless otherwise instructed. These items may be turned in after the deadline, but you will be eligible for fewer points once the deadline has passed: you will only be eligible for 95% of the total grade if it is submitted by 3 am that night, and you will lose an additional 10% from the total you are eligible to earn for every 12 hour period it is late thereafter. Assignments more than three days late will earn a grade of 0.

Extensions will not generally be permitted, but if you think you are subject to an exceptional circumstance, please discuss it with me outside of class or by emailing me at least 24 hours before the original deadline.

Final grades

<i>A</i>	93–100	<i>C+</i>	76–79
<i>A–</i>	90–92	<i>C</i>	73–75
<i>B+</i>	86–89	<i>C–</i>	70–72
<i>B</i>	83–85	<i>D</i>	60–69
<i>B–</i>	80–82	<i>F</i>	<60

Final grades will be rounded to the nearest whole number (e.g. 89.50 to 90, and 89.49 to 89).

Course statements and policies

UGA honor code

“I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others.” A Culture of Honesty, the University’s policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at honesty.uga.edu.

Honesty and transparency are important features of good scholarship. On the flip side, plagiarism and cheating are serious academic offenses with serious consequences. If you are discovered engaging in either behavior in this course, I will follow the procedures laid out in UGA’s Academic Honesty Policy. There you can also find more information about what counts as prohibited conduct.

I encourage you to work together on homework assignments and to make use of campus resources like the Office of Student Success & Achievement and the Writing Center. While collaboration is encouraged, *each student must submit a unique assignment* reflecting their own work.

If you have questions about my integration of the Student Code of Conduct into this course, please do not hesitate to ask: my aim is to foster an environment where you can learn and grow, while ensuring that the work we all do is honest and fair.

Accommodation for disabilities

If you plan to request accommodations for a disability, please register with the Disability Resource Center. They can be reached by visiting Clark Howell Hall, calling 706-542-8719 (voice) or 706-542-8778 (TTY), or by visiting <http://drc.uga.edu>.

Attendance & participation policy

Class participation is a very important part of the learning process in this course. Although not explicitly graded, you will be evaluated on the *quality* of your contributions and insights. Quality comments possess one or more of the following properties:

- Offers a different and unique, but relevant, perspective;

- Contributes to moving the discussion and analysis forward;
- Builds on other comments;
- Transcends the “I feel” syndrome. That is, it includes some evidence, argumentation, or recognition of inherent tradeoffs. In other words, the comment demonstrates some reflective thinking.

We will use our assessment of your participation to manage borderline grades. While your participation grade is subjective, it will not be random or arbitrary. And, clearly, more frequent quality comments are better than less frequent quality comments.

Use of AI in this course

UGA’s policy is that the use of AI for coursework is not permitted unless explicitly authorized by me (your course instructor) ahead of time. In this course, to ensure you develop and master the foundational knowledge and skills in this course, the use of generative AI (GAI) tools is strictly prohibited. This includes all stages of your work process, even the preliminary ones. This prohibition extends to AI writing tools like Grammarly and Wordtune, as well as GAI tools like ChatGPT, Copilot, Writesonic, Rytr, and Rtutor. If you are uncertain about using a particular tool to support your work, please consult with me before using it.

Well-being resources

UGA Well-being Resources promote student success by cultivating a culture that supports a more active, healthy, and engaged student community.

Anyone needing assistance is encouraged to contact Student Care & Outreach (SCO) in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-8479 or visit sco.uga.edu. Student Care & Outreach helps students navigate difficult circumstances by connecting them with the most appropriate resources or services. They also administer the Embark@UGA program which supports students experiencing, or who have experienced, homelessness, foster care, or housing insecurity.

UGA provides both clinical and non-clinical options to support student well-being and mental health, any time, any place. Whether on campus, or studying from home or abroad, UGA Well-being Resources are here to help.

- Well-being Resources: well-being.uga.edu
- Student Care and Outreach: sco.uga.edu
- University Health Center: healthcenter.uga.edu
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services: caps.uga.edu or CAPS 24/7 crisis support at 706-542-2273
- Health Promotion/ Fontaine Center: healthpromotion.uga.edu
- Disability Resource Center and Testing Services: drc.uga.edu

Additional information, including free digital well-being resources, can be accessed through the UGA app or by visiting <https://well-being.uga.edu>.

Disclaimer

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Course schedule and activities

Subject to change — pay attention to announcements on eLC. Papers in the ‘Readings’ column are to be read by all students ahead of lecture; optional readings are in parentheses. Papers in the ‘Assignment’ column are for student presentations.

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
TH 8/14	Introduction	(Davidson 2020)	
T 8/19	Color qualia	Hossenfelder video Sommers & Pizarro podcast (Kawakita et al. 2025)	HW: Qualia reaction (due 8/26)
TH 8/21	Grammar and experiments	Phillips et al. 2021 (Pierrehumbert et al. 2012)	
T 8/26	Self-paced reading	Yoshida 2023	Blodgett & Boland 2004
TH 8/28	The Maze	Boyce et al. 2020	Hoeks et al. 2023
T 9/2	Agreement attraction	Wagers et al. 2009	Chromý et al. 2023
TH 9/4	Lab 1 prep		Lab 1: Materials (due 9/11)
T 9/9	Eyetracking	Kush & Dillon 2023 (Siyanova-Chantouria & Elgort 2021)	Sturt 2003
TH 9/11		Schotter & Rayner 2015	Traxler & Pickering 1996
T 9/16	Visual world		Lab 1: Recruitment (due 9/23) Kaiser et al. 2009
TH 9/18	Lab 1 analysis		
T 9/23	EEG	Sprouse & Almeida 2023 (Swaab et al. 2021)	Lab 1: Write Up (due 9/30)
TH 9/25		Embick & Poeppel 2015	Chow et al. 2015
T 9/30	fMRI	Brennan 2023	Matchin et al. 2014
TH 10/2	Role Processing Bonanza		See Google Drive
T 10/7 *via Zoom*			
TH 10/9 *via Zoom*			HW: Role processing reflection (due 10/16)
T 10/14	Acceptability judgements	Sprouse 2023 Fanselow 2021	Gordon & Hendrick 1997 Lab 2: recruitment (due 10/21)
TH 10/16	Speed-accuracy tradeoff	Foraker et al. 2023	Final Project: Brainstorm (due 10/23)

T 10/21	Response bias	Hammerly et al. 2019	
TH 10/23	Lab 2 analysis		Lab 2: Write Up (due 10/30)
T 10/28	L1 Acquisition	Perkins & Lidz 2023 Syrett 2023	
TH 10/30	Artificial language learning	Culbertson 2023	Final Project: Design proposal and bibliography (due 11/6)
T 11/4	Laboratory phonology	Cho 2011	
TH 11/6	Field psycholinguistics	Polinsky 2023 Wagers & Chung 2023	
T 11/11	Sociolinguistics	Levon 2011	
TH 11/13			
T 11/18	Final presentations		
TH 11/20			
T 11/25			
TH 12/4	Final paper due by 3:00 pm		

References

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