

Syllabus

Psychology of Language Psych/CogSt/Ling 215 - Sp 2008 251 Malott Hall – Tues/Thurs, 10:10-11:25AM <http://instruct1.cit.cornell.edu/courses/psych215>

Instructor: Dr. Morten H. Christiansen
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Required Text: Whitney, P. (1998). *The Psychology of Language*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Required Book Chapter: Christiansen, M.H. & Chater, N. (2001). Connectionist psycholinguistics in perspective. In M.H. Christiansen & N. Chater (Eds.), *Connectionist psycholinguistics* (pp.19-75). Westport, CT: Ablex. (can be downloaded via the class website).

Course Description: This course will provide an introduction to the psychology of language. The purpose of the course is to introduce students to the scientific study of psycholinguistic phenomena. It will cover a broad range of topics from psycholinguistics, including the origin of language, the different components of language (phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics), processes involved in reading, computational modeling of language processes, the acquisition of language (both under normal and special circumstances), and the brain bases of language.

Academic Integrity: Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work. Failure to adhere to the Code of Academic Integrity will result in an F in the course.

Grading/Prelms: The performance in this course will be evaluated based on a total of 200 points distributed over 3 non-cumulative prelims and a final 3-page essay. Each prelim consists of a combination of multiple-choice and short-answer questions and will be worth 55 points. The prelims will be based on material covered in class and in the readings. Note that not all lecture material is covered in the readings, and vice versa. The prelims take place in class and there is no final exam. In the final essay, students are asked to answer one of three questions that cut across the course as a whole. The essay will be due May 12 (during the Final Exam period) and is worth 35 points.

Study Guide and Review Session: A study guide will be available from the course web site. An evening (after 7:30PM) review session will be scheduled shortly before each of the prelims.

Extra Credit: Up to 6 points can be earned through extra credit participation in approved research experiments conducted by Cornell faculty and students. Details of participation will be outlined in class and on the class web site. One point can be earned for each "hour" of participation (that is, at least 30 minutes but no more than an hour). Students should sign up on-line for experiments on the "SUSAN" system: <http://susan.psych.cornell.edu>.

Final Grades: The final grade will be computed based on the sum of the three prelim scores, the score for the final essay, and any extra credit points earned, and then calculated as a percentage of 200. Grades will be assigned based on the following table.

Points	Percentage	Grade	Points	Percentage	Grade
196-200	98-100	A+	144-155	72-77.5	C
184-195	92-97.5	A	140-143	70-71.5	C-
180-183	90-91.5	A-	136-139	68-69.5	D+
176-179	88-89.5	B+	124-135	62-67.5	D
164-175	82-87.5	B	120-123	60-61.5	D-
160-163	80-81.5	B-	< 120	< 60	F
156-159	78-79.5	C+			

Week	Dates	Topics	Readings
Week 1	1/22 1/24	Introduction Origin of Language	Chapter 1
Week 2	1/29 1/31	Phonology and Morphology Syntax	Chapter 2
Week 3	2/5 2/7	Semantics Language and Cognition	Chapter 2 Chapter 3
Week 4	2/12 2/14	Language and Memory Connectionist Models of Language	Chapter 3 Chapter 3*
Week 5	2/19 (Tuesday)	PRELIM 1	Chapters 1, 2, 3*
Week 5	2/21	Speech Perception	Chapter 5
Week 6	2/26 2/28	Perceiving Spoken Words Spoken Word Recognition	Chapter 5
Week 7	3/4 and 3/6	Visual Word Recognition	Chapter 6
Week 8	3/11 3/13	Sentence Processing Syntactic Ambiguity	Chapter 7
Spring Break	3/18 and 3/20		
Week 9	3/25	Beyond Literal Sentence Meaning	Chapter 7
Week 9	3/27 (Thursday)	PRELIM 2	Chapters 5, 6, 7
Week 10	4/1 and 4/3	Language Production	Chapter 9
Week 11	4/8 and 4/10	Language Acquisition	Chapter 10
Week 12	4/15 4/17	Models of Language Acquisition Atypical Language Acquisition	Chapter 10* Chapter 11
Week 13	4/22 4/24	Impaired Language Acquisition Language and the Brain	Chapter 11 Chapter 12
Week 14	4/29	Language and the Brain	Chapter 12
Week 14	5/1 (Thursday)	PRELIM 3	Chapters 9, 10*, 11, 12
Exam Week	5/12	Final Essay	

* In addition to Chapters 3 and 10, students are required to read the textbook chapter on “Connectionist psycholinguistics in perspective” by Morten Christiansen and Nick Chater. This chapter provides a comprehensive introduction to connectionist models of language, including the models covered in this course.

Note: Changes may be made to the syllabus, but will be announced in class and on the class web site.