

Cognitive, Linguistic & Psychological Sciences 0800
Language and the Mind
Semester II, 2012-2013

Instructor:

Jim Morgan
233 Metcalf
X 32462

Office Hours: TTH 1-2

Language is central both to much of what we do in everyday life as individuals and to what we accomplish over time as a species. Although we are often not aware of it, using language involves a gamut of behaviors and mental capacities: complex motor sequences to produce speech or its equivalent, highly tuned perceptual abilities to recover symbols encoded in the speech signal, vast networks of associations linking symbols and meanings, intricate knowledge of grammatical patterns that allow individual word meanings to be woven together into propositions, sophisticated social awareness that modulates how we interpret what we hear or read, depending on the context. There are few, if any, aspects of mind that language does not touch upon in some fashion.

“Language and the Mind” is an introduction to the exploration of the psychological capacities and processes implicated in using (and learning) language. We will generally proceed in an outside-in, bottom-up direction, first considering the nature of the communicative signal, then examining speech perception and spoken word recognition, the organization of the mental lexicon, rudiments of parsing, sentence and discourse processing, and the relation between language and thought. Several of these “higher-order” aspects of psycholinguistics are treated in greater depth in CLPS 1800, “Language Processing”.

Course web site: Canvas

Text & Readings

Harley, T. A. (2008). *The psychology of language: From data to theory*, 3rd edition. New York: Psychology Press.

Supplementary readings to be announced periodically. These will be available electronically.

Course Requirements

Exams. There will be two non-cumulative in-class short-essay exams, covering the material presented in readings, lectures, and class discussions. On each of the exams, there will be a mixture of required and optional essay questions. The midterm exam will be given on **March 7** (Thursday) and will count for about **25%** of your course grade. A quiz will be given on **April 25** (Thursday) and will count for about **15%** of your grade.

Labs There will be two labs on topics of interest relevant to language and the mind. On or before the day of each lab, you will be responsible for participating in a brief experiment. Afterwards, the design of the experiment will be explained and group data will be presented and discussed. You will be responsible for bringing a 2-3 page lab write-up to class at the class meeting following the lab. Labs are tentatively scheduled to be held on **February 26** (Tuesday), and **March 14** (Thursday). Each lab will count for about **5%** of your grade.

Paper Summaries You are responsible for writing two one-page summaries of supplementary articles assigned during the course. These should summarize articles selected from three different sections of the course (there are four in total). Your summaries are due in class on the final data of the relevant section. Each paper summary will count for about **5%** of your grade. Citations of supplementary articles can be found in Canvas. All articles are available on-line through the Brown library. (Note: you are not responsible for reading all of the articles listed, though a few from each list may be assigned for general class reading.)

Term Paper The final requirement is an 8-10 page research paper, which will count for about **40%** of your grade. This project involves reading and critically reviewing literature on a topic relating to language and the mind. I will be happy to suggest possible topics, but my preference is that you chose a relevant topic of personal interest. In either case, you must meet with me to obtain approval for your topic *no later than* **April 9**. At this meeting, I will help you get started in finding relevant literature, if you wish. In addition, you must submit an outline of your paper *no later than* **April 25**. Your completed paper will be due by noon, Wednesday, **May 8**. For additional information, please see the FAQ at the course homepage.

Course Outline

I. **Introduction: What is Language?** (January 24 – 29)

Harley Chapters 1-3

II. **Speech, Speech Perception and Phonology** (January 31 – February 21)

Byrd & Mintz, Chapters 2-5 (available on Canvas)
(Sections of Harley Chapters 4, 9, & 13 are also relevant)

Lab I (February 26)

III. **Words** (February 28 – March 21)

Harley Chapters 9, 11, 6-7

Midterm (March 7)

Lab II (March 14)

IV. **Structure and Comprehension** (April 2 – April 16)

Harley, Chapters 10, 12, 15

Lab III (April 18)

V. **Language and Thought** (April 18 – April 23)

Harley, Chapter 14

Quiz (April 25)