



**OTRP** online

Office of Teaching Resources in Psychology

## PS317 HO Psychology of Language

Fall 2006

**Instructor:** Dr. Andrew Johnson, Associate Professor of Psychology

**Office:** Mabee (the Underground) 220

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**The Course:** Semester dates: Aug 21, 2006 - Dec 15, 2006

**Classroom:** MA221 (Watson Literacy Center)

**Days:** Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays

**Time:** 8:00 - 8:50 am

3 credit hours

### MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Park University, an entrepreneurial institution of learning, is to provide access to academic excellence, which will prepare learners to think critically, communicate effectively and engage in lifelong learning while serving a global community.

### VISION STATEMENT

Park University will be a renowned international leader in providing innovative educational opportunities for learners within the global society.

**Course Description:** Experimental study of language, including sentence comprehension and memory, language acquisition and development, speech perception, and effects of context, perception, reasoning, and linguistic structure on processing of language.

**Instructor's Educational Philosophy:** My educational philosophy is based on using a variety of methods in learning, focusing on student engagement. Lectures, demonstrations, participation activities, readings, group work, class discussion, examinations, writing, and use of the Internet and technology are significant components of this learning process. Students will be required to analyze, critique, evaluate information, and apply it to their own lives.

**Course Objectives:**

1. Demonstrate a basic level of competence in the use of vocabulary in the psychology of language.
2. Describe and explain the four primary domains of language study (phonology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics).
3. Explain the process of language acquisition both in early and later acquisition.
4. Explain the neurological basis for both the comprehension and the production of language.
5. Explain the relationship between language and cognition.
6. Demonstrate understanding of the experimental methods in the psychology of language.
7. Demonstrate metalinguistic processes.
8. Produce professional psychological writing about a psycholinguistic topic.
9. Display proper and appropriate use of APA style.
10. Apply psycholinguistic concepts to one's life and circumstances.

**Course Textbook:** Carroll, D. (2004). *Psychology of Language* (5th ed.), Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/ Cole Publishers

**Academic Honesty:** Academic Honesty is required of all members of a learning community. Hence, Park will not tolerate cheating or plagiarism on tests, examinations, papers or other course assignments. Students who engage in such dishonesty may be given failing grades or expelled from Park.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism—the appropriation or imitation of the language or ideas of another person and presenting them as one's original work—sometimes occurs through carelessness or ignorance. Students who are uncertain about proper documentation of sources should consult their instructors.

**Attendance Policy:** Attendance is not mandatory, but crucial to your performance in this class. There will be information presented in class lectures that will not be found in your text and you will be responsible for this on the exams. Instructors are required to keep attendance records and report absences. The instructor may excuse absences for cogent reasons, but missed work must be made up within the term of enrollment. Work missed through unexcused absences must also be made up within the term of enrollment, but unexcused absences may carry further penalties. In the event of two consecutive weeks of unexcused absences in a term of enrollment, the student will be administratively withdrawn, resulting in a grade of "F".

An Incomplete will not be issued to a student who has unexcused or excessive absences recorded for a course. Students receiving Military Tuition Assistance (TA) or Veterans Administration (VA) educational benefits must not exceed three unexcused absences in the term of enrollment. Excessive absences will be reported to the appropriate agency and may result in a

monetary penalty to the student. Reports of F grade (attendance or academic) resulting from excessive absence for students receiving financial assistance from agencies not mentioned above will be reported to the appropriate agency.

**Late Submission of Course Materials:** For each class period an assignment is late, points will be deducted. No course materials will be accepted after the last regular class meeting.

**Course Assessment:** A variety of methods, e.g., examinations, participation activities, inclass/online experiments, papers, etc, will be used to assess the learning that occurs in this course. Students will be assessed on their class participation, performance on exams, and writing assignments.

1. **Exams:** There will be a total of 2 exams. The exams will consist of short answer and essay questions. Each exam will be worth a total of 50 points. **Make-ups for the exams will be given only to those who have scheduled a test time before that exam** Note: the format of make-up exams may be different than regular exams.
2. **Paper:** A research paper addressing a psycholinguistic concept is a requirement in this course. The length of the paper should be at least 5 pages of text with at least 5 empirical references. The paper should be written in APA style. The research paper is worth a total of 50 points. Additionally, you required to create a PowerPoint presentation of your topic and present it. This portion of the assignment is worth 25 points. See Appendix A for more information.
3. **Assignments:** During the course of the semester you will be required to complete various assignments which will reinforce the course topics.
  - **Assignment 1: Language styles and website perceptions** (20 pts) This assignment involves using the Dialectizer (<http://www.rinkworks.com/dialect>) to examine website language changes. See Appendix B for more information.
  - **Assignment 2: How Foggy is Your Language?** (20 pts) For this assignment students will calculate the fog index of personal, popular, and professional writing samples. See Appendix C for more information.
  - **Assignment 3: Proverbs and Children** (20 pts) For this assignment students will complete a set of popular proverbs and find one grade-school age child to complete the task. See Appendix D for more information.
  - **Assignment 4: Bilingual Interview** (20 pts) Students will interview a bilingual person and report the results. See Appendix E for more information.

**Total points for assignments = 80**

4. **Participation:** Throughout the course there will be in-class activities to earn participation points. Students who do not attend class sessions when participation point activities are presented cannot make up those points. There will be a total of 20 participation points.

**Classroom Rules of Conduct:**

- I expect all students to arrive on time and remain in the classroom except for emergencies.
- No food or drink is permitted in the classroom.
- Turn your cell phones off or to vibrate and use of camera phones is prohibited.
- Computers make writing and revising much easier and more productive. Students must recognize though that technology can also cause problems. Printers run out of ink and hard drives crash. Students must be responsible for planning ahead and meeting deadlines in spite of technology. Be sure to save copies of your work to a disk, a hard drive, and print out paper copies for backup purposes.
- Submission of papers written for other classes is not acceptable. I expect that each paper you submit in this class is a unique paper created by you. Violation of this will result in a failing grade for the assignment.

Additional information which can be accessed through the following link PS 317 Handouts.

**Disability Guidelines:** Park University is committed to meeting the needs of all students that meet the criteria for special assistance. These guidelines are designed to supply directions to students concerning the information necessary to accomplish this goal. It is Park University's policy to comply fully with federal and state law, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990, regarding students with disabilities and, to the extent of any inconsistency between these guidelines and federal and/or state law, the provisions of the law will apply. Additional information concerning Park University's policies and procedures related to disability can be found on the Park University web page:

[www.park.edu/disability](http://www.park.edu/disability).

**Course Topics/ Dates / Assignments:**

*The Instructor reserves the right to amend this Schedule based on the progress of the course and the needs of the students.*

Week	Topic	Chap	Assignments/ Exams
1. Aug 21	Intro / Themes of P.L.	1	
2. Aug 28	Linguistic Principles	2	
<b>Monday September 4<sup>th</sup> - No class - Labor Day</b>			
3. Sept 4	Psych Mechanisms	3	Asn 1 due (Fri 9-8)
4. Sept 11	Perception of Language	4	

5. Sept 18	Internal Lexicon	5	Asn 2 due (Mon 11-18)
6. Sept 25	Sentence Comprehension and Memory	6	
7. Oct 2	Sentence Comprehension and Memory	6	
8. Oct 9	Discourse Comprehension and Memory	7	Mid-term Exam (Fri 10-13) over chaps 1-7
<b>October 14 – 22 Fall Break</b>			
10. Oct 23	Production of Speech and Language	8	
11. Oct 30	Conversational Interaction	9	Asn 3 due (Fri 11-3)
12. Nov 6	Early Language Acquisition	10	
<b>Friday November 10 - No Class - Veterans' Day</b>			
13. Nov 13	Later Language Acquisition	11	Paper (due Mon 11-13)
14. Nov 20	Processes of Language Acquisition	12	Asn 4 due (Wed 11-22)
<b>Thursday/ Friday November 23-24 - No Class Thanksgiving</b>			
15. Nov 27	Biological Foundations of Language	13	
16. Dec 4	Language, Culture, and Cognition	14	
<b>Final Exam - Monday December 11th, 8:00 - 10:0 am MA 221 (WLC) chaps 8-14</b>			

**Grading Plan:** The course grade is determined by the total number of points from papers, participation, and exams. Grades will be based on percentage cutoffs, i.e., 90 % and higher = A, 80-89 % = B, 70-79 % = C, 60-69 % = D, and less than 60 % = F.

Grade	Points
A	225 – 250
B	200 – 224
C	175 - 199
D	150 - 174
F	149 - 0



## Appendix A

### PS317: PSYCHOLOGY OF LANGUAGE

#### CORE ASSESSMENT: RESEARCH PAPER ASSIGNMENT

One of the requirements in this course is the submission of a research paper. The purpose for writing the research paper is to better acquaint you to a specific topic in the psychology of language, delve into a topic more deeply and comprehensively than we are able to do in class, and to learn about some of the researchers associated with the area. Completing this assignment set also allows you to practice APA style, scientific writing, and PowerPoint. The length of the body of the paper should be 5 pages of text with at least 5 primary references (references from journals or books not magazines! Textbooks do not count).

Do not let the five-page paper fool you. This should be a dense paper with the majority of text devoted to content. Your introduction and conclusion should be short. The remainder of your paper should be focused on the content of the topic

The content of your paper should include:

- An introduction to the general area of the topic – history of the topic is appropriate for this section
- An overview of the topic area with representative articles/ researchers presented. Please reference the neurological association to the topic.
- A specific discussion of a key researcher in the area with reference to his or her research
- Specific overview of at least two studies by the researcher (This includes discussion of rationale/ variables of the study, research method, results, conclusions, your evaluation of the study).
- Present any unanswered questions or issues and conclude the paper
- References

A good starting point is to examine the area(s) in your textbook for references and researchers associated with your topic. You will find that the references in the back of the book are great examples of APA citation. Use those as guides for your own work.

The paper should be written in APA style, e.g., title page, abstract, 1 inch margins, running heads, DS, proper reference format, etc.

Along with the submission of the paper, you will also present a summary PowerPoint presentation over your topic at the end of the semester.

There are a total of 75 points associated with this assignment.

Rubrics for Paper and PPT scoring:

## PS317 Psychology of Language Research Paper Rubric

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Topic \_\_\_\_\_

Area	Poor	Fair	Good	Great	Comments
<b>1. Focus</b>					
a. personal voice	2	3	4	5	
<b>2. Development</b>					
a. history/ context	2	3	4	5	
b. empirical studies	2	3	4	5	
c. major issues	2	3	4	5	
d. evaluation	2	3	4	5	
<b>3. Mechanics</b>					
a. grammar/ usage	2	3	4	5	
b. sources	2	3	4	5	
c. length	2	3	4	5	
d. APA format	2	3	4	5	
<b>4. Organization</b>	2	3	4	5	
<b>5. Timeliness</b>					5- point deduction per day late (late = receipt after 3 pm CST of due date of paper)
<b>Total = /50</b>					

PS317 Research Paper PPT Rubric					
Area	Expectations				Comments
	Missing	Does not meet	Meets	Exceeds	
<b>1. Cover Page</b>	0	1	2		
<b>2. History/ context</b>	0	1	2	3	
<b>3. Empirical study</b>	0	1	2	3	Missing from presentation
<b>4. Major issues</b>	0	1	2	3	
<b>5. Evaluation</b>	0	1	2	3	
<b>6. References</b>	0	1	2		
<b>7. Mechanics</b>	0	1	2	3	
<b>8. Aesthetics</b>	0	1	2	3	
<b>9. Oral Presentation</b>	0	1	2	3	
<b>10. Timeliness</b>					3- point deduction per day late
<b>Total = 15 /25</b>					

## Appendix B

### PS317 Psychology of Language

#### **Assignment 1: Accents and Website Perception: The Dialectizer**

The purpose of this assignment is manifold: To give you practice finding websites and utilizing Internet information; To examine contextual effects in language (see what happens when you take your words or others' words and put them into a different context; and to give you more exposure to pragmatic aspects of language (e.g., accents, levels of language, etc). This assignment is worth 10 points.

To complete this assignment you will need: 1) A sample of your own professional writing (It can be an 100 word excerpt from a research paper), 2) A website you want to "transform" (Use your best judgment on this one!), and 3) access to <http://rinkworks.com/dialect> . Please limit your choices to English texts.

#### Procedure:

Please copy a sample of your own professional writing and paste it into the Dialectizer. Please turn in both your professional writing and the translated version

Select a website you want translated and enter the URL (website address) into the Dialectizer. Please print off the website and the translated version. (Note: you only have to print off enough to provide a good sample. Please do not print off more than 2 pages for the website.)

Along with these 4 samples, please submit a typewritten paper to the exercise by answering the following questions:

- 1) What was your reaction to the translation of the Dialectizer?
- 2) What would be the reaction of other people (or audiences) to this translation?
- 3) Which dialect did you select and why?
- 4) Which website did you select and why?
- 5) How does this exercise apply to Psychology and what did you learn from this assignment?

## Appendix C

### PS317 Psychology of Language

#### **Assignment 2: How Foggy is Your Writing?: Obfuscatory Scrivenery (Foggy Writing)**

Some years ago, a New York plumber discovered that hydrochloric acid was dandy for cleaning clogged drains. He sent his suggestion to the Bureau of Standards. “The efficacy of hydrochloric acid is indisputable,” the Bureau wrote back, “but the ionic residues are incompatible with metallic permanence.”

“Thank you,” replied the plumber, “I thought it was a good idea too.”

Finally, someone at the Bureau wrote, “Don’t use hydrochloric acid! It eats the hell out of the pipes!”

“Foggy” writing - letters, memos, reports, and proposals that couch \$5 ideas in \$500 language - has been estimated to cost American businesses over a billion dollars a year in wasted time, lost contracts, and alienated customers. It costs a good many workers their promotions, too. In a survey, top executives from Fortune’s list of 500 companies ranked communication skill as the most important quality for business leaders - ahead of technical, financial, and marketing ability. “Even a genius will fail if he doesn’t make himself clear,” says Douglas Mueller, director of the Gunning-Mueller Clear Writing Institute in Santa Barbara, California.

Mueller travels around the country showing people how to improve their writing - at a fee of \$2000 for a six-hour seminar. His course, devised by the late Robert Gunning, has taught thousands of executives, scientists, and engineers how to write more clearly by monitoring their Fog Index.

Two things can fog a piece of writing: big words, which are usually too abstract to make pictures in the mind, and long sentences, which tax memory. The Fog Index puts these two factors into a simple formula that tells how many years of schooling are needed to read the sample easily. The first letter to the plumber, for example, has a Fog Index of 26. It would read easily for someone with at least a Ph.D. and seven years of postdoctoral study. The second letter, with a Fog Index of 6, would be a breeze for a sixth grader.

Anyone can calculate his or her own Fog Index. Choose a sample of at least 100 words. Figure the average sentence length in words; count clauses separated by colons and semicolons as full sentences. Count the number of Big Words. A Big Word is any word of three syllables or more, unless it's a proper name, a verb that has reached three syllables by adding *-ed* or *-es* (but not *-ing*), or a short-word compound like everything or bookkeeper. Figure the percentage of Big Words; it's 100 times the number of Big Words divided by the number of words in the sample. Add the percentage of Big Words to the average sentence length multiply by 0.4, and drop everything after the decimal point.

This paragraph has a Fog Index of 8.

At what Fog Index should a writer write? "A low one," says Mueller. The nation's largest daily newspaper, the *Wall Street Journal*, got that way by lowering its Fog Index to 11. *Time* and *Newsweek* also average 11. The *New Yorker* usually comes in under 12. Technical journals range a lot higher, but most are notoriously hard reading, even for specialists. Good technical memos, according to a recent study at Bell Laboratories, average only 14. "The truth is," says Mueller, "no matter what Fog Index your readers can tolerate, they prefer to get their information without strain."

Mueller says he's never met anyone in any field, who couldn't lower his Fog Index to 15. "Einstein could. It's easy. Just keep your average sentence length under 20, cross out every useless word, and never use a Big Word unless you absolutely need to. Remember: The less energy your reader wastes on decoding your language, the more he'll have left for your brilliant ideas."

The following are four writing samples with Fog Indexes. Some are written for easy reading. Others clearly were not.

***From a business letter:***

We might further mention that we would be glad to furnish any one of these whistles on a trial basis, to the extent that if the smaller size was not adequate enough, it could be returned in lieu of the purchase of a larger size, depending upon the actual operation and suitability of your requirements for signal distance and audibility.

***Fog Index: 28. Translation: "If your whistle isn't loud enough, send it back and we'll give you a bigger one." (Fog Index: 6.)***

***From the scientific journal Nature:***

The current fashion for environmental impact assessment (EIA) is partly explained by the continuing force of the environmental protection movement in Western countries. That movement is now under severe pressure from economic recession, and there are signs that impact assessments themselves will play a decreasing role in planning and development. Certainly, this is the message that emerges from the USA, where the emphasis is switching back to the costs of environmental protection.

**Fog Index: 17.**

***Opening of the Gettysburg Address:***

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

**Fog Index: 10.**

***Matthew 6:9-13 (King James Version):***

Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in Earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

**Fog Index :4.**

Source: Dunkle, T. (1982, April). Obfuscatory scrivenery, *Science*.

## **Now the assignment ☺**

Like assignment 1 this assignment involves a sampling of your writing and 2 other samples. Please select a sample of your own professional writing (at least 100 words) and calculate the Fog Index (Figure the average sentence length in words; count clauses separated by colons and semicolons as full sentences. Count the number of Big Words. A Big Word is any word of three syllables or more, unless it's a proper name, a verb that has reached three syllables by adding *-ed* or *-es* (but not *-ing*), or a short-word compound like everything or bookkeeper. Figure the percentage of Big Words; it's 100 times the number of Big Words divided by the number of words in the sample. Add the percentage of Big Words to the average sentence length multiply by 0.4, and drop everything after the decimal point).

For your second source, please select a writing sample from a popular media source, e.g., Time, Wall Street Journal, Better Homes & Gardens, etc, and calculate the Fog Index.

For your third source, please select a writing sample from a psychological journal and make the same Fog Index calculation.

For your write-up please include answers and discussion of the following:

- What is the Fog Index for your sample (include the level of the course where the paper was submitted)? Is the Fog Index too low, too high? Explain. If your Fog Index is too low or too high, what should you do to make your writing more appropriate?

- Include the Microsoft Word Readability statistics for all three samples in your write up (you can find the Readability statistics in Microsoft Word by clicking on Tools – Options – Spelling & Grammar – and then click on Show Readability Statistics. The readability statistics will be displayed after a spelling and grammar check is run).
- What are the Fog Indexes for the popular media sample and psychology journal samples? Are these appropriate? Explain. Any insights?
- How do the Fog Indexes relate to the Microsoft Word Readability statistics?
- How does this activity relate to your writing and how can you apply this information in general?

Your assignment write-up should be typewritten and is worth 20 points.

## Appendix D

### PS317 Psychology of Language

#### Assignment 3: Proverbs and Children (this assignment is worth 20 pts.)

For this assignment you need to locate a child who will cooperate long enough with you to answer some questions (Pretend it's like a game!).

**Procedure:** Before asking a child to complete the following sentences, YOU complete them first. Please respond to all of the items. Then locate a willing child (preferably between the ages of 6-10 years old) to finish them.

For your paper please discuss your answers and the child's answers. Were there any patterns? Were there any proverbs that you did not know? How did your participant handle this activity? Discuss how this activity relates to the production of language? Your paper should be longer than 1 typewritten page and less than 4 pages long. (If you want to ask several children – great!)

1. As You Shall Make Your Bed So Shall You...
2. Better Be Safe Than....
3. Strike While The....
4. It's Always Darkest Before....
5. You Can Lead A Horse To Water But...
6. Don't Bite The Hand That....
7. No News Is....
8. You Can't Teach An Old Dog New....
9. If You Lie Down With The Dogs, You'll....
10. Love All, Trust...
11. The Pen Is Mightier Than The....
12. An Idle Mind Is...
13. Where There's Smoke, There's....
14. A Penny Saved Is....

15. Two's Company, Three's....
16. Don't Put Off Tomorrow What....
17. Laugh And The Whole World Laughs With You, Cry And....
18. Children Should Be Seen And Not....
19. If At First You Don't Succeed....
20. You Get Out Of Something What You....

## Appendix E

### PS 317 Psychology of Language

#### **Assignment 4: Interviewing a Bilingual Person (this assignment is worth 20 pts.)**

For this assignment, you are to find 2 individuals who are bilingual or multilingual and interview them. Preferably, these individuals should be originally from another culture. Ask them the following questions but feel free to add your own and allow the conversation to go where it naturally leads. Please turn your paper in typewritten, and you may format the paper in a “question and answer” (Interview format). Ask them about their favorite words in their native language too!

1. What languages do they know? When, where, and how did they learn them? How fluent would they rate themselves in different language skills (reading, writing, speaking, oral comprehension)
2. What are the BEST benefits about being bilingual?
3. What are the WORST disadvantages of being bilingual?
4. How do you see yourself as different from people who are monolingual?
5. How do you see language related to culture?
6. As a bilingual, what would you like to tell monolingual Americans?
7. If you wanted to learn a new language, which one would you choose and why?
8. What is the most difficult thing about the English language?
9. Are there any concepts that you have a difficult time putting into words in the English language? Explain.
10. What advice would you give an individual coming to the US with little knowledge of the English language?