



OTRP online

Office of Teaching Resources in Psychology

Psychology 348: Psychology of Language (Psycholinguistics)

Spring 2005

Dr. Meredyth Krych-Appelbaum
Montclair State University

Class Info

Meetings: Mon. & Thurs. 11:30-12:45pm
Location: M. Dickson 275; Th. LI-051
Office Hours: Wed. 2-3:45pm
Thursday, 12:45-2pm or by appointment

Instructor Info

Email: krychm@mail.montclair.edu
Office: Rm 243, Dickson Hall
Phone: (973) 655-4336

Welcome to Psychology of Language! This course is designed so that you can develop a good basic knowledge of psycholinguistics. Language plays such a crucial role in our daily lives. We take it for granted every day, yet what is language and how does it work? How do we communicate our thoughts to other people?

In this course, we will look at language from a psychological viewpoint. We use scientific methods from cognitive psychology to answer questions *experimentally* about psychological aspects of language. This course will cover a number of topics including language acquisition, language comprehension, language and thought, and how we use language in conversation. More specifically, we can ask questions such as these:

- How do we perceive sounds? Does our perception of sounds change over time?
- What is a concept and how do we represent information?
- How do children acquire language?
- How do we learn foreign languages later in life? Do we use different processes than when we were children?
- Is the process of understanding language in conversation similar to reading text?

You will find that there are no simple answers to these questions. The psychology of language field is still fairly new, so there is much more for us (and for researchers) to discover...

Fundamental objectives:

In this course, you should be able to:

1. Understand language as a subject to be studied and the various sub-areas which together comprise the psychology of language
2. Better understand the nature of scientific inquiry in asking questions about language, its nature and how language is used.
3. Develop your oral and written communication skills. We will occasionally break into groups to discuss issues. It is important that you communicate your thoughts and ideas clearly.

4. Further your critical thinking skills and integrate course material.

Required Materials:

Harley, T. (2001). *The psychology of language: From data to theory*. 2nd edition. New York, NY: Psychology Press.

Blackboard website:

The syllabus and other important information will be placed on Blackboard. Blackboard is a helpful resource for our class to post important information over the course of the semester—whether it be your syllabus, an article for you to read, or tips for writing an effective paper. You can access Blackboard by going to the following website: <http://montclair.blackboard.com>.

At the prompt, type in your username and password as you would if you were logging into your Montclair email account (such as your webmail account.)

Sample username for Jen Smith: *Username:smithj1*

Click on Psych 348, and you will find that a copy of your syllabus is posted on-line. We will use Blackboard to supply further readings and handouts this semester.

Important Note: If you don't know your username and password, go to <http://netid.montclair.edu> and complete the form.

Grading:

93-100%	=	A
90-92	=	A-
88-89	=	B+
83-87	=	B
80-82	=	B-
78-79	=	C+
73-77	=	C
70-72	=	C-
68-69	=	D+
63-67	=	D
< 63	=	Fail

Course Requirements: (% are approximate)

Midterm exam	= 25% = 100 points
Final exam	= 35% = 140 points
5-6 page paper	= 30% = 120 points
Short assignment, Quiz	= 10% = 40 points
+ participation	

Exams

The purpose of the exams is to enable you to thoughtfully reflect on, and integrate the course material (goals #1 & 4). In order to succeed on exams, it is not enough simply to attend class or to read the book, but you must thoughtfully reflect on the material, so that you could explain what concepts mean to someone else and provide an example. Students who do best on the exams, not

only aim to master the material but are able to weigh evidence for theories, and to be able apply what they have learned. For example, you might be asked about to write an essay about the Whorf hypothesis and then provide some research evidence both for and against it. Would Chomsky most likely agree or disagree with the Whorf hypothesis? Why or why not?

Thus by preparing for the exam, you are not only better able to master the material, but you also will develop critical thinking skills and will be better able to apply the material.

There will be two (2) exams in this course. Since students have different strengths, each exam will consist of a variety of question types, including: essays, multiple choice, as well as fill-in-the blank questions. **You are responsible for all of the material covered in class, whether in the lectures, in the text, or in additional readings.** However, we will particularly emphasize overlap between the lectures and the readings. So, while attendance is not specifically a part of your grade, you will find the time we spend in class to be very important to help you focus your efforts when preparing for exams.

- Make sure to prepare *thoroughly* for each exam—it is your responsibility to make sure you learn the material.
- Feel free to ask questions either in class or in office hours and ask other students for notes if you miss class. I recommend setting up a study group to test yourself on material that you learn.

Exam conflicts

Each exam will be scheduled on the date assigned. You **MUST** take the exams on the date scheduled in order to be fair to your fellow students. If you have a conflict with an exam date, you **MUST** tell Dr. Appelbaum as soon as possible. If you do need to miss an exam due to serious illness or other emergency, you should notify me as soon as possible in order to be able to make up the exam. Otherwise, you might **NOT** be allowed to make up the exam.

In the rare case that a student is allowed to take a make-up exam, the exam format is similar but usually involves more essays (to be fair to students who have already taken the exam). So it is in your best interest to take the exam on time.

Paper

The purpose of the paper is to give you a chance to explore a topic of interest to you in more depth than we can cover in class (objectives #2, 3, & 4). In order to be successful, you must not only integrate scientific articles and class readings but develop a specific argument and support it with evidence from the literature. The strongest papers will acknowledge and attempt to reconcile counterevidence which does not support your view. Your goal is to be able to present a coherent, concise argument which you can back up with research studies as evidence.

You will have one 5-6 page paper double spaced paper on a topic related to the psychology of language. You will receive more information about the paper a couple of weeks into the semester and it will be placed on Blackboard. The **paper is due on 4/11** and your emphasis should be on quality review, not on quantity. Since the paper due date is in this syllabus, you **MUST** turn in your paper on that date either in person or by email. If you fail to turn it in on time, your grade will be penalized one letter grade (A- → B+) per day late.

A few words of advice when writing a psychology paper:

- Make an argument and support what you say with evidence from the readings.

- Do not directly quote authors—paraphrase them. Your paraphrases of ideas from other sources (the Harley text, articles) must give credit to the author.
- The paper must reflect your **best** work. Make sure to proofread your work. Multiple misspellings and poor grammar will detract from your grade. You may need to resubmit the paper with those corrections.

A few helpful tips on the writing process:

- Outline your paper before you begin writing.
- Plan to write multiple drafts.
- Make sure that you support what you say.
- Make sure you have a “take-home” message

Short Assignment

You will be given a choice of two short assignments to do (objectives #1 &2). The write-up should be approximately two pages and your emphasis should be on thoughtful analysis and content of work we have discussed in class. Examples of possible assignments:

1) Record yourself and a friend in a conversation for five minutes. Type up *everything* that you both say, including pauses, false starts, and interruptions. (This takes time to do properly). How is the way you actually speak different from what you expected? Chomsky views such pauses and false starts as problematic and as an indication of the imperfect nature of speech. In what ways might such pauses be helpful for conversation to proceed? In what ways does your conversational partner influence how you time not only what you say, but when you say it? Is there anything else you found noteworthy or surprising?

OR

2) Choose one of the articles related to class readings, then summarize it, and critique it. (This will require you to read over the paper multiple times.) Explain what the problem is being studied, what the authors assert and what evidence they use to advance their argument. Try to come up with alternative explanations for the research findings. Do you find the researcher’s arguments compelling? Why or why not?

Discussion

As part of our class, in addition to lectures, we will also have opportunities for reflection and discussion of the material (objective #3). The discussions will take place as part of our regular class sessions. I love the psychology of language and I want everyone to feel comfortable to participate and share their ideas and reasoning in class discussions. Therefore, it is crucial to be **well-prepared and attentive** in class. Your preparation and participation will help us all enjoy the class more and get more out of our time!

Questions.

During class, if you have a question related to class, please feel free to ask. If you have a question, chances are that someone else in the class has the same question. When you want to speak, please raise your hand to be called on, so that we can all easily hear each other.

Attendance and participation:

Attending every class will help you to better understand the material, help you to focus on particularly important material for exams, as well as help you to produce better papers by learning about tips for effective writing that we will discuss in class. You will also enjoy the experience and benefit more from class discussions.

It is your responsibility to participate actively in your own education. A sign-in signature sheet will be passed around at each class. Students who have 3 or more unexcused absences may have their participation grade lowered by one letter grade (e.g., from a C to C-). Your grade itself though would likely suffer much more though from the exams, since the exams cover material from the lecture as well as from the text and readings. There is a very high correlation between student attendance and student success in this course. You will benefit much more from this class by attending and participating regularly.

Plagiarism and cheating.

Copying anyone's work without acknowledging the author is considered cheating. This includes anything taken from the internet as well as in books and articles or from fellow students. Any instances will be turned over to the University Dean of students office. Plagiarism is a very serious offense and will result in a 0 for the paper and also will be taken before the Dean. Refer to Montclair State's policy on plagiarism and overall code of conduct.

<http://www.montclair.edu/pages/deanstudents/regulations1.html>

Lateness Penalty.

You must submit your work on time. For example, if you have an emergency and cannot attend class on the date the paper is due, you should email it to me at krychm@mail.montclair.edu Do NOT wait to hand in the paper until the next class. *I will deduct 10% per 24 hours late.*

Disabilities.

Students with disabilities who may need disability-related classroom accommodations need to contact Linda Smith in the Disability Services office in Morehead Hall. She will contact me, and then we can make sure that you are provided appropriate accommodations.

Office hours.

My office hours are in Dickson, Rm 243. Please feel free to visit me at that time if you have any questions. If you have a quick question, you may phone me during those hours at 973-655-4336. If you cannot make these hours, let me know and we can schedule an alternative time to meet. You can set up the appointment by emailing me or talking to me during a class break.

Info about Dr. Krych-Appelbaum:

Welcome to Psych 348 -- my name is Dr. Meredyth Krych-Appelbaum (Krych is pronounced "Crick") and I'm originally from the Philadelphia area. I've always loved languages, so I double majored in Psychology and Linguistics as an undergraduate at the University of Pennsylvania and later went on to receive a Ph.D. in cognitive psychology from Stanford University. Aside from academics, I love watching football, especially the Philadelphia Eagles and I think that chocolate should be its own food group. If you enjoy learning, asking questions, reading about ideas and experiments, and thinking about language, you should really enjoy this course. Looking forward to a great semester with you!

Course Schedule, Spring 2005:

<u>Week of:</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading for topic</u>
Week of Thurs. 1/20/04	Introduction to course and to Psych. of Language	Gleitman introductory text chapter.
Week of 1/ 24	History and methods Themes and Controversies	Harley, Chapter 1
Week of 1/31	Speech perception 2/3/05 = short quiz	Harley, Chap. 2
Week of 2/7	Word Meaning	Harley, Chap. 10 Roediger & McDermott (1995)
Week of 2/14	Language Acquisition	Harley, Chapter 4
Week of 2/21	Language acquisition (cont.)	Harley, Chapter 4
Week of 2/28	Bilingualism/Second lang. acquisition	Harley, Chapter 5;

Monday, 3/07/05 Mid-term exam

[Week of Mon. 3/14 = SPRING BREAK]

Week of 3/21	A Tale of Two Views of Language comprehension Short Assignment due 3/24/05	Trueswell & Tanenhaus (2005) Schober and Brennan (2003)
Week of 3/28	Language Use additional readings	Clark (1996) ; Clark & Krych 2004
Week of 4/4	Language and Thought	Harley, Chapter 3 Boroditsky reading Li & Gleitman 2003
Week of 4/11	Language and Thought (cont.) Paper due 4/11/05	Harley, Chapter 3
Week of 4/18	Do Animals have language?	Harley, part of Ch. 3
Week of 4/25	Class choice (if time)	
Monday, 5/2	Wrap-up	

Final exam = Monday. May 9th, 1-3pm

Note: The above course outline serves as a guide. Depending on the pace of our class (and winter weather), dates of topics are subject to change.

References of Additional Readings:

- Boroditsky, L. (in press). Linguistic relativity. *Encyclopedia of Cognitive Science*. MacMillan Press.
- Boroditsky, L. (2001). Does language shape thought? English and Mandarin speakers' conceptions of time. *Cognitive Psychology*, 43(1), 1-22.
- Clark H. H. (1996). *Using language*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Clark, H. H. & Krych, M. A. (2004). Speaking while monitoring addressees for understanding. *Journal of Memory and Language*, 50(1), 62-81.
- Gleitman, H., Fridlund, A. J., & Reisberg, D. (1999). Chapter 9: Language. *Psychology*. NY: Norton and Co.
- Harley, T. (2001). *The Psychology of Language: From Data to Theory*. 2nd edition. New York, NY: Psychology Press.
- Li, P. & Gleitman, L. R. (2002). Turning the Tables: Language and Spatial Reasoning, *Cognition*, 83, 265-294.
- Roediger, H. L. & McDermott, K. (1995). Creating false memories: Remembering false words not presented in lists. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*. 21(4), 803-814.
- Schober, M. F., & Brennan, S. E. (2003). Processes of interactive spoken discourse: The role of the partner. In A. C. Graesser, M. A. Gernsbacher, & S. R. Goldman (Eds.), *Handbook of discourse processes* (pp. 123-164). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Trueswell, J. C. & Tanenhaus, M. K. (2005). Approaches to Studying World-Situated Language Use. In J. Trueswell & M. Tanenhaus (Eds.). *World-Situated Language Use: Psycholinguistic, Linguistic and Computational Perspectives on Bridging the Language-as-Product and Language-as-Action Traditions*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Note: Like any subject area, these readings provide a snapshot of a huge field. We will try to strike a balance between empirical research articles and other chapters, which provide you with an overview of the exciting and diverse psychology of language field. Your textbook (Harley 2001) also provides numerous other sources of solid research at the end of each chapter if you would like to learn more...

