NOT A CURRENT SYLLABUS – use this Fall 2016 syllabus to get an idea about content of course for

PSYC234, Fall 2016

Psychology of Language Course Syllabus

Lectures MW 1:50-3:00; F 2:20-3:20; Weitz 235
Labs TTh 10:10-11:55 or 1:15-3:00; Olin 11

Instructor: Mija Van Der Wege (mvanderw)
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Office Hours: W 3-4 (Weitz atrium), Th 3-4 (Olin 135), or by appointment

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About the course:

Language pervades almost every aspect of our day-to-day life, from telling our parents about our new classes to writing academic essays for professors to sending text messages to our friends. If you’ve learned a second language as an adult, you probably already realize how complex language is. Yet we spend little, if any, time reflecting about how we are able to produce and understand it so fluently; we don’t need to understand how it works or even think about it at all in order to do it. Conversational language use is mostly automatic, and, as you will find out this term, some scientists believe that people have an instinct for language.

In this course, we will delve into how we process language: how an idea from the mind of one person is translated into a linguistic signal (message formulation and production) and is interpreted by a second person (language comprehension). While studying these seemingly straightforward topics, other issues will arise, such as what words mean, how culture affects our use of language, and how babies learn language. And, because no area in psychology is really isolated from others, we will also touch on memory, perception, social cognition, mental representation, and neuroscience, as they are relevant to our discussion of language. Because of this, Principles of Psychology (PSYC110) is a pre-requisite for this course.

Researchers studying language use a wide variety of methodologies from natural observation to conversation analysis to reaction time studies. In the lab, we will try out a variety of methods for studying language in hands-on experiments and you will have the opportunity to test some of your own hypotheses.

Course Objectives:

1. Learn about psychological perspectives, theories, methods, and findings related to language.
2. Practice finding, evaluating, summarizing, and critiquing primary and secondary sources.
3. Practice using sources effectively as part of a larger rhetorical argument and as a window into further well-grounded research questions.
4. Practice designing experiments, carrying out experiments, and analyzing data.
5. Improve communication skills effectively through practice with writing and speaking, both in the style recommended by the American Psychological Association and for naïve readers.
6. Develop team-building skills, including working efficiently with peers to complete larger projects, recognizing what different colleagues offer, and helping team members succeed.
7. Apply knowledge about psychology to everyday concerns and establish a habit of mind in considering scientific and psychological findings in answering questions about day-to-day life.
Texts:
Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (recommended)
Additional readings can be found linked from the Moodle course website.
The textbook has excellent supplementary materials online at http://sites.sinauer.com/languageinmind/.

Course Expectations:

*Participation.* Psychology has empirically demonstrated that people learn more and recall more following active discussion than passive listening or reading. There will be numerous opportunities in class and in lab for active participation and discussion. On class days, please come prepared to discuss the reading material and to participate fully in class activities. Attendance and participation in lab activities are mandatory. Any absences to labs must be excused in advance.

*Exams.* The first midterm exam will be an oral examination. The second midterm exam will be a written exam. For the final examination, you will include a 2-hour written exam and a 15-minute team-based oral exam. The exams are comprehensive.

*Lab Work.* In the first few weeks of lab, you will be working on predetermined lab projects. Each week, you will submit a brief report on the project and your findings.

*Research Paper.* In the second half of term in the lab, lab groups will research, design, and conduct an experiment, with some guidance from me. This will culminate in an APA style journal article, due at the end of the term.

Academic Honesty

All assignments, quizzes, and exams must be done on your own and must not have been submitted as work for another course. Note that academic dishonesty includes not only cheating, fabrication, and plagiarism, but also includes helping other students commit acts of academic dishonesty by allowing them to obtain copies of your work. You are allowed to use the Web for reference purposes, but you may not copy material from any website or any other source without proper citations. In short, all submitted work must be your own.

Cases of academic dishonesty will be dealt with strictly. Each such case will be referred to the Academic Standing Committee via the Associate Dean of Students or the Associate Dean of the College. A formal finding of responsibility can result in disciplinary sanctions ranging from a censure and a warning to permanent dismissal in the case of repeated and serious offenses. The academic penalty for a finding of responsibility can range from a grade of zero in the specific assignment to a F in this course. Please review the College's information about academic integrity on the College website (http://apps.carleton.edu/campus/doc/integrity/).

Extensions, make-ups, and accommodations:

Extensions on assignments and make-up exams will not be given except in cases of medical or personal emergencies. Situations such as severe illness and family crises are grounds for a make-up exam or an extension. In these extreme circumstances, you should contact your class dean, and have them be in touch with me and your other professors. Having another assignment or exam due on the same day does not constitute a legitimate excuse. *If you miss class the day an assignment is due, it will be counted as late.* For individuals involved in extracurricular activities that may take them off-campus on the day an exam is scheduled, please inform me at least a week before a scheduled exam to make arrangements to take the exam early.

Those who need academic accommodations should see me as soon as possible in the term, concerning either classroom, material and/or exam accommodations. Making arrangements to receive extra time on exams is your responsibility.
**Course Website:** [http://moodle.carleton.edu/]

The course materials will be available on Moodle, along with syllabus updates and class announcements. In Moodle, you will find updates to the syllabus, links to class handouts and assignments, and most of the course reserve readings in pdf format.

**Course Calendar:**

This calendar is a tentative projection of the course schedule for the term. Check for updates and specific assignments on Moodle.

- **Topic 1:** Foundations of Language
- **Topic 2:** Phonemes and Words
- **Topic 3:** Understanding Sentences
- **Topic 4:** Speech and Conversation
- **Topic 5:** Reading
- **Topic 6:** Development
- **Topic 7:** Language Diversity