

PSYC 614 – Language and Thought Interfaces FALL 2016

Class Location: KUAR Focus Group Room
Class Hours: Wednesday 10:00 – 12:45

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Course Description and Objectives

What is the relation between language and other cognitive processes? Does language influence the way we think? Or does learning a language relate only to expressing thoughts with words and the grammar of a specific language? In this course, we aim to examine the interface of language and thought from various perspectives, focusing on some of the specific cases.

Learning Objectives

At the end of this course, students will be able to gain knowledge and discuss the following topics:

- What is special about language and how different theories examine this?
- Why are the humans the only animal species to talk and think with language?
- Where did human language come from?
- Do differences in language lead to differences in thought? What kind of thought?
- How does language help or harm thought processes?
- What is the relationship between language and many other cognitive domains?
- Do language impairments or lack of spoken language impair thought processes? If so, how?

Readings

There is no textbook. Each week there will be ~ 4 assigned articles, chapters. Also for some weeks, I may ask you to find additional articles related to the topics you like.

Course Assessment and Grading

1. Participation and weekly comments/questions

Students are expected to read the material of each week before class to ensure a lively discussion in class. Students are required to submit questions/comments from weekly readings through Blackboard by **Tuesdays till 21:00**. Writing weekly questions/comments will count 12% of your grade. Class participation (and attendance) will count 20% of your grade.

2. Discussion leader (DL)

Each week, one person will be the discussion leader. We will distribute the weeks in the first class. That person will lead the discussion based on the questions and comments each student will send for that week. Discussion leader can add more information on a specific topic and/or prepare a short slide show for the class discussion. This will count 8 % of your grade.

3. Position papers

- a. Initial position paper: After the discussion of the theoretical positions on language-thought interface in the first two weeks, students will write an initial position paper regarding their view on this topic. This short reaction paper will be a 1-2 single-spaced page long. Grading will be based on clarity of writing and argumentation, not on an evaluation of the content of the opinions presented. This paper is due by **Oct 12 class time** and it will count 10 % of your grade.
- b. Final position paper: At the end of the class, students will write their final position on the relation between language-thought. In this final paper, they will be asked to present how their views have changed from their initial position (if any) and what topic/area/findings mainly affect their viewpoint. This reaction paper will be 2-3 single-spaced page long. This paper is due by **Jan 04 by 17:00**. and it will count 10% of your grade.

4. Proposal

At the end of the semester (for the final) students will submit a proposal including an in-depth review of the selected area and the proposed study (methods and possible results). The topics need to be discussed with the instructor by **Oct 26**. Each student will discuss their questions and method in a 5-7 min. presentation during class time on **Nov 23** or **Nov 30** (5% of your grade). The review of the literature part and questions for the proposal (extended introduction) of the proposal is due by **Dec 14** and will count 7% of your grade. The final proposal is due by the final time and instead of a final we will have a presentation session of the proposals. The final proposal will count 20% of your grade and the presentation will count 8% of your grade (**dates TBA**)

Grading Summary:

Weekly Comments	12%
Participation	20%
Discussion Leader	8%
Position papers	
Initial Position	10%
Final Position	10%
Proposal	
Mini presentation	5%
Review-draft	7%
Final proposal	20%
Presentation	8%
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Total	100%

TENTATIVE WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Topics and Readings	Assignments
1	Sept 28	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus • What is language for? • Discussion about the class – distribution of DL weeks 	
2	Oct 05	Theoretical Positions on L&T <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whorf (1940) • Gleitman & Papafragou (2013) • Pinker (1994) • Boroditsky (2010) • Fedorenko & Varley (2016) 	
3	Oct 12	Language and evolution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hauser et al. (2002) • Christiansen & Kirby (2003) • Lupyan & Dale (2010) • Imai & Kita (2014) 	Initial Position Paper due
4	Oct 19	Language and color <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regier & Kay (2009) • Winawer et al. (2007) • Ozturk et al. (2013) • Athanasopoulos (2009) <u>Optional:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ozgen & Davies (2002) • Siok et al. (2009) 	
5	Oct 26	Language and categorization, objects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lupyan et al. (2007) • Malt et al. (2003) • Imai & Gentner (1997) • Barner et al. (2009) 	Topic Discussion for Proposal
6	Nov 02	Language and number <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gordon (2004) • Frank et al. (2008) • Spelke & Tsivkin (2001) • Gelman & Gallistel (2004) <u>Optional:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saalbach & Imai 	
7	Nov 09	Language and memory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baddeley (2003) • Fausey & Boroditsky (2011) • Papafragou et al. (2007) • Koç et al. (2009) 	

8	Nov 16	Language and vision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dessalegn & Landau (2013) • Anderson et al. (2011) • Bedny et al. (2011) • Struiksma et al. (2009) • Chabal & Marian (2016) 	
9	Nov 23	Language and spatial cognition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goksun et al. (2010) • Gentner et al. (2013) • Sumer et al. (2014) 	Mini presentation of proposals
10	Nov 30	Language and spatial cognition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majid et al. (2004) • Haun et al. (2011) • Shusterman & Li (2016) • Landau & Ferrara (2013) <u>Optional:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marghetis et al. (2014) • Li et al. (2011) 	Mini presentation of proposals
11	Dec 07	Language and time (and space) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casasanto & Boroditsky (2008) • Cooperider et al. (2014) • Casasanto et al. (2014) • De La Fuente et al. (2014) • Cai et al. (2013) <u>Optional:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miles et al. (2011) 	
12	Dec 14	Language and odor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lorig (1999) • Oloffson & Gottfried (2015) • Majid (2015) • Majid & Levinson (2011) • Majid & Burenhult (2014) 	Draft of the Proposal
13	Dec 21	Language and music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doslcheid et al. (2013) • Fedorenko et al. (2009) • Patel (2012) • Kunert et al. (2015) 	
14	Dec 28	Wrap-up and other topics of interest	Final Position Paper due Jan 04
	TBA	Presentations of projects & FINAL - Proposal	