

## **TEACHING STATEMENT**

Tilbe Göksun, Ph.D.

### **Teaching Philosophy**

As an educator and scholar, my ultimate goal in teaching is not only to present students with breadth and depth of knowledge, but also to encourage them to explore and reflect on what they learn in a classroom. I mentor students to be independent thinkers who can critically evaluate issues within and beyond psychology, integrate different materials successfully, and transfer their knowledge to different domains. I try not simply to convey particular information on a topic, but to produce a familiarity with the tools to gather and think critically about that information.

I aim to provide theoretical and scientific understanding with its applications and go beyond the commonsense psychological knowledge to real facts in a friendly and dynamic environment. I strongly believe in equality in classroom, active participation of students, collaborative learning, and learning outside the classroom. The evaluation of student learning should go beyond rote memorization and must include assignments such as reflection papers, creation of discussion questions, and observations outside classroom. A mixture of these various activities result in better understanding and learning the material.

My experience in a culture that infuses Eastern and Western beliefs (i.e., my upbringing in Istanbul-Turkey) increases my awareness and sensitivity to diversity, cultural beliefs, and practices. My own learning experiences in diverse institutions have led me to synthesize and streamline my teaching skills. Teaching necessitates self-reflection and self-improvement; I frequently analyze my own teaching capabilities, content knowledge, and teaching materials.

In sum, my classes might be demanding, but promote independent and creative thinkers in an active environment. I avoid memorization, boost students' core skills, and prepare them for their personal and professional goals.

### **Teaching Experience**

I have had a wide array of teaching experiences, from teaching in small classes to large lecture halls in urban settings. Course topics have varied from general introductory topics (e.g., Developmental Psychology) to upper division courses (Topics in Psychology: Language Development). I have received consistently high evaluations for courses I have taught as primary instructor (e.g., Language Development) and as a teaching assistant (e.g., Developmental Psychology, Introduction to Psychology) as well as received university recognition for my teaching accomplishments ("Certificate of Merit in Teaching," Temple University). These experiences along with several guest lectures on my expertise area (e.g., Early Cognitive and Language Development) has provided opportunities to teach in a variety of settings, transfer my knowledge to students with different backgrounds, and enhance my teaching skills.

I also encourage students to move beyond the text and gain hands-on research experience in laboratories. Beyond the classroom I have served as a mentor to undergraduate students, honors students, summer interns, and high school students in research laboratories. I work closely with students on different levels of research - implementing research design, creating stimuli, recruiting participants, coding, and analyzing data. In international conferences (e.g., Society for Research in Child Development, International Conference on Infant Studies, and

Cognitive Neuroscience Society), two undergraduate students, three of the summer interns, and a volunteer I mentored were co-authors on my presentations. I also mentored an honors student on her project about language acquisition. We submitted two papers to child development conferences. In addition, together with one of my laboratory fellows, we designed a small language discussion group where undergraduate research assistants read articles in detail and discussed their ideas, reactions to the studies. I believe that mentoring in a research laboratory improves both teaching and researcher qualifications. I excel my skills about describing theoretical underpinnings of research at various levels, presenting challenging material in an accessible way by putting it to a big picture, and considering the students' perspectives on research.

Finally, as an instructor, I use my ultimate energy to inspire my students to be open to various standpoints, diversity, and cultural beliefs, and to promote them to be open-minded, creative, and analytical individuals. My perseverance, ambition, and dedication in teaching encourage me to consider teaching as an enduring process that must be developed throughout an instructor's life. My students recognize my efforts and always rate me as an accessible, helpful, dedicated, and knowledgeable instructor. As an Assistant Professor in Psychology, in both my courses and my laboratory research, I will continue to promote independent thinking of students by helping them to critically evaluate and communicate innovatively, scientifically about issues in psychology.

### **Teaching Interests**

My teaching interests include both introductory psychology courses such as Developmental Psychology and Research Methods and specialized psychology courses such as Cognitive Development, Infancy, and Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience. I am also prepared to teach on various psychology topics that are closely related to my trainings as a graduate student and post-doctoral researcher. These courses include, but are not restricted to Language Development, Cognitive Development and Language, Language and Thought, Cognitive Neuropsychology, and Spatial Development.

Below is a list of some of the potential courses I am prepared to teach in both undergraduate and graduate levels. I provide brief descriptions of the courses and my approaches in teaching them.

#### *Developmental Psychology*

My undergraduate level Developmental Psychology course will focus on the nature of neural, physical, social and cognitive development across lifespan with their interactions in a cultural, broader context. The class will consider methods used to study development and theories designed to explain how and why development takes place. Throughout the term we will also look for opportunities to apply information from research on development to current social issues. Students will not be passive lecture attendants. Instead, they will prepare questions regarding the lectures, write short reaction papers on current developmental issues ranging from ethical and social issues to findings on plasticity and bilingualism.

My graduate level Developmental Psychology course will have similar focuses as the undergraduate level course. One main difference will be the decrease in the amount of lecture time dedicated to each class. Students will rather be discussion leaders for each week and will also lead debates on some of the controversial topics in developmental psychology. We will also highlight current directions in developmental research.

At the end of this course, students will be able to think development in its context, improve their understanding on the connectedness among different developmental issues, and criticize scientific findings regarding developmental research.

### *Research Methods*

My undergraduate and graduate research methods classes would address two related parts of psychology research: evaluation of psychological evidence and implementation of psychological studies. First, students will be able to critically evaluate scientific evidence that is published in academic journals, popular press, and other resources. While doing this, we will also discuss the importance of maintaining research ethics. Second, students will design and conduct research, learn how to ask the right questions and formulate hypotheses, collect and analyze data. The course will include both lecture and lab components that will enable students to discuss scientific thinking as well as to examine and implement what they learn outside the classroom with hands-on lab experiences. At the end of this course, students will learn to effectively criticize and communicate psychological evidence and to write scientifically.

### *Language Development*

This graduate level seminar on language development will explore language development closely through different theories and research findings and its close connections to other cognitive processes (e.g., conceptual development). Students will not only learn the facts and findings on language development, but also to evaluate and analyze several theories critically within the context of historical debates and recent advances in methodology. There will be visits to the research labs (including mine) to present some of these methods. Students will prepare discussion questions for each class and every week one or two students will lead the discussion. On some of the controversial and highly debated topics such as the modularity of language, domain specificity of language, uniqueness among species, and bilingualism, the class will be divided into two groups to encourage discussion. Students will also write position papers on these topics. At the end of this course, students will learn and critically evaluate language development with its interactions to other cognitive processes.

### *Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience*

The goal of this undergraduate level course will be to present an in-depth review on developmental cognitive neuroscience, which is an evolving field with the advances of new methodologies and techniques in this field. Some of the questions that will be considered in the course are: What is the nature of developmental change? How does the developing brain support underlying emergent behavior? What are the consequences of early brain injury on cognitive functions? What are the links between various cognitive functions and neurobiological substrates in neurodevelopmental disorders such as autism, specific language impairment, and Williams syndrome? During this course, special emphasis will be given to major methods used in this area, the relation of developmental cognitive neuroscience to broader scientific issues such as critical periods of development, plasticity, the modularity arguments in development, and nature-nurture debate. The implications for education and social issues will also be discussed. This upper-level undergraduate course will involve a short lecture period followed by discussion sessions and debates on controversial issues. At the end of this course, students will develop an understanding of this emerging field with its broader impacts on various developmental topics, educational settings, and social issues.

## Sample Syllabus

Below is a sample syllabus from one of the upper-level undergraduate courses – Topics in Psychology: Language Development – I taught as an instructor.

### Psychology 3620 - Topics in Psychology Language Development

Instructor: Tilbe Göksun  
Course #: 3620-011  
Class Hours: TR 5:45 -8:40 p.m.  
Location: Tuttleman Learning Center 403A

Email: [tgöksun@temple.edu](mailto:tgöksun@temple.edu)  
Office: Weiss Hall 321  
Office Hours: Tuesdays 4:00 – 5:30 pm  
Thursdays 4:00 – 5:30 pm or by appointment

Prerequisite: Psychology 2196 (W123)

#### Introduction

Learning language is one of the milestones in children's development. Infants produce their first words by the end of the first year. In their second year, they talk in short sentences. We usually take language for granted. However, language learning is a tough task if you think about learning a second language as adults. Then, how do infants achieve this task?

The aim of this course is to explore language development closely through a variety of theories and research findings. You will become familiar with different theories concerning language development, and develop an understanding of relevant issues, theoretical positions, and relevant methodologies in language development. In this course, we will discuss and analyze language development critically. You will also have the opportunity to evaluate research with respect to language development.

#### Course Materials

##### **Book**

Hoff, E. (2009). *Language Development, 4th Edition*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

##### **Readings**

In addition to the book chapters, each week there will be readings to discuss. You are required to read the chapters in your textbook and the readings that pertain to the day's lecture *prior* to the lecture.

##### *Academic Integrity*

Professional behavior is expected, including demonstrating courtesy and respect for the instructor and for other students during class. This includes turning off cell phones, not reading the newspaper during class etc. Professional behavior also includes adhering to the Temple

University rules for academic honesty (available in the student handbook). Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated and you will receive “0” from that exam or assignment/paper.

## **Course Requirements**

### *1. Attendance*

You are required to come to class, no exceptions. Attendance will be taken in each class and will make up **6%** of your final grade. We will meet 12 times in the entire session. Each day will count **0.5%** of your grade. You are required to come within 15 minutes of the official start time of class (5:45 pm). If not, you will get “0” for that day. Similarly, on the day when there is an exam, if you do not show up within *15 minutes* of the official start of class you will *not* be permitted to take the exam. Please try to email me before class if there is an emergency.

### *2. Questions and Participation*

You are required to read the chapters and articles in your textbook that pertain to the day’s lecture *prior* to the lecture. On the selected 3 days, you are required to submit discussion questions regarding the readings for that week. Your participation to class discussion and your questions before the class time will make up **12%** of your final grade. Each time your question and participation will be evaluated out of **4 points** ( $4 \times 3 = 12$  points of your final grade)

### *3. Exam*

Each student will be responsible for taking **one** in-class exam. The exam will be in both test and essay format, and will count **30%** of your grade. There will also be a review prior to the exam. For review session, you should come to class with your questions about the covered topic and I will also present sample questions. If you are not able to come to the exam (e.g., medical reasons), you must send me an email before exam time and provide your report of excuse. I will arrange a make-up exam time. If you do not show up in the make-up exam date, you will receive “0” from the exam with no exceptions.

### *4. Assignment*

In addition to the exam, there will be **one** out-of-class assignment. There will be 5 short articles available on Blackboard to choose **one** of them. You are required to read one of the articles and write a reaction paper for that. At the due date of the assignment, we will discuss the articles and your reactions to them briefly class. I might give you some specific questions to focus on while writing the reaction paper. The reaction paper should be only 2-3 double-spaced pages and in APA format. It will count **12%** of your final grade. Details about the assignment will be given later on a separate document.

### *5. Paper and Presentation*

As your final project, you are required to write **a review paper** on a relevant topic of language development. I will ask you to discuss your topic with me by **June 2**. The paper should be based on reading articles in-depth on a chosen topic (between 5-7 articles) and analysis of them. The review paper should be 8-10 double-spaced pages and in APA format. At the end of the session, you will give a 10- to 15-minute **presentation** of your paper. Details about the paper and presentation will be given later on a separate document.

The paper will count **30%** of your grade. Your presentation of the paper will be evaluated out of **10 points** (**10%** of your grade).

### 6. Extra Credit

You can earn up to **3** extra credits. Please see the “Participation in Research” section at the end of the syllabus.

**\*\*\* All of your points will promptly be posted onto Blackboard including your attendance. Please see me if you will have any objections or problems/concerns for the grading.**

### **Grading**

Attendance	6%
Questions and Participation	12%
Exam	30%
Assignments	12%
Review Paper	30%
<u>Presentation</u>	<u>10%</u>
Total	100%

Your final grade will be based on the following grading scale; however, grades will be curved up if necessary:

↑93	=	A	72 – 70	=	C-
92 – 90	=	A-	69 – 67	=	D+
89 – 87	=	B+	66 – 63	=	D
86 – 83	=	B	62 ↓	=	D-
82 – 80	=	B-			
79 – 77	=	C+			
76 – 73	=	C			

### **Students with disabilities:**

Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible. Contact Disability Resources and Services at 215-204-1280 in 100 Ritter Annex to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

## WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE

### **Week 1:**

#### May 19: Introduction to Language Development

Hoff – Chapter 1

##### Articles:

1. Miller, G.A. (1990). The place of language in a scientific psychology. *Psychological Science, 1(1)*, 7-14.

#### May 21: Biological Bases of Language Development

Hoff – Chapter 2

##### Articles:

1. Hauser, M.D. (2005). Our chimpanzee mind. *Nature, 437*, 60-63.
2. Kaminski, J., Call, J., & Fischer, J. (2004). *Science, 304*, 1682-1683
3. Blakeslee, S. (2007). If you want to know if Spot loves you so, it's in his tail. *New York Times*, April, 17.

### **Week 2:**

#### May 26: Phonological Development

Hoff – Chapter 4

##### Articles:

1. Werker, J. (2003). Baby steps to learning language. *Journal of Pediatrics, 143*, S62-S69
2. Saffran, J.R., Aslin, R.N., & Newport, E. (1996). Statistical learning by 8-month-old infants. *Science, 274*, 1926-1928.
3. Holowka, S., & Petitto, L.A. (2002). Left hemisphere cerebral specialization for babies while babbling. *Science, 297*, 1515.

#### **\*\*\* Post Discussion Questions by May 26, 3:00 pm**

#### May 28: Perceptual and Conceptual Development

##### Articles:

1. Baillargeon, R. (2004). Infants' physical world. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 13(3)*, 89-93.
2. Spelke, E. S. (1998). Nativism, empiricism, and the origins of knowledge. *Infant Behavior and Development, 21(2)*, 181-200.
3. Hespos, S. J. & Spelke, E. S. (2004). Conceptual precursors to spatial language. *Nature, 430*, 453 - 456.

### **Week 3:**

#### June 2: Gesture and Non-verbal Communication

Hoff Ch 3 (pp. 89-104)

##### Articles:

1. Petitto, L. A., Holowka, S., Sergio, L. & Ostry, D. (2001). Language rhythms in babies' hand movements. *Nature, 413*, 35-36.
2. Iverson, J., & Goldin-Meadow, S. (2005). Gesture paves the way for language development. *Psychological Science, 16*, 367-371.
3. Goldin-Meadow, S. (2006). Talking and Thinking With Our Hands. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 15*, 34 – 39
4. **Optional:** Liszkowski, U., Carpenter, M., Tomasello, M. (2007) Pointing out new news, old news, and absent referents at 12 months. *Developmental Science, 10 (2)*, F1-F7.

**\*\*\* Discussion about final papers**

**\*\*\* Review for Exam: Come to class with your questions – Last 45 minutes for review**

June 4: Lexical Development: Word Learning

Hoff – Chapter 5

Articles:

1. Bornstein, M.H., Cote, L.R., Maital, S., Painter, K., Park, S.Y., Pascual, L., Pecheux, M.G., Ruel, J., Venuti, P., & Vyt, A. (2004). Cross-linguistic analysis of vocabulary in young children: Spanish, Dutch, French, Hebrew, Italian, Korean, and American English. *Child Development, 75*(4), 1115-1139.
2. Golinkoff, R.M., & Hirsh-Pasek, K. (2008). How toddlers begin to learn verbs. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 12*, 397-403.
3. **Optional:** Woodward, A.L. (2009). Infants' grasp of others' intentions. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 18*, 53-57.

**\*\*\* Exam: @ 7:15 pm**

**Week 4:**

June 9: The Development of Syntax and Morphology

Hoff – Chapter 6

Articles:

1. Marcus, G. F., Vijayan, S., Bandi Rao, S. and Vishton, P. M (1999). Rule learning by seven-month-old infants, *Science, 283*, 77-80
2. Pinker, S. (1999). Out of the minds of babes. *Science, 1*, 40-41.
3. Gertner, Y., Fisher, C., & Eisengart, J. (2006). Learning words and rules: Abstract knowledge of word order in early sentence comprehension. *Psychological Science, 17*, 684-691.

**\*\*\* Post Discussion Questions by June 9, 3:00 pm**

June 11: Language, Culture, and Cognition in Development

Hoff – Chapter 7

**\*\*\* Discussion of Assignment Articles**

**\*\*\* Assignment (due class time)**

**Week 5:**

June 16: Communication and Language Development

Hoff – Chapter 3 (pp. 104-130)

Hoff – Chapter 9 (pp. 341- 350)

1. Matthews, D., Lieven, E. & Tomasello, M. (2007). How toddlers and preschoolers learn to uniquely identify referents. *Child Development, 78*, 1744–1759.
2. **Optional:** Nicolopoulou, A. (1997). Children and narratives: Towards an interpretive and sociocultural approach. In M. Bamberg (Ed.), *Narrative development* (pp. 179-217). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum

June 18: Bilingualism

Hoff – Chapter 8

Articles:



1. Petitto, L. A. & Kovelman, I. (2003). The Bilingual Paradox: How signing-speaking bilingual children help us to resolve it and teach us about the brain's mechanisms underlying all language acquisition. *Learning Languages*, 8 (3), pp.5-18.
2. Weikum, W., Vouloumanos, A., Navarro, J., Soto-Faraco, S., Sebastian-Galles, N., & Werker, J.F. (2007). Visual language discrimination in infancy. *Science*, 25 May, 316 (5828), 1159.
3. **Optional:** Genesee, F., Nicoladis, E. (2007). Bilingual first language acquisition. In E. Hoff and M. Shatz (Eds.), *Blackwell handbook of language development*. UK: Blackwell.

**\*\*\* Post Discussion Questions by June 18, 3:00 pm**

**Week 6:**

June 23: Atypical Language Development

Deafness, blindness, autism, Down syndrome, Williams Syndrome, SLI

Hoff – Chapter 10

Articles

1. Goldin-Meadow, S. (2007). The challenge: Some properties of language can be learned without linguistic input. *The Linguistic Review*, 24, 417 – 421.
2. Smith, V., Mirenda, P., Zaidman-Zait, A. (2007). Predictors of Expressive Vocabulary Growth in Children With Autism. *Journal of Speech, Language & Hearing Research*, 50, 149-160.
3. Helmuth, L. (2001). From the mouth (and hands) of babes. *Science*, 293, 1758-1759.
4. **Optional:** Reilly, J., Losh, M., Bellugi, U., Wulfeck, B. (2004). “Frog, where are you?” Narratives in children with specific language impairment, early focal brain injury, and Williams syndrome. *Brain & Language*, 88, 229-247.

June 25: Bringing everything together – What have we learned?

**\*\*\* Class Presentations**

**Articles for Assignment**

Pick one of the following articles for your assignment. The articles and instructions will be available on Blackboard.

1. Saffran, J. R. (2003). Musical learning and language development. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 999, 397-401.
2. Kinzler, K. D., Dupoux, E., & Spelke, E. S. (2007). The native language of social cognition. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 104, 12577 – 12580.
3. Winawer, J., Witthoft, N., Frank, M., Wu, L., Wade, A., & Boroditsky, L. (2007). Russian blues reveal effects of language on color discrimination. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 104, 7780-7785.
4. Malt, B. C., Gennari, S., Imai, M., Ameel, E., Tsuda, N., & Majid, A. (2008). Talking about walking: Biomechanics and the language of locomotion. *Psychological Science*, 19, 232-240.
5. Boroditsky, L. (2003). Linguistic Relativity. In L. Nadel (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Cognitive Science* (pp. 917-921). MacMillan Press: London, UK.