

Linguistics 170: Intro to Psycholinguistics

TuTh 2-320

Warren Lecture Hall 2204

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Instructor Office Hours: Tues 12-2

Website: <http://crl.ucsd.edu/~phofmeister/teaching/2011/lign170.html>

Course description

This is an introduction to psycholinguistics, the study of how humans learn, represent, comprehend, and produce language. Topics covered in the course will include visual and auditory recognition of words, sentence comprehension, reading, sentence production, language acquisition, neural representation of language, bilingualism, and language disorders.

Course organization

The twice-weekly course meetings will be a mixture of lectures, group discussions, and tutorials. During lectures and tutorials, interrupting (politely!) to ask questions is highly encouraged. There will also be an optional review section held at a time TBA.

Intended Audience

Upper-division students interested in language and the mind. Students should have taken Linguistics 101 (Introduction to the Study of Language), Psychology 105 (Cognitive Psychology), both, or the equivalent of at least one. If this doesn't describe you, talk to the instructor.

Course objectives

By the end of this course you should have a solid understanding of both the research methodologies used in psycholinguistics and many of the well-established major findings in the field. You should also have achieved a degree of confidence in reading and critiquing original psycholinguistics research articles.

Textbook & other requirements

The following textbook is required for the class:

Harley, Trevor. 2008. [The psychology of language: from data to theory](#). Psychology Press.
Third edition.

This is a highly detailed text covering the major topics of psycholinguistics. You should budget quite a bit of time for reading the assigned chapters as it is a fairly densely written book. It has many references for further reading in all subfields of psycholinguistics. If you are interested in other developments in a particular subfield, please ask the TA or instructor.

Assignments & grading

Requirements & grading

Your grade will be based on five criteria:

1. **Squibs.** There are no mid-term or final exams in this course, but instead you will be required to write five short squibs (= a short paper ~ 500-1000 words) on the readings and course material. Throughout the quarter, I will present between 7-9 writing prompts. You are free to skip writing prompts if you have completed five already (or if a topic does not interest you or other obligations prevent you from writing), but be careful not to leave your squibs for the end of the quarter. **It is your responsibility to make sure you have completed five squibs by the end of the quarter.**

Each squib must be posted on WebCT by **the beginning of class** on the day it is due. Please don't email the instructor/TAs with the squib unless you have technical problems with WebCT.

Each squib will be worth 6% each for a total of 30% of your grade. Your grade will depend on the submission being **on time** and **substantially engaging with the writing prompt**. A squib that only **summarizes the contents of a reading** will receive **zero credit**. I have kept the number of assignments low in order to improve the chances that you will be thoughtful and on time with your assignments. So, please help me in this endeavor by thinking critically about the prompt, doing any necessary reading, and writing about it!

I will show you a sample squib before the first one is due.

Note on technical problems that may arise with squib submissions

WebCT is imperfect software, and odd errors can crop up when you're doing something you think should be totally simple. However, if you wait until just before the submission deadline to enter your squib, then this is a risk that you take upon yourself. I highly recommend that you write the squib in a text editor or word processor, then copy and paste it into the WebCT after it's done. Ideally you should do this sufficiently before the submission deadline that if WebCT gives you an error upon submission, you can restart your browser and try again. If you continue to have difficulties, you can certainly email your squib to me and the TA with an explanation that you were having difficulties with WebCT. But you'll have to send this email before the submission deadline!

2. One short analysis of a pre-existing psycholinguistic dataset. You will be supplied with data relating to a core topic in psycholinguistics. You will need to provide a written analysis of what the findings suggest about the topic, and discuss any implications. The instructor & TAs will provide assistance in showing you how to analyze data. This will count for 10% of your grade.

3. A group review paper (10-12 pages) on a particular published research article chosen by the group (4-5 people). There are many, many articles referenced in the Harley book, so you should be able to find a selection of articles of interest to you. Some articles may be unsuitable for review, so please clear your preferred choice of article with either the TA or the instructor and research article your group has presented on, to be written jointly by all

members of the group. You should meet as a group at least once and thoughtfully discuss the article before writing it. This will count for 20% of your grade.

4. Another review paper (6-8 pages) on a psycholinguistics research article of your choice, this one to be completed individually due **Monday June 6, 5:00 PM**. This will count for 35% of your grade.

5. One of the two following options (5% of your grade; no extra credit for doing both!):

a. Participation in 4 hours of the Human Subject Pool (<http://experimetrix2.com/ucsd/>): each hour of participation counts as 1% of your grade, *plus a 1% bonus for participation in all four hours*. You are encouraged to participate in language-related experiments, and to participate in these experiments early.

b. Writing a research paper (1000-1500 words) on some topic covered in the class. The due date for such a paper is June 2, and *no late papers will be accepted*. If you choose this option, you must discuss it and get an OK on your research topic from the instructor/TAs by May 3—*before* writing the paper and turning it in.

In addition, positive participation in classroom discussion (including asking well-thought-out questions) will be rewarded—your final grade may get bumped up a notch if it is borderline.

6. The following will be taken into consideration favorably when assessing borderline grade cases:

- a. Regular attendance in class, having done the assigned readings beforehand, and active participation in class discussions;
- b. Active participation in the optional section meetings;
- c. Active participation in WebCT discussion lists, including (thoughtfully!) answering questions posed by other students.

WebCT

For the most part, we will be using WebCT for administering homework and various surveys. Most of you should be familiar with WebCT from another class; if you aren't, take a look at http://iwdc.ucsd.edu/docs/step1_webct_fa07.pdf.

Instructor contact policy

Coming to talk to the instructor or TA during their office hours is highly encouraged. Electronic communications about course content should be made through the WebCT discussion board (see above). We ask that you use email contact only for communications that are not relevant to other students (e.g., specific learning circumstances or medical/personal emergency). Also, if you email the instructor or TA, please do not use WebCT to do so! WebCT mail is a terrible interface and very inconvenient for us.

Regrading/correction policy

We all make mistakes—TAs and professors as well as students—so please do look over your returned homeworks and tests. In addition to helping ensure that you get the credit

you deserve, this checking will improve your retention of the material. Any mistakes you notice should be brought to our attention either in person during office hours or after class (in the case of physical homeworks and exams), or via email (in the case of WebCT homeworks) to the address

However, there is a statute of limitations: ***all grading mistakes must be brought to our attention within one week of the distribution of the answer key to the homework or test.***

Academic Integrity

Please take some time to read the [UCSD Policy on Integrity of Scholarship](#). We will be conducting this course in full accordance with this policy. In particular, any suspected cheating or plagiarism in the course will be taken very seriously and investigated. If we determine that cheating or plagiarism has taken place, it will be reported to UCSD's Office of the Academic Integrity Coordinator, in accordance with UCSD policy. Please note that ***it is not at our discretion*** whether or not to report instances of academic dishonesty: ***we are obligated by UCSD policy*** to report such instances.

Examples of academic integrity violations

Here are some examples of academic integrity violations. ***DO NOT DO THESE!!!***

- Copying a friend or roommate's homework assignment.
- Finding the answer key to a homework assignment (e.g., on the Web) and copying it.
- Giving a false reason (e.g., death of a relative) for missing an exam or turning in an assignment late.

This is not an exhaustive list — please read the [UCSD Policy on Integrity of Scholarship](#) and use your common sense!

Class Schedule (tentative)

Week	Day	Topic	Reading	Homework
Week 1	29 Mar	Class intro	Harley Ch. 1	
	31 Mar	Linguistics review	Harley Ch. 2	
Week 2	5 Apr	Word recognition	Harley Ch. 6 (pp 167-192)	
	7 Apr	Word recognition	Harley Ch. 6 (pp 192-208)	Squib #1 Due
Week 3	12 Apr	Speech perception	Harley Ch. 6 (pp 257-267)	
	14 Apr	Speech perception	Harley Ch. 6 (pp 267-283)	Squib #2 Due
Week 4	19 Apr	Reading	Harley Ch. 7 & 8	
	21 Apr	Comprehension		Squib #3 Due
Week 5	26 Apr	Comprehension	Harley Ch. 10 (287-301)	
	28 Apr	Comprehension	Harley Ch 10 (301-319)	Squib #4 Due
Week 6	3 May	Comprehension	Harley Ch. 10 (301-319)	
	5 May	Comprehension	Harley Ch 12 (361-373)	Squib #5 Due
Week 7	10 May	Language meaning: representation and processing I	Harley Ch 11 (321-340)	
	12 May	Language meaning: representation and processing I	Harley Ch 13 (340-360)	Squib #6 Due
Week 8	17 May	Language production I	Harley Ch 13 (397-404)	
	19 May	Language production II	Harley Ch 13 (404-428)	Squib #7 Due
Week 9	24 May	Language production III	Harley Ch 13 (428-450)	
	26 May	Neural methods in the study of language	Harley Ch 5	Squib #8 Due
Week 10	31 May	Models of language use	Harley 485-491	
	2 Jun	TBA	TBA	Squib #9 Due