

# Psycholinguistics and Linguistic Theory, I

## LING157/257, Fall Quarter, 2009

**Time:** Tu/Th, 10-11:45am  
**Place:** Soc Sci 2, Room 075  
**Web:** <http://people.ucsc.edu/~mwagers/ling157/>

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**Office hours:** Wed, 10am – 12n

### How is this course structured?

**Course description:** The goal of psycholinguistics, as a discipline, is to develop models of language cognition: how is language acquired? how is language comprehended? how is language produced? LING157 will introduce some of these foundational questions. We will examine some basic properties of mental processes and representations involved in language processing (primarily perception); consider how those properties constrain or interact with theories of linguistic knowledge; how linguistic processes can be deployed both over very small time-scales -- say, hundreds of milliseconds -- and how they can change over longer ones -- months to years.

Along the way it will be necessary to learn something about experimental design and techniques in cognitive psychology. To do that, we will undertake several psycholinguistic experiments on ourselves and our friends.

This course is *not* an exhaustive introduction to the field. It is focused on the relationship between language structure and language perception, and there are three core relationships we will examine: phonology and sound perception, word structure and word recognition, and real-time grammatical accuracy. However, this course will provide you with the necessary theoretical anchors and practical experience to learn about other areas of psycholinguistics, and, in particular, prepare you for topics covered in LING158/258.

**LING157/LING257:** This course has dual enrollment. LING157 is the course for undergraduates. LING257 is the course for graduate students. We will meet together and cover the same material, but LING257 enrollees have expanded responsibilities for readings and assignments and distinct evaluation criteria. See '**How will I be evaluated?**' below.

**Course readings:** There is no textbook to purchase for this class. Readings consist of primary sources, review articles, and some book excerpts. The full bibliography is online. These will be distributed electronically, as described at the first class meeting.

Several books are on reserve at McHenry, to serve as supplementary reading or guidance for your projects. Initially, these are:

- Townsend, D., & Bever, T., (2001). *Sentence Comprehension*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. *This book is also available electronically through [CruzCat](#).*
- Gaskell, M. Gareth, ed., (2007). *The Oxford handbook of psycholinguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

**Course schedule:** The course schedule is available on the course web site. Please check it frequently. If there are any changes, I will announce them in class, but you are ultimately responsible for keeping yourself up-to-date. For each instructional day in the quarter, the course schedule indicates: lecture and discussion topics, the readings that should be completed *by that date*, and what assignments are due *on that date*.

## How will I be evaluated?

### 90% Written work

- 65%** Lab project final write-ups
  - 10% speech perception lab
  - 20% lexical access lab
  - 35% sentence processing lab
- 25%** Worksheet assignments

### 10% Participation

#### Scale

Scores are not curved, so there is no competition. I do expect you to work hard. However, I am aware the material may be difficult or, at least, unfamiliar. You will receive a grade that fairly reflects that fact. The grades and their numerical range are as follows:

A+ > 95 > A > 85 > A - > 80  
 B+ > 75 > B > 65 > B- > 60  
 C+ > 55 > C > 50  
 D > 40 > F

#### Late Work Policy

Assignments should be turned in at the beginning of the class on the day they are due (within the first 15 minutes). If you are unsure whether you will be able to make it to class on time, email me the completed assignment in advance of class. Otherwise, the work is *late*.

Late work is penalized as follows:

- 25% deduction, if turned in by the beginning of the *next* class period;
- 40% deduction, thereafter.

Please email any questions about assignments to me well in advance of the due date. Not understanding an assignment – when you have not asked for help – is not an acceptable excuse.

As a complement to the late work policy, it is the instructor's responsibility to return your work in a timely manner. The worksheet assignments will be returned by the next class period, and lab write-ups after two class periods.

### **LING257 Enrollees**

Graduate students must assume responsibility for their own academic careers. Within the context of this course, I advise you to read widely, as suggested by the supplemental bibliography. Naturally your written work will be held to high standards for clarity, incorporation of relevant background, analytic rigor and synthesis of new ideas. You have two specific additional responsibilities:

1. You should think of the final project write-up as having the scope of a seminar paper. In addition, you will submit an abstract to accompany the paper, written as you would if you were submitting the work to a conference. (and perhaps you will!)
2. You are responsible for presenting once this quarter at the Syntax and Language Processing lab meeting. Presentations on methodologies or analysis techniques are as welcome as presentations on research papers. Contact me about possible topics and scheduling.

In exchange for these responsibilities, LING257 students are not required to submit the worksheet assignments – only the final write-ups. You are welcome to complete those assignment and submit it for comments, but it will not count toward your grade.

### **What are the student's responsibilities?**

You are expected to take responsibility for your own learning. So, here are the usual reminders for optimizing your performance in the class.

Attend class. You are responsible for material in your readings and as well as those presented in lecture. Keep in mind that readings will often be primary sources or professional reviews, and it is during class that unfamiliar concepts will be explained and discussed.

Participate. Ask questions and offer ideas in class. Take responsibility in group work.

Complete written assignments in a timely manner. Pay attention to instructions and due dates so you can plan the required research. Even in short responses or technical lab reports, the quality of your prose writing matters. It is an important goal of this class to hone your skills in communicating scientifically. You will be in a better position to do so, the less you have to rush. The late work policy is spelled out under "How will I be evaluated?"

Adhere to standards of academic honesty. From the Registrar (*The Navigator*, p 3):  
"Academic integrity is the cornerstone of a university education. Academic dishonesty diminishes the university as an institution and all members of the university community. It tarnishes the value of a UCSC degree. "

This class involves a fair amount of collaboration in the form of lab work. For each

assignment, I will make it clear what is expected of each individual. I will also ask you to list who you worked with. But here are the general guidelines: I encourage you to work together to understand material, to work out the design of experiments, to share the responsibility for collecting data, and to help one another understand how to execute the data analysis afterwards. However, all analysis and written work must be completed by the individual.

The Academic Integrity web site contains the policies and procedures that bind us both for suspected academic dishonesty: [http://www.ucsc.edu/academics/academic\\_integrity/](http://www.ucsc.edu/academics/academic_integrity/)

Request accommodation if necessary. If you qualify for classroom accommodations because of a disability, please obtain an Accommodation Authorization from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) and submit it to me in person outside of class (e.g., office hours) within the first two weeks of the quarter. Contact DRC at 459-2089 (voice), 459-4806 (TTY), or <http://drc.ucsc.edu> for more information on the requirements and/or process.

Communicate. Lastly, but most importantly, never hesitate to get in touch. If you get into difficulty, it is entirely appropriate to seek help. Come by office hours, or drop me an email. Likewise, if you are having a problem that adversely affects your classroom participation, contact me.