

Psychology of Language

Sten Knutsen

Summer 2019

Rutgers University Psychology Department

COURSE INFORMATION

Rutgers Course Number: 01:830:351 Section B6

Day and Time: Mondays and Wednesdays 6:00 PM — 10:00 PM

Location: SEC-212

INSTRUCTOR

Sten Knutsen (Cognitive Psychology PhD student) [Please call me Sten!]

Email: sten.knutsen@rutgers.edu

Office: SEC-212

Office Hours: Before and after class

Note: office hours by appointment are held in room 110 of the Psych. Bldg

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Psychology of Language explores the cognitive bases of human language. The underlying question that this course seeks to address is: What makes human language special? How does human language differ from other systems of communication systems? What is the relationship between language and thought? Why are people able to speak, understand, and learn the sounds, words, and sentences of language with ease, despite the daunting computational problems associated with doing so?

INSTRUCTOR GOALS

My goals as your instructor are:

- for each student to learn and master the material of this course
- for each student to earn an A (note that the wording is *earn* not *receive*)
- to structure each class session in an effective and engaging manner
- to cultivate a safe environment for students to learn and make errors (both in the classroom and in office hours)
- to improve as an instructor.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

While in the class, I as the instructor expect each of you:

- to pay attention and ask lots and lots of questions (you're all here to learn, not to text and not to pretend that you don't have any questions)
- to engage your mind with the material and participate in group discussions about it
- to be bold enough to express an idea even if you're not positive that you're correct

- to be honest with yourself about what you do and do not know (the pace is so fast that you really need to see me as soon as you fall behind on any concept whatsoever)
- never to hinder any fellow student's ability to learn (e.g., don't be a distraction to everyone by texting or talking in class, and don't make anyone feel 'stupid')
- to try to enjoy the learning process!

Similarly, you can expect that:

- I will be ready and willing to address any questions you have
- I will challenge you to think and reason in ways that encourage your academic and intellectual growth
- I will always be respectful, considerate, and patient with you
- I will make himself available in office hours and by appointment to provide any additional help or clarification you'd like
- I will present the material in multiple ways so that each student might be personally engaged in a manner and at a level by which he or she learns best
- I will try my best to make the learning process enjoyable!

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Traxler, M. 2011. *Introduction to Psycholinguistics: Understanding Language Science*, 1st edition. Wiley-Blackwell.

NOTE: With a little creative Googling, you can find this book online at an EXTREME discount ;)

READINGS

You are responsible for the information in the assigned readings. Readings that are not from the class textbook (Traxler) will be found on Sakai under Resources > Additional Readings. I highly recommend that you **complete the readings before class** so that you are primed for the lecture. Please keep up with the readings!

ATTENDANCE

Students are to attend every class and to be on time. This course has a necessarily fast pace, so missing even a single class can lead to substantial gaps in your understanding. Although exams may be partly based on readings, **they will stress the material that I present in class, some of which is not in the books.**

ATTENDANCE QUIZZES

There will be two attendance quizzes per class: one during the first half of class, and one during the second. The quizzes will be just a question or two about material we just covered in that day's lecture — **so no need to study in advance.** This means that a) if you show up to class and b) are paying attention, these quizzes should be pretty easy.

CLASSES

As this is a summer course, our meetings are quite long, providing time for two complete lectures per class. There will be a break between the the lectures (more details in our first class). As you look at the tentative Lecture Schedule, you will see I have broken up classes into parts.

GRADING

The following is the *tentative* grading breakdown for the semester:

- **Attendance quizzes (twice each class):** 15% of final grade
- **Exam 1 (Monday, June 10):** 25% of final grade
- **Exam 2 (Monday, June 24):** 25% of final grade
- **Exam 3 (Wednesday, July 3):** 35% of final grade

MAKE-UP EXAMS

All students are expected to take the exams on the day they are offered. If you are so ill that you cannot physically take the exam on the scheduled day, ***you must notify me by email before the exam starts***. All make-up exams will be offered on Friday, July 5 at 9:00 AM. This exam will be different than the corresponding exam and will be entirely composed of essay questions. ***A note from a doctor, dean or other appropriate person will be required for makeup exams.***

CHEATING

All students are required to comply with the University's Academic Integrity Policy, as presented at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu>

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you receive special accommodations for exams, you must provide your official Letters of Accommodation to me at least one week prior to the first exam. You must also make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Disability Services for them to proctor your exam at the same day and time as the rest of the class. The ODS requires you to make these arrangements at least five business days ahead of each individual exam. If you fail to make arrangements through ODS, you will not receive special accommodations and will be required to take the exam with the rest of the class.

TENTATIVE LECTURE SCHEDULE

Date	Lectures	Readings
Wednesday, May 29	Part I: Introduction to Psycholinguistics Part II: Language & Communication	Fernandez & Cairns, pp 25 – 29; Traxler chap. 1, pp 1 – 18; Crystal, pp. 396 – 398;

Monday, June 3	Part I: Language and Communication Part II: Language and Thought	Hauser, Chomsky and Fitch; Traxler chap 1, pp 18-30; Pinker chapter 3
Wednesday, June 5	Part I: Language and Thought Part II: Speech Production	Fernandez & Cairns, pp 29-44;
Monday, June 10	Part I: Speech Production Part II: Speech Perception Part III: EXAM 1	Traxler, chap. 2, pp 51 – 54 (skim 37 – 43); Language File 9.4
Wednesday, June 12	Part I: Speech Perception Part II: Speech Perception	Traxler, chap. 2, pp 54 – 72; Traxler, chap. 9, pp 325 - 344
Monday, June 17	Part I: Words and Meaning Part II: Lexical Access	Traxler, chap. 3, pp 79 – 97; chap. 9, pp 344 - 350; chap. 2, pp 37 – 51
Wednesday, June 19	Part I: Lexical Access Part II: Lexical Access	Traxler, chap. 3, pp 97 – 119
Monday, June 24	Part I: Sentences and Syntax Part II: Sentence Processing Part III: EXAM 2	Fernandez & Cairns, pp 47 – 62; Traxler, chap. 4, pp 141 – 183;
Wednesday, June 26	Part I: Sentence Processing Part II: Sentence Processing	Traxler, chap. 4, pp 141 – 183;
Monday, July 1	Part I: Sentence Production Part II: Language Acquisition	Re-read Traxler chap. 2, pp. 37-45; Fromkin 1973
Wednesday, July 3	EXAM 3	