

San José State University
Department of Psychology
Psychology 237, Seminar in Psychology of Language, Section 1, Fall 2022

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Dr. Christina Tzeng
Office Location:	Virtual for Fall 2022
Telephone:	N/A for Fall 2022
Email:	christina.tzeng@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	Via Zoom on Fridays 1:30 PM – 3:30 PM PST, or by appointment
Class Days/Time:	Tuesdays & Thursdays, 3:00 PM – 4:15 PM PST
Classroom:	Hugh Gillis Hall 221
Prerequisite(s):	PSYC 135 Cognition, PSYC 155 Perception, LING 101 Introduction to Linguistics, or LING 161 Psycholinguistics

Course Description

One of the biggest mysteries of human cognition is our ability to understand and use language. We use language with seemingly little effort, yet we have only to look at machines, or try to learn a new language in adulthood, to see evidence of what an incredible feat this is. This seminar course draws from theoretical and empirical literature in psychology, neuroscience, linguistics, and anthropology to examine fundamental questions about the psychology of language. These include: How did language evolve? How does human language differ from other systems of communication? How do we acquire language? How is language represented in the brain? How do we map words to meaning? How do language disorders inform the cognitive processes underlying language processing?

Course Format

This is an **in-person course** with weekly in-person meetings on **Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:00 PM – 4:15 PM PST**

As this is a graduate seminar course, our class sessions will be heavily discussion- based. Prior to attending class each week, students will engage in course content which may include reading assigned readings, viewing demonstrations that illustrate relevant course concepts, and writing response papers.

Canvas

All course content, such as the syllabus, readings, assignments, grades etc. will be on the Canvas Learning Management System course website at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>. You are responsible for regularly checking Canvas for course announcements and updates.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

Upon successful completion of the MA Graduate Program in Research and Experimental Psychology, students will achieve the following PLOs:

PLO1. Advanced Knowledge Base in Research and Experimental Psychology

- Students completing the MA in Psychology program will be able to demonstrate advanced knowledge of the major theoretical perspectives and research methods across areas of experimental psychology (i.e., Developmental, Social, Cognitive, and Physiological).

PLO2. Research Skills and Scholarship

- Graduates of our program will possess an advanced level of competence in research methods, statistical techniques, and technical writing skills. Students completing the MA in Psychology program are required to complete a thesis. The thesis will demonstrate:
 - creative problem-solving in the design, implementation of empirical research.
 - project management skills in the implementation of empirical research.
 - advanced competency in the statistical analysis and interpretation of empirical research findings.
 - communication (oral and written) of research findings at a professional level.

PLO3. Career Enhancement

- Students completing the MA in Psychology program will achieve career enhancement through placement in a doctoral program or acceptance of a position requiring a master's in psychology in the public or private sector.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will achieve the following CLOs:

Master Course Content:

- **CL01.** Demonstrate knowledge of the different components of language, including its evolution, perception, production, acquisition, and the cognitive mechanisms that underlie these phenomena

Demonstrate Critical Thinking:

- **CL02.** Infer appropriate conclusions from theoretical and empirical research on the psychology of language
- **CL03.** Evaluate and criticize arguments pertaining to issues in psychology of language research
- **CL04.** Present and discuss findings and implications from psychology of language research
- **CL05.** Apply knowledge of course concepts to understand the role of spoken language in everyday interactions

Embrace Scientific Values:

- **CL06.** Respect the relative nature of empirical evidence
- **CL07.** Recognize the value of intellectual curiosity and skepticism

Required Materials

Textbook: Ludden, D. (2015). *The Psychology of Language: An Integrated Approach*. Sage Publications.

Peer-reviewed Readings: Weekly readings will also include theoretical and empirical journal articles or book chapters that will be made available on our Canvas course site.

Library Liaison: Christa Bailey (christa.bailey@sjsu.edu)

Course Requirements and Assignments

Readings

Students must complete assigned readings and activities **before** the start of each class session. Readings will include textbook readings, and peer-reviewed theoretical and empirical articles. You may also be required to view short lectures, listen to podcasts, or watch demonstrations of relevant course concepts.

Critical Commentaries

You will prepare critical commentaries prior to every class session. Commentaries should be about 300 words each (~ 1 page, double-spaced) and must:

- 1) describe how the papers relate to relevant concepts and theories from the other assigned materials for that week
- 2) comment on the impact of this work for the field
- 4) pose questions that focus on major theoretical issues, overarching course themes, and broader significance of the papers.

The goals of these critical commentaries are to (1) encourage you to critically evaluate empirical and theoretical work, (2) to help you organize your thoughts in preparation for class discussion, and (3) to provide me with a means of gauging your comprehension of specific topics.

Critical commentaries are **due by noon every Monday and Wednesday**.

Article Presentation/Discussion

Students will a lead discussion twice during the semester. Each time, two students together will facilitate one class discussion centered on the assigned readings. Facilitators are required to (1) prepare brief presentations summarizing the take-home messages of the papers, (2) pose critical thinking questions, and (3) fuel and mediate class discussion.

The objective of this exercise is to provide you with the opportunity to practice engaging in productive discussions grounded in theoretical and empirical literature. Facilitators are required to meet with me virtually prior to their assigned discussion date to share their plans for this assignment.

Final Paper

Students will be asked to write a 6- to 8-page paper on a relevant topic of interest that incorporates at least three of the course readings. The paper will begin with a literature review of the topic at hand and end in a research proposal for how to address a specific empirical question on your topic.

The objective of this assignment is to give you the opportunity to (1) critically evaluate empirical findings, (2) relate them to each other and to broader course themes, (3) identify research questions

relevant to the target issues, and (4) propose ways to address them. You will write a brief proposal that must be approved by me prior to when you begin writing.

Participation in In-Class Discussions

Seminar sessions are heavily discussion-based and thus require full participation from everyone in the class. Participation will be evaluated on the extent to which contributions fulfill the CLOs mentioned above.

A note on attending class sessions:

Attending class sessions is strongly encouraged. Quite frankly, a seminar course necessitates regular attendance to yield fruitful discussion.

Class attendance has also been found to be a better predictor of college grades than any other known predictor of academic performance, including high school GPA and standardized test scores (Credé, Roch & Kieszczynka, 2010). Data gathered from SJSU students suggests that attending class sessions:

- (1) helps students feel more accountable for their studies
- (2) helps them stay on track with course material
- (3) makes students feel more engaged with the class and with the instructor
- (4) allows them the opportunity to ask questions and receive an immediate response

All of these are factors that led to a more positive overall class experience.

If you cannot attend class, please email me with **as much advance notice as possible**.

Additional University-Wide Information on Course Requirements

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

Please review the following sources and policies, as well:

- [University Syllabus Policy S16-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>.
- Office of Undergraduate Education's [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

Grading Information

Assignment/Activity	CLO Assessed	Percent of Final Grade
Critical Commentaries	1, 2, 3	35%
Discussion Facilitation 1	3, 4, 5	15%
Discussion Facilitation 2	3, 4, 5	25%
Final Paper	1, 2, 3, 4	15%
Participation in Class Discussions	5, 6, 7	10%

Final Letter Grade Scale:

A plus: 97.00 to 100.00%	A: 93.00 to 96.99%	A minus: 90.00 to 92.99%
B plus: 87.00 to 89.99%	B: 83.00 to 86.99%	B minus: 80.00 to 82.99%
C plus: 77.00 to 79.99%	C: 73.00 to 76.99%	C minus: 70.00 to 72.99%
D plus: 67.00 to 69.99%	D: 63.00 to 66.99%	D minus: 60.00 to 62.99%
F: ≤ 59%		

Course Policies

1. I will not change grades unless there is a clerical error in the calculation of your grade.
2. If you encounter an **unexpected** emergency outside of your control (e.g., COVID infection, eviction from your home, daycare closure, etc.) and you would like to request an extension on an assignment, please email me with as much notice as possible in advance of the assignment deadline. Although contacting me does not guarantee that your request will be approved, know that I take all requests seriously and will work with you to find appropriate resources and a path forward for completing your coursework.

Please note that my flexibility with respect to deadlines relates to emergencies **beyond your control**, and that this flexibility does not apply to vacation travel, conflicts with your work schedule, or other foreseeable circumstances that are within your control. I expect you to act ethically and honorably and not to take advantage of the current global crisis.

3. **Late submissions:** All assignments must be submitted by the indicated due date and time unless I have approved an extension (see above). For each 24-hour period that your assignment is late, your score will drop 10% (100% will become 90%). For example, if you submit a critical commentary two hours late, your grade will drop by 10%, and if you submit it 25 hours late, your grade will drop by 20%, and so on.
4. **Office hours:** Please take advantage of office hours to speak with me about anything related to this course, your research or career interests, or anything else that I may be able to help with. The more I know about how my students are doing and what they are thinking, the better I can ensure that the course will be an engaging and interesting experience. Please [book an appointment online](https://christina-tzeng.youcanbook.me) at <https://christina-tzeng.youcanbook.me> if you want to meet with me virtually. If you cannot make my weekly office hours, please email me to schedule an appointment.
5. **Academic integrity:** Cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. If I find evidence of academic misconduct, you will receive a zero on the assignment(s) in question, and I will file a report with the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. Please visit the [office's website](https://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/policies/) for more information at <https://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/policies/>.

In-Person Course Classroom Protocol

Please see Module 0 on our course Canvas site for detailed information about the following:

- COVID-19 health and safety protocols
 - technology requirements and resources (e.g., tutorials on how to use Canvas, etc.)
 - student resources for academic, financial, and health support
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Statement of Inclusion and Diversity

We all have diverse personal experiences, identities, and values that bias how we view the world. I hope that we can embrace this diversity and work together to ensure each student feels like a valued member of the learning community. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. It is also my intent that students from all backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as an asset.

Accommodations

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with AEC at <https://www.sjsu.edu/aec/> to establish a record of their disability. Academic Senate Policy F06-2 at <https://www.sjsu.edu/aec/docs/F06-2.pdf>

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9 (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on Syllabus Information web page (<http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo>), which is hosted by the Office of Undergraduate Education. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

References

Credé, M., Roch, S. G., & Kieszczynka, U. M. (2010). Class attendance in college: A meta-analytic review of the relationship of class attendance with grades and student characteristics. *Review of Educational Research, 80*(2), 272-295.

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Course Schedule

Note: The schedule is subject to modification (with fair warning) as the instructor deems necessary.

Date	Topic	Assignments Due* (CC = Critical Commentary)
Th 8/25	Welcome/Introduction	
T 8/30	Language Evolution 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assigned reading • Submit CC
Th 9/1	Language Evolution 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assigned reading • Submit CC
T 9/6	Language Evolution 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assigned reading • Submit CC
Th 9/9	Language Evolution 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assigned reading • Submit CC
T 9/13	Language Acquisition 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assigned reading • Submit CC
Th 9/15	Language Acquisition 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assigned reading • Submit CC
T 9/20	Language Acquisition 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assigned reading • Submit CC
Th 9/22	Language Acquisition 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assigned reading • Submit CC
T 9/27	Bilingualism 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assigned reading • Submit CC
Th 9/29	Bilingualism 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assigned reading • Submit CC
T 10/4	Bilingualism 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assigned reading • Submit CC
Th 10/6	Bilingualism 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assigned reading • Submit CC
T 10/11	Speech Perception 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assigned reading • Submit CC
Th 10/13	Speech Perception 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assigned reading • Submit CC
T 10/18	Speech Perception 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assigned reading • Submit CC
Th 10/20	Speech Perception 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assigned reading • Submit CC
T 10/25	Speech Production 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assigned reading • Submit CC
Th 10/27	Speech Production 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assigned reading • Submit CC
T 11/1	Speech Production 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assigned reading • Submit CC
Th 11/3	Speech Production 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assigned reading • Submit CC

T 11/8	Language & Culture 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assigned reading • Submit CC
Th 11/10	Language & Culture 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assigned reading • Submit CC
T 11/15	Language & Culture 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assigned reading • Submit CC
Th 11/17	Language & Culture 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assigned reading • Submit CC
T 11/22	Language & Technology 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assigned reading • Submit CC
Th 11/24	No Class (Thanksgiving Day)	
T 11/29	Language & Technology 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assigned reading • Submit CC
Th 12/1	Topic TBD: Class will vote on topic	
T 12/6	Topic TBD: Class will vote on topic	
F 12/9		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Paper due by noon

*All critical commentaries (CC) are due on Canvas by **noon PST on Mondays and Wednesdays**, the day before our in-person sessions. A complete list of peer-reviewed journal articles/book chapters is on Canvas.