
PSYCH 411: LANGUAGE AND THOUGHT FALL 2014

Instructor	Prof. Gary Lupyan; lupyan@wisc.edu
Meetings	T, R 9:30:10:45 Psych (Brogden) 115
Office Hours	Wednesdays 11-12
Class Readings	http://sapir.psych.wisc.edu/wiki/index.php/Psych411
Discussion Qs	Moodle

Goals

Students will develop a rich understanding of the relationship between language and other cognitive processes. At the end of the term, students will be able to intelligently discuss topics like these:

- What's so special about human language?
- Why are humans the only animal species with language?
- Where did human language come from?
- What can we learn about nonlinguistic cognition from the study of language acquisition?
- Do differences in language lead to differences in thought? What kind of thought?
- How does language help or hurt out "thinking?" (whatever "thinking" may mean)?
- What is the relationship between language and..... vision/spatial cognition/ arithmetic/abstract thought/categorization?
- What are the neural mechanisms by which language can affect various cognitive processes?
- Do language impairments impair "thought"?
- How does the science of language/thought relations inform us about metaphors, propaganda/politics discussion, and just plain conversation?
- How do new communication technologies change language?
- Can we create new languages to improve human thinking?

Expectations:

The class will consist of a mix of discussion of readings and lectures. For each class, students are expected to have read the assigned readings, and to post QRCs (questions/responses/comments) related to the readings on the class Moodle site. These need to be posted by 6pm on the day before class and will be graded on a 1-3 scale. Most posts will receive a grades of 2 (think of it as equivalent to a $\sqrt{}$, with 3 being a $\sqrt{+}$).

This class is meant to be an interactive experience and your QRCs will shape the discussion for the next class. Students should plan on raising at least one of their posted questions in class. I will tie in your QRCs to ongoing debates in the field, and to the relevant scientific literature. Students will also be expected to write two papers on a topic of their choosing. The first paper will be a literature review. The second paper will be an experimental research proposal. We will also have a few in-class debates (topics TBA) and 2 short quizzes.

Grading

Participation (25%)

Online QRCs (questions, responses, comments on readings) (25%)

2 quizzes (5%)

Paper 1: Research paper (20%)

Paper 2: Experiment proposal (25%)

Final grade assignment:

A	> 92%
AB	89-92%
B	85-88%
BC	80-84%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	< 60%

List of topics and readings

PDFs are on the class wiki site <http://sapir.psych.wisc.edu/wiki/index.php/Psych411>

	DATE	Topic	Readings / Assignments
1	T Sep 2	Introductions, What is language for?	-
2	R Sep 4	What makes language special?	Hockett (1960); Burling, 1993 Short writing assignment (see wiki page)
3	T Sep 9	"Language" in nonhuman animals	Cheney & Seyfarth (1997); Kaminski, Call, & Fisher (2004).
4	R Sep 11	Language Evolution	Deacon (2003), Tomasello (2003); Kirby, Cornish, Smith (2008)
5	T Sep 16	Concepts and analogy	Goldstone et al. (2012-see wiki for listing of sections to read);
6	R Sep 18	Analogy and translation	Hofstadter (2006); Nabokov (1941)
7	T Sep 23	The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis	Whorf (1956) (2 readings); Quiz 1
8	R Sep 25	Arguments & Controversies	Levinson (2003); Boroditsky (2010)
9	T Sep 30	Language and Categories	Pullum (1989); Lupyan et al (2007). Lexicon Valley podcast: When nouns grew genitals
10	R Oct 2	Open Discussion	Debate 1: Groups 1 and 2 debate; groups 3 and 4 judge
11	T Oct 7	Language and Memory	Loftus (2003); Fausey & Boroditsky (2011)
12	R Oct 9	Language and Number	Gordon (2004), Casasanto (2005), Frank et al (2008)

13	T Oct 14	Language and Vision	Meteyard et al. (2007); Winawer et al., (2007); Lupyan & Ward (2013)
14	R Oct 16	Language and Spatial Cognition	Majid et al (2004), Haun et al (2011)
15	T Oct 21	Language and Time	Boroditsky et al (2010); Fuhrman & Boroditsky (2010).
16	R Oct 23	Consequences of Language Impairments	Gainotti (2014); Lupyan & Mirman, 2012; Paper 1 Due by 7pm in mailbox.
17	T Oct 28	Theory of Mind and counterfactual reasoning	Hale & Tager-Flusberg (2003); Pyers and Senghas (2009); Optional: Siegal et al (2001).
18	R Oct 30	Putting it together: consolidating what we've learned so far.	Review previous QRCs, readings; Quiz 2
19	T Nov 4	Sound symbolism and iconicity	Perniss et al. (2010); Lupyan & Casasanto (2014).
20	R Nov 6	Linguistic engineering	Foer (<i>New Yorker</i> Article); Radiolab segment on Bliss-symbolics.
21	T Nov 11	Language change and the linguistic niche hypothesis	Lupyan & Dale (2014); TBA
22	R Nov 13	Sociolinguistics	PBS readings + Lexicon Valley Podcasts (two episodes)
23	T Nov 18	Metaphors, talking points and propaganda	Lakoff & Johnson (1980); Lexicon Valley podcast on metaphors; Thibodau & Boroditsky (2011).
24	R Nov 20	Debate 2 and open Discussion	Debate 2: Groups 3 and 4 present; Groups 1 and 2 judge. Latest date to submit paper topic (email).
25	T Nov 25	Origin of writing systems	Web readings; Lexicon Valley podcast
26	T Dec 2	Cognitive consequences of literacy	McWhorter chapter from <i>Babel</i> book; TBA
27	R Dec 4	Group critiques of experimental design	Have outline of paper 2 ready
28	T Dec 9	Language and the Internet	TBA
29	R Dec 11	Wrap-up and open discussion	Review readings and QRCs
	M Dec 15	Paper 2 Due 7pm by email.	Paper 2 Due 7pm by email.

The Small Print

Where to take complaints about a Teaching Assistant or Course Instructor:

Occasionally, a student may have a complaint about a Teaching Assistant or course instructor. If that happens, you should feel free to discuss the matter directly with the TA or instructor. If the complaint is about the TA and you do not feel comfortable discussing it with him or her, you should discuss it with the course instructor. If you do not want to approach the instructor, make an appointment to speak to the Department Chair, Professor Patricia Devine: chair@psych.wisc.edu.

If your complaint has to do with sexual harassment, you may also take your complaint to Vicky Lenzlinger, Instructional Program Manager, vlenzlinger@psych.wisc.edu. Her office is located on the second floor of the Psychology building, room 222.

If you believe the TA or course instructor has discriminated against you because of your religion, race, gender, sexual orientation, or ethnic background, you also may take your complaint to the Office of Equity and Diversity, room 179-A Bascom Hall, or go to: <http://www.oed.wisc.edu/>

UW Code of Conduct

The UW Student Code of Conduct, including an explanation of what constitutes plagiarism, can be found at <http://students.wisc.edu/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html>. For your own good, Please do not plagiarize.

Ethics of being a student in the Department of Psychology

The members of the faculty of the Department of Psychology at UW-Madison uphold the highest ethical standards of teaching and research. They expect their students to uphold the same standards of ethical conduct. By registering for this course, you are implicitly agreeing to conduct yourself with the utmost integrity throughout the semester. In the Department of Psychology, acts of academic misconduct are taken very seriously. Such acts diminish the educational experience for all involved – students who commit the acts, classmates who would never consider engaging in such behaviors, and instructors. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, cheating on assignments and exams, stealing exams, sabotaging the work of classmates, submitting fraudulent data, plagiarizing the work of classmates or published and/or online sources, acquiring previously written papers and submitting them (altered or unaltered) for course assignments, collaborating with classmates when such collaboration is not authorized, and assisting fellow students in acts of misconduct. Students who have knowledge that classmates have engaged in academic misconduct should report this to the instructor. For detailed information on how to avoid plagiarism, please see the following website: <http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html>

Your instructor will contact you if he has concerns about academic misconduct. You will have an opportunity to explain your work and address your instructor's concerns. Following the meeting, if your instructor believes that you engaged in misconduct, he will decide on an action. Following UW protocol, your instructor will inform the Dean of Students' Office of the outcome of the meeting and proposed sanction. Penalties for substantiated cases of academic misconduct include a zero on the assignment or exam, a lower grade in the course, and failure in the course. Repeated acts of academic misconduct may result in more serious actions such as probation or suspension. For complete information on proper conduct, academic misconduct, and sanctions, please see UWS Chapter 14: <http://students.wisc.edu/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html>

Special Needs

The McBurney Disability Resources Center provides a variety of services for those who might need special accommodations. Services can include counseling, testing, and recommending accommodations. Please let us know 2 weeks before each exam if you need extra accommodations, as documented by a McBurney Visa. Contact them at 1305 Linden Drive, 263-2741, or <http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/>. In addition, the TRIO Student Support Services provides support for low-income families, first generation college students, and students with disabilities. Contact them at 16 Ingraham Hall, 1155 Observatory Drive, 265-5106, or <http://www.education.wisc.edu/trio/>.