

# PSYC 145 Syllabus

## The Psychology of Language

### Instructor

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Office hours: Thursdays 12:30-2, CSB 267 (or by appointment)

### Course Overview

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One of the biggest mysteries of human cognition is our ability to produce and comprehend language – something we normally do very quickly and seemingly effortlessly. But we have only to look at machines, or to try to learn a new language, to see evidence of how amazing this feat really is. This course provides an introduction to theory and empirical research on fundamental questions in psycholinguistics, including: How do we acquire language? Do animals have language too? How do we get from the incredibly noisy speech signal to individual words to meaning? When we want to express a meaning, how do we choose which words and structures to produce? What does it mean to know a word? Is language processing modular or interactive? How is language represented in the brain? What can language disorders teach us about normal language development and processing? What insights from traditional psycholinguistics add to our understanding of dialogue, and how does dialogue change our understanding of psycholinguistic theory?

### Course Materials

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Textbook (required): Harley, T. 2007. *The Psychology of Language: From Data to Theory* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). New York: Psychology Press.

Book (recommended): Altmann, Gerry T. M. (1997). *The ascent of Babel: An exploration of language, mind and understanding*. Oxford.

Website: <http://crl.ucsd.edu/courses/psyc145/>

I will sometimes post additional readings on the course website.

### Evaluation

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There will be two midterms and final exam. Each will be worth 35 points, thereby constituting 35% (each) of your final grade. The final will be worth 30 points and will be completely multiple choice. The midterms will be multiple choice plus two of three short-answers, OR multiple choice plus a previous assignment that you have opted to do instead of the two in-class short-answers (to be discussed in class).

You will also have the opportunity to earn up to 3 points extra credit (i.e., a 3% boost to your

grade), by participating in psychology experiments. Sign up at <http://experimetrix.com/ucsd>. It is *your* responsibility to ensure you have assigned credit to this course **by June 6<sup>th</sup>** (\*but note that **the last day to actually participate in an experiment is June 4<sup>th</sup>**).

### **Course Topics/Associated readings (add'l readings sometimes tba)**

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- Overview/Core Issues/What psycholinguists do: *Harley Ch 1 & 2; Altmann Ch 1; pinker1.pdf (on course website)*
- Animal Communication: *Harley Ch 3 (pp 51-67)*
- Language Development: *Harley Ch 4; Altmann Ch 2, 3, 4*
- Speech: *Harley pp. 27-24; Harley Ch 9; Altmann Ch 3*
- Words: *Harley Ch 6 & 11; Altmann Ch 5 & 6*
- Sentences – Structure and comprehension: *Harley Ch 10 & 12; Altmann Ch 7 & 8*
- Bases of Language: *Harley Ch 3 (pp. 67-101); Altmann Ch 4*
- Language & the brain: *Harley pp. 67-71, 435-446; Altmann Ch 12*
- Using language – Dialog/Interaction/Pragmatics: *Harley Ch 14; Altmann Ch 9 (other readings tba)*
- Learning: *Harley parts of Ch 4 (Appendix A on back propagation, if you're extremely motivated); Altmann Ch 13*

**\*\*TENTATIVE\*\* COURSE SCHEDULE**

| <b>Week 1</b>  | <b>Topic</b>  |
|--|---|
| T April 1  | Introduction/Overview   |
| Th April 3   | *Special guest lecture, Dr. Tim Beyer, AAE and SAE                              |
| <b>Week 2</b>  |   |
| T April 8  | Human Language, Core Issues, Methods  |
| Th April 10  | Animal Communication  |
| <b>Week 3</b>  |   |
| T April 15   | Language Development I  |
| Th April 17  | Language Development II   |
| <b>Week 4</b>  |   |
| T April 22   | <b>MIDTERM 1</b>  |
| Th April 24  | Speech Perception I   |
| <b>Week 5</b>  |   |
| T April 29   | Speech Perception II/Word Recognition   |
| Th May 1   | Word Recognition continued/Semantics  |
| <b>Week 6</b>  |   |
| T May 6  | Words and Dialogue  |
| Th May 8   | Sentences I   |
| <b>Week 7</b>  |   |
| T May 13   | Sentences II  |
| Th May 15  | Review for Midterm 2  |
| <b>Week 8</b>  |   |
| T May 20   | <b>MIDTERM 2</b>  |
| Th May 22  | Bilingualism  |
| <b>Week 9</b>  |   |
| T May 27   | Gesture and dialogue: Talking bodies  |
| Th May 29  | Language and Cognition  |
| <b>*Note that next week June 4, Wednesday – last day to do experiment*</b> |   |
| <b>Week 10</b>   |   |
| T June 3   | Brain and Language I: Structure, Function, and Disorders                        |
| Th June 5  | Brain and Language II: Disorders continued, Imaging techniques (healthy adults) |

Note: This schedule is tentative and subject to change. You are responsible for regularly checking the course website (<http://crl.ucsd.edu/courses/psyc145/>) for up-to-date information.

## EXPERIMETRIX INFO FOR THOSE WISHING TO EARN EXTRA CREDIT

**SIGN UP FOR EXPERIMENTS EARLY IN THE QUARTER TO AVOID DEALING WITH A SHORTAGE LATER IN THE YEAR! Do NOT wait until finals week to try and sign up for an experiment because you won't be allowed.**

### What to do:

1. Go to <https://experimetrix2.com/ucsd/>.
  - For general rules, guidelines, etc., click on the “**read.me**” link on the main page.
  - For frequently asked questions, click on the “**help.me**” link on main page.
2. Click on the “**new.user**” link, enter your name, student ID, and email address. Your logon and password will then be sent to your email address. **It is your responsibility to make sure your provided email address is able to accept emails.**
3. After you receive your logon and password, you'll have 3 days to log on to your account. If you fail to logon within that 3 day period, your membership is deleted and you'll have to register again. If you make a mistake (e.g., enter the wrong email address) and never receive your logon and password, you must wait 3 days before registering again. You should only have to register one time (not every quarter or even every year).
4. If you forget your password, click on “**forgot.password**” located on the main page.
5. Once you've logged in, go to the “**Edit your course selection**” link. You **must** select the course(s) to which you wish to later assign the credit (Psych 1, Psych 2, etc.).
6. Go to the “**sign up**” link on the home page to select an experiment. You should select both an experiment and the course for which you want to receive the credit. Confirmation will then be sent to your email address.
7. You will receive an email reminder 24 hrs before the experiment. A common reason for not receiving this email is that your mailbox is full, so check that first.
8. You can cancel an appointment without penalty as long as you do so at least 24 hrs prior to the experiment. Confirmation will be sent to your email address. *Failing to show up for a scheduled experiment will result in a penalty equal to the number of credits offered for that experiment.*
9. At any point, you may select the “**log.in**” link from the main page to review your scheduled and past appointments, edit your course selections, and assign your earned credits to your courses.
10. **VERY IMPORTANT!** After receiving credit for your participation, you **must** select **Assign Credits to Your Courses**, and you must do this **before finals week**. The classes to which you wish credit to be assigned are listed, with the number of credits you've received. You will need to type in the number of credits you want assigned next to the class to which you want it assigned. **If you fail to do this step, you will not receive your credit.**

*\*As a participant in psychological research, you have the right to leave the experiment at any time if you wish to do so. If you conscientiously object to experimental participation, or if there is a shortage of experiments in which you can participate, your instructor will provide you with an alternate assignment which will serve the same educational ends. You are entitled, in each experiment, to at least five minutes devoted to teaching you about the experiment and its purposes.*