Psychology 3346.001: Psychology of Language  
Spring 2020  
M-W-F 11:00 – 11:50 OCNR 118

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Phone: 825-2184  
Office: BH 317  
Office hours: T, Th 12:30 – 2:00, W 12:00 – 2:00, & by appointment

Introduction to the Course

This course will introduce you to major theories and topics in the field of language development with a focus on language as a social and cultural phenomenon. We will explore the relationship between language and social cognition, consider evolutionary and comparative work in the field, as well as interdisciplinary work on language as a social and cultural phenomenon. Throughout the semester, you will have ongoing opportunities to read, discuss, and critically evaluate works in child language development and to discuss and analyze the application of these works to the everyday contexts within which children develop.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Critically evaluate research in child language development through active reading and class discussion of textbook and primary source readings
- Explicate theoretical positions and empirical findings in the field of language development
- Apply these research findings to everyday contexts within which children develop

Design of the course

Seminar: Each week, class time will be devoted to probing and discussing the details of the readings for that week. Small groups of students will be assigned the responsibility of leading class discussions on particular readings (see below). Some weeks may include in-class debates (see below).

Readings and preparation for class discussions: All readings are to be completed before the class during which we will discuss or debate them so that you will be able to fully participate in the class. Your goal in reading should be to 1) clearly understand what the author(s) is saying, and 2) think about how this is similar to and different from what other authors have said. Make notes of these specific things and also of questions that you have about what the authors are saying. I encourage you to have these notes with you in class to help you participate in discussion. If you do not feel that you have completely understood everything you have read (completely expected!), your participation in class should focus on asking questions and helping your fellow students to clarify key points. Each of you will be called on to comment on what you have read.

Writing assignments (annotated bibliographies): For each of the 4 sections of the course, students will prepare an annotated bibliography for each of the assigned articles (not the textbook chapters) in that section (up to 30 points for each summary for a total of 120 points to post on BB). Additional instructions will be provided on Blackboard.

Discussion leaders. Students will be assigned to function as discussion leaders 4 times throughout the semester. On some weeks this may take the form of a short debate. Detailed instructions will be given in class.
Final paper: In your final paper (around 10-12 pages, due on or before the last day of class) you should synthesize material from one section of the course (either the section on Cognitive Foundations, Social Cognitive Development, or Social and Cultural Approaches). Alternatively, you could compare/contrast the material from two sections if you feel up to it. Either way, I encourage you to build from your annotated bibliographies in preparing your final paper and to use additional readings from those suggested at the end of each section. Each student is encouraged to have at least one “planning meeting” with me prior to beginning writing. More detailed instructions will be given in class.

Participation: The participation grade includes participation in class discussions. Consistent and informed participation is expected of all students. This means that not only should you meaningfully contribute to class discussions, but that your comments, questions and contributions should show that you have carefully read and reflected on the assigned material so that you are prepared for class meetings. Randomly assigned in-class activities will be used to determine participation scores.

Getting help outside of class. I encourage you to meet with me at any time that you feel stuck or have questions or just want some feedback. In my experience, students who do this do significantly better in my courses. I am willing to answer virtually any question pertaining to the course. I want you to succeed in this class and will try to help you in any way I can. Second, I encourage you to form study groups or have online discussions to help you compare your understanding of complicated concepts. Third, I strongly encourage you to make use of the writing center. The folks there are trained to help you with all kinds of different writing forms, and are great resources for helping with organization and style (you will be entirely responsible for the content), and they are terrific at helping you polish your thinking through writing. Check the schedule online http://critical.tamucc.edu/wiki/WC/Home or email for an appointment at Writing-Center@tamucc.edu.

Blackboard. We will use Blackboard for posting important class documents including the syllabus, specific instructions for the various writing assignments, announcements, student summaries, etc.

Attendance: Students are expected to attend all classes. I will not take attendance, though your consistent and informed participation (impossible if you are absent!) is an important part of your final grade. In-class writing assignments may be given and will constitute part of the participation grade. If you miss a class, you will need to arrange to get notes and other information (e.g. announcements) from a fellow student. Students who are absent may not make up in-class assignments for attendance credit.

Final grades: Your final grade will be calculated based on:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class participation</th>
<th>30</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion leader (4 times)</td>
<td>40 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annotated bibliographies (1 per section)</td>
<td>80 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>100 points</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FINAL COURSE GRADE</strong></td>
<td>/ 250 points</td>
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| 90-100% (225 – 250 pts.) | A indicates work of very high quality |
| 80-89% (200 – 224 pts.) | B indicates good work, but not of distinction |
| 70-79% (175 – 199 pts.) | C indicates average work |
| 60-69% (150 – 174 pts.) | D indicates marginal work |
| Below 60% (below 100 pts.) | F indicates unacceptable work |
Disabilities Accommodations

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Grade Appeals

As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C0.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C0.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught or the Office of the Provost. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at: http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf.

Academic Advising

The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

Dropping a Class

I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. Friday, April 10th is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in failure of the work in question, possible failure for the course, and an incident report being submitted to the office of the Associate Dean of Students.
Academic Honesty/Plagiarism

**Definition:** In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else’s language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source. Plagiarism is a violation of academic expectations, but it is sometimes difficult to understand what plagiarism actually is. Often, students commit unintentional plagiarism (not citing sources properly, for example), because they are unaware of the standards that apply. Plagiarism includes:

- Using the work of another as your own,
- Downloading or purchasing ready-made essays off the web and using them as your own,
- Using resource materials without correct documentation,
- Using the organization or language of a source without using quote marks and proper citation.
- Turning in a researched project without citing sources in an appropriate documentation style.

When you are confused about citation of quotes or ideas, please visit the Writing Center or me to get help. Information on MLA documentation rules and APA documentation rules is available at Purdue University’s OWL: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/), and from our local Writing Center at CASA.

Classroom/professional behavior

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

I also ask, as a matter of professionalism and courtesy, that **all phones and other electronic devices not directly related to the ongoing course activities, be put away for the duration of class time.**

Statement of Civility

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Statement of Academic Continuity

In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi, this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.
Tentative Course Outline

SECTION I, INTRODUCTION: NATIVIST VS. NON-NATIVIST APPROACHES

Week 1 (Jan 22, 24): Readings:
(W) – Introduction to the course
(F) – Chapter 1 – Introduction to the Study of Language Development (Hoff; pp. 4-24)

Week 2 (Jan 27, 29, 31):
(M) Chapter 2 – Biological Bases of Language Development (Hoff; pp. 39-71)

Additional suggested reading:

Week 3 (Feb 3, 5, 7):
(M) Chapter 3 – Communicative Development: Foundations and Functions of Language (pp. 99-118)

Additional suggested readings:

Week 4 (Feb 10, 12, 14): Perspective-taking
⇒ Readings:
- (M) Chapter 3 – Communicative Development: Foundations and Functions of Language (pp. 120-130)


SECTION II: COGNITIVE FOUNDATIONS

Week 5 (Feb 17, 19, 21): Theory of Mind and Language

⇒ Readings:

- (M) Chapter 7 – Language, Culture, & Cognition in Development (pp. 290-294)

Additional suggested readings:


SECTION III: SOCIAL COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Week 6 (Feb 24, 26, 28): Social Cognition

⇒ Readings:

- (M) Chapter 3 – Communicative Development: Foundations and Functions of Language (Hoff; pp. 89-98)
Week 7 (March 16, 18, 20): Pointing
⇒ Readings:
  o (M) Chapter 2 – Biological Bases of Language Development (Hoff; pp. 72-88)

SPRING BREAK!! No classes March 9 - 13

Week 8 (March 23, 25, 27): Joint attention
⇒ Readings:
  o (M) Review Chapter 3 (Hoff)

Week 9 (March 30, April 1, 3): Evolutionary and comparative perspectives
⇒ Readings:

Additional suggested readings:


**SECTION IV: SOCIAL AND CULTURAL APPROACHES**

**Week 10 (April 6, 8, 10): Language and Social Interaction**

⇒ Readings:

- (M) Chapter 9 – Language in the School Years (pp. 329-350),

** Week 11 (April 13, 15, 17): Special Topic/debate: Do animals have/use language?**

⇒ (see instructions posted on Blackboard)

**Week 12 (April 20, 22, 24): Culture and cognitive development**

⇒ Readings:

- (M) Chapter 7 – Language, Culture, & Cognition in Development (pp. 271-290)

**Week 13 (April 27, 29, May 1): Language Socialization**

⇒ Readings:

- (M) Review Chapter 7 – Language, Culture, & Cognition in Development (pp. 271-290)

**Week 14 (May 4, 6): Grammar and interaction**

⇒ Readings:

- (M) Chapter 6 – The Development of Syntax and Morphology: Learning the Structure of Language (pp. 221-234; 250-265)

Additional suggested readings:


⇒ Final Course Paper due MAY 6

**FINAL EXAM (May 8, 11:00 – 1:30)**