

LING/PSYC 27010: Psycholinguistics
Spring 2023

Tues/Thurs 11-12:20pm

Location: Cobb Hall 101

Instructor: Prof. Monica Do (monicado@uchicago.edu)

Office: Rosenwald 229C

Office hours: Tuesdays, 3-4pm

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Office: Landahl 010B (Basement of Social Science Research building)

Office Hours: Thursdays, 10-10:50am

Course description

This course is a one-quarter introduction to this broad, interdisciplinary field of study. Over the course of this quarter, we will ask a range of fundamental questions at the intersection of language and cognition: How do we manage to produce language on the fly, and how do we understand language in the moment? How does our mental machinery shape natural language? How is language organized and implemented in the brain? Do different languages lead to different information processing strategies in production and comprehension, and if so, why? These questions, and related questions, form the bedrock of the field of psycholinguistics.

Learning objectives

- Learn about the discipline of psycholinguistics and its overall approach to human language.
- Learn foundational results in psycholinguistics.
- Learn to critically evaluate primary scientific literature.
- Learn the basics of experimental design and scientific reasoning.
- Learn basic data science skills for analyzing experimental data

Required readings

Each week, you will be assigned primary source reading that we will discuss in class. Readings will be made available on Canvas.

Optional Readings

The following texts have been reserved in the Regenstein library for your convenience. They are **not** required for the course and you do not need to purchase them to succeed. However, you may find it useful to consult these texts for background or further information about the topics we cover in the course.

- *Language in Mind: An Introduction to Psycholinguistics*. Julie Sedivy. Oxford University Press. 1st or 2nd Edition.
- *Traxler, M., & Gernsbacher, M. A. (Eds.). (2011). Handbook of psycholinguistics*. Elsevier. (digital copy available through UChicago Library)
- *Language Files: Materials for an Introduction to Language and Linguistics*. The Ohio State University Press. 12th Edition (or earlier)

Course requirements

Grade Distribution

Class Participation	10%
Weekly Canvas Posts (6 total)	12%
2 Mini Labs	28%
Synthesis Assignment	20%
Final Project	
Presentation	10%
Written Proposal	20%

Class participation: You are expected to come to class prepared to actively participate in class discussions. You should aim to participate at least once per week.

Weekly Canvas Posts: For each of the assigned readings, you are required to post your thoughts, response, criticism, or questions on the relevant Canvas discussion board. These posts are due before 9am on the dates listed below. To receive full credit, you must *substantively* engage with the readings. You may also engage with another comment on the board, but should still make reference to the readings. There are a total of 7 assigned readings, but you are only required to complete a total of 6 posts. This means you are free to skip 1 post.

Mini Labs: Four mini labs will be assigned throughout the quarter. They are intended to help you develop your skills in basic experiment design and data analysis. Additional instructions for each lab will be posted on Canvas.

Synthesis Assignment: In lieu of a mid-term exam, you will submit a written synthesis assignment. As in a literature review, you will be required to synthesize the material covered in the course. In addition, you will be asked to relate this new knowledge to things you'll encounter in the future outside the university. These synthesis assignments are designed to help you put together the ideas we've covered in a way that you'll be able to use it in the future.

Final project: You will need to decide on a research question and develop a small experiment to investigate the question. You are *not* required to collect any actual data. Your final project can be on any topic of interest as long as it related in some substantial way to the topics we have covered. Don't feel like you need to re-invent the wheel! It is fine to propose follow-ups to the papers we have read, so long as your proposal answers a different question than the original paper. You must meet with me some time during Weeks 5-8 to confirm your research topic. I encourage students to collaborate with other students in groups of 2-3 to come up with research question(s) and design an appropriate experiment.

- **Written Proposal:** While you may work in groups, each student must hand in their own separate written proposal.
- **In-class final project presentation & participation:** Each project must be presented to the class (in groups or individually). Note that part of your final presentation grade is evaluated based on your comments / participation on other people's presentations.

Course Policies

Deadlines: Assignment deadlines are listed on Canvas. You must submit your work on time to receive full credit. Late work will not be accepted. However, if there are extenuating circumstances, please let me know and we can work together to figure something out.

Accessibility and Accommodation: Students with disabilities who have been approved for the use of academic accommodations by Student Disability Services (SDS) and need a reasonable accommodation(s) to participate fully in this course should follow the procedures established by SDS for using accommodations. Timely notifications are required in order to ensure that your accommodations can be implemented. Please meet with me to discuss your access needs in this class after you have completed the SDS procedures for requesting accommodations. For more information, visit disabilities.uchicago.edu.

Mental Health and Wellness: Your success in this class and overall wellness at the University is important to me. Should you feel in need of mental health or wellness support, remember that you have in place here a network of people who are ready and willing to help. Your College Advisor, your Resident Heads and Resident Assistants, and the staff at Student Counseling are available to you should you need or want to talk. You can find a description of the services offered here: <https://wellness.uchicago.edu/>.

Plagiarism: Your work needs to be your own. The Student Handbook statement on academic honesty is efficient in explicating the point:

It is contrary to justice, academic integrity, and to the spirit of intellectual inquiry to submit another's statements or ideas as one's own work. To do so is plagiarism or cheating, offenses punishable under the University's disciplinary system. Because these offenses undercut the distinctive moral and intellectual character of the University, we take them very seriously. Proper acknowledgment of another's ideas, whether by direct quotation or paraphrase, is expected. In particular, if any written or electronic source is consulted and material is used from that source, directly or indirectly, the source should be identified by author, title, and page number, or by website and date accessed. Any doubts about what constitutes "use" should be addressed to the instructor.

Cases of academic dishonesty are taken very seriously by the College and by me.

DATE	TOPICS	ASSIGNED READING	ASSIGNMENTS
Week 1			
3/21	Introduction to Psycholinguistics	None	
3/23	Speech Perception: The Problem of Invariance		Lab 1 Assigned
WEEK 2			
3/28	Speech Perception: Overcoming the Lack of	Werker & Tees, 1992	
3/30	Invariance Problem		Lab 1 Stimuli Due
Week 3			
4/4	Word Processing: The segmentation problem	Yee & Sedivy, 2006	Lab 1 Data Due
4/6	Word Processing: Word Processing Models		
Week 4			
4/11	Sentence Processing: Incrementality, Ambiguity, &	Pickering & Traxler, 1998	Lab 1 Report Due
4/13	Garden Paths		
Week 5			
4/18	Sentence Processing: Dependencies	Sussman & Sedivy, 2003	Synthesis Due
4/20	Sentence Processing: Pragmatics		Lab 2 Assigned
Week 6			
4/25	Language Production: Incremental Planning	V. Ferreira, 1996	
4/27	Language Production: Message Generation		Lab 2 Stimuli Due
WEEK 7			
5/2	Language Production: Syntactic Priming	Bock & Warren, 1985	Lab 2 Data Due
5/4	Language Production: Word Retrieval		
Week 8			
5/9	Language & Thought: How Whorfian are we?	Boroditsky, Schmidt, & Phillips, 2003	Lab 2 Report Due
5/11	Language & Brain		
Week 9			
5/16	Student Presentations		
5/18			

Final Projects due: Tuesday, May 23 by 11:59 pm CDT