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Class meets on Wednesday Evenings 7:00 - 10:00

**Course Overview and Objectives:**

Psychologists, linguists, and scholars from other academic disciplines study language and behavior in different ways; there is no single approach to this topic. Instead, researchers use a variety of approaches and methods to understand language and behavior. In this course, we will take a cognitive-experimental approach to the psychology of language. That means that we will favor theories that can be tested scientifically, and that we will read and discuss controlled laboratory experiments as much as we will be reading about and evaluating theories.

This course has four primary objectives: 1) to expose you to a range of theory and research in language comprehension that includes work from a variety disciplines; 2) to provide a forum in which you and your peers will discuss the readings in a relaxed yet analytical and rigorous fashion that will lead to a mastery of current theories and research methods; 3) to give you the opportunity to develop and expand your presentation skills; and 4) to give you the opportunity to use your knowledge of the relevant literature and experimental methodology to design an original study that will be realized in the form of a research proposal. You will make a poster presentation of an article central to your proposal midway through the semester; you will present your full proposal at the end of the semester.

This syllabus is preliminary. Readings and assignments are subject to change.

<b>Course Requirements</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Due</b>
Attendance & Participation	15	every class
1 Class Presentation	10	day of class
Critical Reader Summaries	15	day before class
Section-summaries presented in class	15	day of class
Poster Presentation of Article Relevant to Final Project	10	midterm
Poster Presentation of Proposed Research	15	last class
Final Research Proposal	20	end of term

**Grading**

Grades will be assigned based on the percentage of available points:

93-100 %	90-92%	88-89%	82-87%	80-81%	78-79%
A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+
72-77%	70-71%	68-79%	62-67%	60-61%	<60%
C	C-	D+	D	D-	NC

## Attendance and Participation

- 15 pts Attend all classes  
Initiate contributions multiple times during each class period  
Contributions are relevant and insightful  
Listen attentively when others present
- 8 pts No more than one unexcused absence  
Initiate contributions once during each class period  
Contributions are usually, but not always, relevant and insightful  
Listen attentively when others present
- 0 pts More than one unexcused absence  
Initiate contributions infrequently  
Contributions are not relevant or informative  
Not consistently attentive

## Classroom Roles

The Presenter's role can take two forms: 1) *Whole-paper presentation*; and 2) *section presentation*.

1) The goal of the whole-paper presentation is to provide a cogent presentation of a reading. The presentation should be understandable to an interested, general audience that has not read the article. Presentations should be formalized as either a "PowerPoint" presentation or a structured handout.

Key points for whole paper presentations:

- Introduce theoretical motivation, research questions/predictions, and prior results.
- Describe method and design: **give examples of stimuli as early as possible in the presentation**, if possible, **before or while** you describe them in abstract terms; describe the experimental assumptions.
- Describe the experimental predictions and make clear how these relate to the theories being tested (if applicable)
- Describe results: explain why and how results relate to research question, make sure to "unpack" the results for a general audience (e.g., if key results are in tabular form in the article, consider converting them to a graph so that the effects are more transparent).
- Describe the authors' conclusions, alternative interpretations, and the paper's contributions.

2) The goal of the section presentation is to walk the group step by step through their assigned section of the article. The most important job of the presenter is to figure out which details embedded in their section are important, and which are less important. You will present the important content and skip over the less crucial details. Above all, ***do not simply read verbatim from the article (or from your verbatim notes of the article)***! One goal of the section presenter is to provide some "value added" to their section; that is, to point out something interesting or intriguing from the sections that others may have overlooked. The point of the assignment is for you to read and understand the article deeply, especially the section that has been assigned to you. Only then will you be able to easily identify the important bits that deserve presenting. It is the presenter's job to answer any questions about that section that come up. The section presenter will, of course, have read the entire article thoroughly; they should be able to connect their particular section with any other part of the paper. In the unlikely event that a person is absent from class, it will fall to the person covering the section before the absent student's section to cover it.

Critical Summaries Each student will read non-presented papers carefully and will submit a brief synopsis together with a set of discussion questions of the paper on Moodle the day before class.

Key points for synopses:

- Describe the major contributions of the paper.
- Summarize the design (i.e., What were the dependent and independent variables? How were independent variables operationalized? How were dependent variables measured?)
- Describe the researchers' assumptions (e.g., "reaction time reflects accessibility of information from memory") and their predictions
- Pose one question about lit review, methods, or results section.
- Describe how the results relate to previous research that we have covered.

Key points for discussion questions:

- Avoid closed (e.g., yes/no) questions
- The goal is to get classmates to engage as deeply as possible with the material.
- Avoid the temptation to focus too much discussion on opinion. (e.g., Weak: "What do you think of Grice's proposal?" Stronger: "Which parts of Grice's proposal fit conversational behavior, and which seem problematic, and why?")

### **Final Project and Poster Presentations**

The final project is to propose a novel experiment, in the form of a grant proposal, which will help to answer a question related to language behavior. This is an opportunity to study a topic that is of particular interest to you. It is also an opportunity to develop and refine your research/design skills and to improve your proficiency at scientific communication. An important consequence of this project being a grant proposal is that the research must be interesting and important **to people other than yourself**. Specifically, the research you propose should have the potential to advance current research and be useful to other scholars. Therefore, as you identify and develop your research ideas, we will be mindful of how "the reviewers" will react to various elements of your proposal. "The reviewers" are (hypothetical) grant reviewers at large government agencies like the NSF (National Science Foundation) and the NIH (National Institutes of Health) who must decide which research projects will likely be the most valuable to the scientific community. Only a fraction of grant proposals are funded. The evaluation of your final paper will in part be determined by how fundable (i.e., how potentially valuable to the field) the proposed research is. I will serve as your research colleague throughout the semester until you turn in your paper. Then I become a grant reviewer. Along the way, you will need to complete the following:

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|--|------|
| ▪ Description of Interest Area & List of 3 Key Papers                  | 2/12 |
| ▪ Preliminary Research Question / Paper for Poster Presentation        | 2/19 |
| ▪ Poster Presentation of a Published Article Relevant to Final Project | 3/11 |
| ▪ Draft of Methods   | 4/1  |
| ▪ Draft of Introduction (literature review)                            | 4/8  |
| ▪ Draft of Results / Discussion  | 4/15 |
| ▪ Poster Presentation of Proposed Research                             | 4/29 |
| ▪ Final Research Proposal  | 5/8  |

## **Health and Well-Being Statement<sup>1</sup>**

Here at Macalester, you are encouraged to make your well-being a priority throughout this semester and your career here. Investing time into taking care of yourself will help you engage more fully in your academic experience. Remember that beyond being a student, you are a human being carrying your own experiences, thoughts, emotions, and identities with you. It is important to acknowledge any stressors you may be facing, which can be mental, emotional, physical, financial, etc., and how they can have an academic impact. I encourage you to remember that you have a body with needs. In the classroom, eat when you are hungry, drink water, use the restroom, and step out if you are upset and need a break. Please do what is necessary so long as it does not impede your or others' ability to be mentally and emotionally present in the course. Outside of the classroom, sleep, moving your body, and connecting with others can be strategies to help you be resilient at Macalester. If you are having difficulties maintaining your well-being, please don't hesitate to contact me and/or find support from other resources listed below.

### On-Campus Resources

#### **Laurie Hamre Center for Health & Wellness**

Leonard Center Room 53, 651-696-6275 (call to make an appointment). Follow *macalesterhmc* on Instagram. [www.macalester.edu/healthandwellness/](http://www.macalester.edu/healthandwellness/)

- Medical Services
  - There is no charge for an office visit to see a provider for most appointments
  - Medical providers can talk to you about your mental health.
- Counseling Services
  - Health & Wellness counselors provide short-term counseling to students.
  - Drop-in counseling sessions are available each day; first-come, first-served basis.
  - Counseling staff offers multiple groups each semester. Check Hamre Center website for more information on specific groups being offered.
  - Let's Talk - brief, drop-in chats with counselors on Wed., 3-4:30, Kagin Commons
  - 24 Hour Urgent Phone Counseling – PRESS 2
    - To speak to a mental health counselor at any time, call 651-696-6275, then press “2” to be connected to ProtoCall, a free phone counseling service that Macalester provides for students, available 24/7.
- Self-Care Resources
  - Health Promotion
    - Provides a variety of resources and events, including free movement classes, tea, sleep masks, earplugs, and sexual health resources. Visit the HWC website, visit the Wellness Lounge in Leonard Center room 55 (across from Studio 2) for resources.

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<sup>1</sup> This statement was provided by the Hamre Center for Health & Wellness

- PAWS @ Mac (therapy dog program)
  - To learn more about when and where to find the therapy dogs, email [paws@macalester.edu](mailto:paws@macalester.edu), or follow [pawsatmac](#) on Instagram or Facebook.

### **Resident Advisor (RA) and Resident Hall Director (RHD)**

- Both RAs and RHDs can serve as a first point of contact and are able to connect you to resources during mental health crises.

### **Other Support Offices**

- Center for Religious and Spiritual Life, (651-696-6298), Weyerhaeuser Chapel
- Office of Student Affairs (651-696-6220), Weyerhaeuser 119

### **Urgent and Off-Campus Resources**

**([www.macalester.edu/healthandwellness/afterhours](http://www.macalester.edu/healthandwellness/afterhours))**

### **Macalester Security**

- Call 651-696-6555 in the case of any emergency to reach Macalester Security. They will connect you with other campus response personnel.
- On Friday and Saturday nights (9 pm – 2 am), student EMTs are on call, and will respond to health-related emergencies when Security is called

### **Telehealth (call, text, email or video)**

#### **24/7 services with NO charge**

**Press 2 – Phone Mental Health Counseling** (Macalester-sponsored. See description above) Call **651-696-6275**, select menu option 2.

**Crisis Text Line** Text **MN** to **741741**

Minnesota's suicide prevention and mental health crisis texting services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

**Trevor Project** (text, chat, or call - suicide hotline for LGBTQ youth)

Call: **1-866-488-7386** [TheTrevorProject.org/get-help-now](http://TheTrevorProject.org/get-help-now) Text **START** to **678678**

**Transgender Suicide Hotline** 877-565-8860

**Steve Fund Crisis text line** Text **STEVE** to **741741** For person of color.

**SOS Sexual Violence Services** 651-266-1000

**BetterHelp.com** Does charge but covered at 100% if the student has the Macalester-offered United Healthcare Student Resources health insurance.

### **Urgent Care for Adult Mental Health**

402 University Ave E, St. Paul, MN 55130

651-266-7900 (24/7 phone support; walk-ins M-F 8am - 5:30pm)

**Regions Hospital (Emergency Room)**

640 Jackson Street, St. Paul, MN 55101

651-254-3456

Transportation

If you have an urgent health need and do not have transportation to get to a clinic or hospital, Hamre Center staff, Residential Life staff, Office of Student Affairs and other campus response individuals can arrange for a ride share (Uber) to and from the clinic/hospital. There is no charge for the ride.

**Outline of the Topic Schedule (subject to change), and Deadlines:**

- 1/29: **Introduction to the course and some background to language research**
- 2/5: **Background to language research**
- 2/12: **The Importance of Cooperation in Discourse**  
Description of Interest Area & List of 3 Key Papers
- 2/19: **Discourse as a Collaborative Process/The role of Common Ground in Discourse**  
Preliminary Research Question / Paper for Poster Presentation
- 2/26: **Inferences During Reading**  
Research Topic approved
- 3/4: **Video Night: “Genie: The Wild Child”; “Acquiring the Human Language”**  
Preliminary Research Question / Paper for Poster Presentation
- 3/11: **Poster Presentations**  
Research Topic approved

**Spring Break!**

- 3/25: **Language Acquisition**
- 4/1: **Bilingualism**  
1<sup>st</sup> draft of Method section due
- 4/8: **Metaphor and Sarcasm**  
1<sup>st</sup> draft of Introduction (literature review)
- 4/15: **Learning from Texts/Individual Differences in Reading**  
1<sup>st</sup> draft of Results / Discussion sections due
- 4/22: **Mixed Topics**
- 4/29: **Poster Party**

Final paper Due Friday, May 8