

LING209 | COGS209 | PSYC242
Language and Human Mind
Fall 2020

Jonathan R. Brennan

This course is about using *linguistic analysis* as a tool for studying the *cognitive faculty of language*

This course is **fully online**. Every week this term, you will:

- read book chapters and original articles and answer **reading questions**,
- view recorded **lecture videos** and answer **lecture questions**,
- and attend **online section meetings**.

Meet Your Instructors		Ofc Hrs	
Jonathan Brennan	jobrenn@umich.edu	Tu 1-2 Fr 9:30-10:30	make appointment
Lauretta Cheng	lspcheng@umich.edu	Mo 1-2	make appointment
Yushi Sugimoto	yushis@umich.edu	Th 10-11	zoom link

Weekly Coffee Hour (optional) Tues 10:30 - 11:30 link

Discussion Sections	#	Time	
Yushi Sugimoto	002	Fr 11-12	zoom link
Lauretta Cheng	003	Fr 12-1	zoom link
Yushi Sugimoto	004	Th 3-4	zoom link
Lauretta Cheng	005	Th 4-5	zoom link
Yushi Sugimoto	006	Th 5-6	zoom link
Lauretta Cheng	007	Fr 9-10	zoom link

Course Description

This course introduces students to the “cognitive revolution” and its impact on the contemporary study of language. We review the shift away from seeing speech behavior or “languages” as the object of inquiry to the experimental and

theoretical study of the cognitive mechanisms underlying our unique human capacity for language, the exercise of which permeates virtually every aspect of human life, including what you are now doing! In every household, all of the children, barring pathology - but none of the dogs, cats or other organisms (nor the inanimate objects!) - acquire the language spoken (or signed) by the adults. There is some biological property of humans that makes this feat possible. What do we know when we know a language, and what does it mean to say that humans have an innate capacity for language?

Course Readings

There are two books for this course:

LU: Adger, David *Language Unlimited* 2019: Oxford University Press (ISBN: 9780198828099) [course reserve, 3 copies available]

EoL: Anderson, Catherine *Essentials of Linguistics*, OER Open access online textbook (CC-BY-SA 4.0): <https://essentialsofinguistics.pressbooks.com>

Additional course readings come from various online sources, including:

SEP: Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <https://plato.stanford.edu>

All other readings can be accessed by following links in the syllabus

Please keep in mind that the readings, class lecture, and my comments in class will suggest a particular **point of view**. This perspective is my own and does not have to be yours! I encourage you to disagree with the ideas in the readings and lectures as well as the perspectives of your colleagues in the course. Please express yourself!! A significant part of a college education is learning about the complexity of various issues; therefore, it is important that we listen and respect one another but we do not have to agree. A richer discussion will occur when a variety of perspectives are presented in class for discussion.

Assignments, Exams, & Grading

Before reading about coursework, remember: this semester, more than any other, **unexpected things may come up**. We will try to be as flexible as possible as we balance the needs of everyone in the class. **Please communicate with us if you require special accommodations**

All assignments are posted and submitted via Canvas

(30%) Problem Sets

Students complete five problem sets throughout the term. These assignments allow you to practice the skills of linguistic analysis that we learn in class.

Problem are posted and submitted on Canvas under *Assignments*.

Problem sets submitted within 1 week of the deadline will receive half credit. Problem sets received after 1 week of the deadline will not receive any credit. The lowest problem set grade will be dropped from the final grade calculation.

(30%) Exams

There are three exams in the course. This includes a **final exam on December 14**. The exams are a mix of multiple choice and short-answer questions. The exams will draw on any material that has been discussed so far in the class (that is, they are cumulative.) Review sheets indicating the material tested on each exam will be provided in advance.

The exams will be administered online via *Canvas*. You can take the exam at any time during the date indicated on the syllabus from 12:01 am to 11:59 pm. Each exam will be time-limited to 1.5 hours and you must complete the exam in the allotted time. You are permitted to use notes, books, and other course material to complete the exam.

The lowest exam grade will be dropped.

You are expected to take the exam by yourself and to not discuss exam contents with any other students in the course until after the exam period has ended.

(15%) Readings & RQs

Readings for each week are posted on the syllabus.

Readings will come from the textbooks (**LU**, **EO**), or from websites and journal articles that are linked from the syllabus.

All readings have two **reading questions (RQs)** that you complete on Canvas. RQs are posted on Canvas under *Assignments*. Note that simply doing each RQ will count for 50% of your RQ grade; the quality of your answers counts for the remainder. (For example, if you answer one RQ question out of two incorrectly, then you receive a 75%! for that assignment.)

Reading questions are due by the end of the day on *Wednesday* of the week they are assigned. Up to four RQs can be missed without penalty.

(15%) Lecture Recordings & LQs

Lecture videos are posted each week. These complement and build on the readings. You are expected to watch the lecture videos and answer the **lecture questions*** (LQs) for each video that are posted on Canvas.

Lecture questions are due by the end of the day on *Wednesday* of the week they are assigned. Up to four LQs can be missed without penalty.

There is also a forum on Canvas for students to post questions and comments about the assignments and to continue the discussion outside of the classroom.

Students are encouraged to post to the forum and to respond to posts by your fellow students.

(10%) Section Participation

Learning isn't passive. Section meetings are an opportunity to learn by *actively engaging* with your peers. Please do so! Attendance at your virtual section meetings is required.

It's not always easy to participate in a virtual classroom! There is also be a chat/discussion board via *Google Chat* for your section where the conversation can continue outside of class.

The key idea is that *we want to hear from you* about course content and activities, and we aim to give you options to make yourself heard in the most suitable way.

You can miss two section meetings without penalty. No documentation is required under this policy. Absences due to representing the university in an official capacity, or due to conflicts with religious holidays, are accommodated without penalty so long as appropriate documentation is provided. More details are available by the Newnan Academic Advising Center.

Grading Scale

	A	B	C	NRC	NRC
+	97-99	87-89	77-79	67-69	
	93-96	83-86	73-76	63-67	<60
-	90-92	80-82	70-72	60-62	

Course Schedule

Each week of the course follows the same pattern:

- Lecture recordings are posted by the *previous Friday*
- View lectures and answer questions by *Wednesday* end-of-day
- Complete readings and RQs by *Wednesday* end-of-day
- There is an virtual office-hours open to the whole class on TBD
- Section meetings are *synchronous* on Thursdays and Fridays.
- Some weeks have *problem sets* or *exams!!*
 - Problem sets are due by *Friday at 5 pm*
 - Exams can be taken any-time on *Wednesday* of the week they are assigned

All due dates and times are based on the local time in Ann Arbor (EDT/EST). Please adjust your calendar accordingly if you are in a different

time-zone.

In the schedule below, asterisk (*) indicates a *required reading*

Wk	Date	Lecture Topic	Readings & Assignments
		UNIT 1	
1	Aug 31	LEC1 Introduction LEC2 Ways of knowing	RQ1 *LU Ch. 1 *Chater et al. 2015 <i>Introduction</i> SEP <i>Rationalism vs. Empiricism</i>
2	Sep 7	LEC3 Behaviorism LEC4 Cognitivism	RQ2 *LU Ch. 2 *SEP <i>Behaviorism</i> *Marler 1991 <i>The instinct to learn</i> Watson 1913 <i>Psychology as the behaviorist views it</i> RQ3 *LU Ch, 4 *Miller 2003 <i>The cognitive revolution: A personal history</i> *SEP <i>Innateness & Language</i> sec. 1 Chomsky 1959 <i>A review of B.F. Skinner's Verbal Behavior</i>
3	Sep 14	LEC5 Animal language LEC6 Computer language	RQ4 *LU pages 159–162 * <i>What do talking ape studies really tell us?</i> (Slate article) *Epstein 2016 <i>Nurture is natural too</i> Tomasello 2017 <i>What did we learn from the ape language studies?</i> RQ5 *LU Ch. 8 *OpenAI <i>Language Models</i> website Marcus 2018 Problem Set 1 due 9/18
4	Sep 21	LEC7 Language & thought LEC8 Phonetics	RQ6 *Boroditsky 2001 <i>Does Language Shape Thought?</i> *January & Kako 2007 <i>Reply to Boroditsky</i> RQ7 *EoL 2.1-2.8 *Website: <i>IPA Chart with Sounds</i>

Wk	Date	Lecture Topic	Readings & Assignments
			Website: <i>The sounds of speech</i>
		UNIT 2	
5	Sep 28	LEC9 Phonetics	RQ8 *EoL 3.1-3.6 *Bouavichith et al. 2019 <i>Perceptual influences</i>
		Unit 1 Exam 9/30	
6	Oct 5	LEC10 Phonology	RQ9 *EoL 4.1-4.5
		LEC11 Phonology	RQ10 *LU Ch. 5 *LU Ch. 6 through p. 136 *EoL 6.1-6.2
			Problem Set 2 due 10/9
7	Oct 12	LEC12 Morphology	RQ11 *EoL 6.3-6.5 * <i>The hierarchical structure of words</i>
		LEC13 Morphology	No RQ Review EoL 6.1-6.5
			Problem Set 3 due 10/16
8	Oct 19	LEC14 Syntax	RQ12 *Sentence Patterns of Language pp. 76-109 EoL 7.1, 7.3
		LEC15 Syntax	RQ13 *Sentence Patterns of Language pp. 109-119
9	Oct 26	LEC16 Syntax	RQ14 * LU Ch. 7
		LEC17 Semantics	RQ15 *Elbourne: Definitions *Elbourne: Word Meaning
			Problem Set 4 due 10/30
10	Nov 2	LEC18 Semantics	RQ16 *Meaning of Language pp. 139-146; 166-175
		UNIT 3	
11	Nov 9	LEC19 Parsing syntax	RQ17 *Ferreira & Patson, 2007
		Unit 2 Exam 11/11	
12	Nov 16	LEC20 Parsing semantics	RQ18 *Surian et al., 1996

Wk	Date	Lecture Topic	Readings & Assignments
		LEC21 Acquiring sounds	RQ19 *Video: Ted Talk on Acquiring Speech
13	Nov 23	No Class Thanksgiving	
14	Nov 30	LEC22 Acquiring words	RQ20 *Entry on Vocabulary Learning *Video: Gleitman on early word learning
		LEC23 Acquiring syntax	RQ21 *Lidz et al. 2003 on the poverty of the stimulus Lidz & Waxman defending the poverty of the stimulus Problem Set 5 due 12/4
15	Dec 7	LEC24 Universal grammar	No RQ Video: Chomsky on UG
Unit 3 Exam 12/14			

Frequently Asked Questions

What's the e-mail policy?

E-mail should only be used for personal concerns that cannot be addressed via the discussion board or in office hours.

The best place to ask questions is via the **Canvas Forum** where the instructor and fellow students may all engage with the question. Posting your questions on the forum allows for easy follow-up discussion and makes your contribution available to other students who may have similar questions. The instructors will monitor the forum to ensure answers are clear and accurate.

The instructors aim to respond to emails within 24 hours on weekdays. We are generally not available on e-mail after business hours or on weekends.

I did the assignment, but it didn't get submitted on Canvas. Can you fix it?

Please make sure to double-check that your assignments are submitted prior to the deadline indicated on the syllabus. Students are responsible for ensuring that their assignments are properly submitted.

Can I record class and/or post class notes or recordings online?

Students are prohibited from recording/distributing any class activity without written permission from the instructor, except as necessary as part of approved accommodations for students with disabilities. Any approved recordings may only be used for the student's own private use.

Accessibility and Accommodations

If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let us know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course, such as the assignments, online activities, or the way we teach may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make us aware of your needs, we can work with you, the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities, or the Adaptive Technologies Computing Site to help determine appropriate accommodations. We will treat any information about your disability with the utmost discretion.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

The University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 734.764.8312 and <https://caps.umich.edu> during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or through its counselors physically located in schools on both North and Central Campus. You may also consult University Health Service (UHS) at 734.764.8320 and <https://www.uhs.umich.edu/mentalhealthsvcs>, or for alcohol or drug concerns, see <https://www.uhs.umich.edu/aodresources>.

For a listing of other mental health resources available on and off campus, visit <http://umich.edu/~mhealth/>.

Sexual Misconduct Policy

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here:

- UM Sexual Assault and Prevention Center (SAPAC) 24-hour confidential crisis line (734) 936-3333 <http://sapac.umich.edu/>
- UM Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) (734) 764-8312 <http://caps.umich.edu/>
- University of Michigan Police (DPSS) (734) 763-1131 (or 911 for emergency) <http://www.dpss.umich.edu/>
- UM Office of Student Conflict Resolution (724) 936-6308 <http://oscr.umich.edu>

- UM Newnan Academic Advising Center (734) 764-0332 <https://lsa.umich.edu/advising>

Academic Misconduct

The University of Michigan community functions best when its members treat one another with honesty, fairness, respect, and trust. The college promotes the assumption of personal responsibility and integrity, and prohibits all forms of academic dishonesty and misconduct. All cases of academic misconduct will be referred to the LSA Office of the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Education. Being found responsible for academic misconduct will usually result in a grade sanction, in addition to any sanction from the college. For more information, including examples of behaviors that are considered academic misconduct and potential sanctions, please see lsa.umich.edu/lsa/academics/academic-integrity.html

Plagiarism

The LSA Office of Academic Affairs defines plagiarism as “representing someone else’s ideas, words, statements or other work as one’s own without proper acknowledgment or citation” (see <https://lsa.umich.edu/lsa/academics/academic-integrity/academic-misconduct.html>). New writing challenges can tax your writing fluency, and entering new academic discourses can test your abilities to synthesize and take ownership over source texts and concepts. My job as instructor in this course is to help you through these obstacles so that you can find your footing as a writer in new domains. Your job as a student is to keep the faith, so to speak, and work through these new domains until you regain confidence. This work requires patience, planning, and focus.

Much plagiarism occurs as a result of a lack of care in regard to reading, note taking, and citation practices, or from procrastination, and/or panic. Care, timeliness, and communication will eliminate most of the risk. If you have questions about whether or not you should give credit to a source in your work, you may clarify it with me. In general, though, I recommend always the citing sources you have consulted as well as those you borrow from directly. If you are having difficulty with an essay, please contact me right away! That’s what my email address and office hours are for.