

LING209 | COGSCI209 | PSYC242
Language and Human Mind
Fall 2021

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

click for zoom webinar link

Overview

Course at a Glance

- **Virtual Lectures:** Mon, Weds 10 - 11:30 AM (ET) (click for zoom webinar link)
 - Preferred: Synchronous participation via iClicker
 - Optional: Asynchronous answers via this google form within one week
- **In-person discussion sections:** Thurs or Fri (schedule below)
- **Weekly coffee hour** (optional) TBD link

- Weekly **readings** and **reading questions** (RQs) submitted via Canvas
- Five **Problem Sets** submitted via Canvas (due dates below)
- Three **Exams** completed on Canvas (dates: 9/27, 11/15, 12/14)

Meet your Instructors

- **Jonathan Brennan** (he/him)
 - *Email* jobrenn@umich.edu
 - *Office Hours (virtual)* Weds 2-4:30pm via zoom (make appointment)
- **Aliaksei Akimenka** (he/him)
 - *Email* aakimen@umich.edu
 - *Office Hours (virtual)* Mondays 4-5:00pm via zoom
- **Mathew Kramer** (he/him)
 - *Email* arkram@umich.edu
 - *Office Hours (virtual)* Tuesdays 11:00am-12:00 via zoom (make appointment)

Discussion Sections

Instructor	#	Time	Where
Mathew Kramer	002	Fr 11-12	1423 EQ
Aliaksei Akimenka	003	Fr 12-1	373 LORCH
Mathew Kramer	004	Th 3-4	142 LORCH
Mathew Kramer	005	Th 4-5	142 LORCH
Aliaksei Akimenka	006	Th 5-6	2011 MLB
Aliaksei Akimenka	007	Fr 9-10	142 LORCH

Student Well-being

Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal well-being. In addition to disruptions from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, these may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, mental health, alcohol or other drugs, identities, finances, etc.

If you are experiencing concerns, **seeking help is a courageous thing to do for yourself and those who care about you.** If the source of your stressors is academic, please contact me so that we can find solutions together. For personal concerns, U-M offers many resources, some of which are listed at Resources for Student Well-being on the Well-being for U-M Students website. You can also search for additional resources on that website.

Accommodations

If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way the course is usually taught may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to help us determine appropriate academic accommodations. SSD (734-763-3000; <http://www.ssd.umich.edu>) typically recommends accommodations through a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

Coursework and Schedule

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://essentialsoflinguistics.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 course schedule below

Your perspective matters Please keep in mind that the readings, lectures, and comments from the instructors will reflect a particular *point of view*. These perspectives may not be the same as yours! If you find that you disagree with the ideas in the readings and lectures or 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.

Assignments & Exams

(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 sets are posted, and submitted, on Canvas under *Assignments*.

There is a grace period of *1 day* for late problem sets. The lowest problem set grade will be dropped from the final grade calculation.

(30%) Exams

There are three exams in the course. 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.

Exams are administered via Canvas. They may be taken at any time on the date indicated on the syllabus. Exams are timed: they must be completed within **1.5 hours**

(20%) Readings & Reading Questions (RQs)

Readings for each class are posted on the syllabus. Please come to class prepared to talk about the readings. Readings will come from the textbooks (**LU**, **EoL**), or from websites and journal articles that are linked from the syllabus on Canvas.

All readings have two **reading questions (RQs)** that you complete on Canvas *prior to class*. RQs are posted on Canvas under *Assignments*. 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 75% for that assignment.)

RQs should be submitted by 10:00 AM (ET) on the date indicated on the syllabus.

There is a grace period of *1 week* for late RQs. Up to four RQs can be missed without penalty.

(10%) Participation and iClicker questions

All students are expected to complete the readings before class and to actively contribute to discussions.

The lectures include **iClicker questions**; completing these questions count towards 10% of your final grade. These questions can be answered by any internet-enabled device (click for more info). You must answer at least 2/3 of the questions per class to earn full participation credit. If you are watching a recorded lecture, you can answer the iClicker questions by submitting this google form (click for link)

For more information, click here for the LSA student guide for iClickers.

A discussion forum on Canvas is maintained 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.

iClicker questions for three lectures can be missed without any penalty. There is a grace period of *1 week* for submitting iClicker responses on Canvas. (This is the same as saying that you can watch lectures asynchronously and answer questions within 1 week of the date indicated on Canvas. We don't encourage this, but you can do it.)

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.

(10%) Discussion Sections & Worksheets

Learning isn't passive. Section meetings are an opportunity to learn by *actively engaging* with your peers. Please do so! Discussion sections offer an opportunity to ask more questions, review difficult concepts, and importantly, to work together on coursework. These include weekly **worksheets**.

Discussion participation is assessed by submitting these worksheets; full credit is given simply for completing each one.

There is a grace period of up to one week on completing these worksheets. (This is the same as saying that you can get full participation credit for submitting worksheets online within one week of each discussion section. We don't encourage this, but you can do it.) You can miss up to two worksheets without any penalty. No documentation is required under this policy.

Grading Summary

Problem Sets	Exams	RQs	LQs	Worksheets
30%	30%	20%	10%	10%

Grading Scale

	A	B	C	D	F
+	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

Asterisk () indicates required reading*

Wk	Date	Lecture Topic	Readings & Assignments
		UNIT 1	
1	Aug 30 Sep 1	Introduction Ways of knowing	RQ1 *LU Ch. 1 *Chater et al. 2015 <i>Introduction</i> SEP <i>Rationalism vs. Empiricism</i>
2	Sep 6 Sep 8	No Class Labor day Behaviorism	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>
3	Sep 13	Cognitivism	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>
	Sep 15	Animal 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>
4	Sep 20	Computer language	Problem Set 1 due 9/17 RQ5 *LU Ch. 8 *OpenAI <i>Language Models</i> website Marcus 2018
	Sep 22	Language & thought	RQ6 *Boroditsky 2001 <i>Does Language Shape Thought?</i> *January & Kako 2007 <i>Reply to Boroditsky</i>
5	Sep 27	Unit 1 Exam 9/27	
		UNIT 2	
	Sep 29	Phonetics	RQ7 *EoL 2.1-2.8 *Website: <i>IPA Chart with Sounds</i> Website: <i>The sounds of speech</i>

Wk	Date	Lecture Topic	Readings & Assignments
6	Oct 4	Phonetics	RQ8 *EoL 3.1-3.6 *Bouavichith et al. 2019 <i>Perceptual influences</i>
	Oct 6	Phonology	RQ9 *EoL 4.1-4.5 Problem Set 2 due 10/8
7	Oct 11	Phonology	RQ10 *LU Ch. 5 *LU Ch. 6 through p. 136 *EoL 6.1-6.2
	Oct 13	Morphology	RQ11 *EoL 6.3-6.5 * <i>The hierarchical structure of words</i>
8	Oct 18	No Class Fall Break	
	Oct 20	Morphology	No RQ Review EoL 6.1-6.5 Problem Set 3 due 10/22
9	Oct 25	Syntax	RQ13 *Sentence Patterns of Language pp. 76-109 EoL 7.1, 7.3
	Oct 27	Syntax	RQ14 *Sentence Patterns of Language pp. 109-119
10	Nov 1	Syntax	RQ15 * LU Ch. 7
	Nov 3	Semantics	RQ16 *Elbourne: Definitions *Elbourne: Word Meaning Problem Set 4 due 11/5
11	Nov 8	Semantics	RQ17 *Meaning of Language pp. 139-146; 166-175
	Nov 10	Catch-up day	No RQ
12	Nov 15	Unit 2 Exam 11/15 UNIT 3	
	Nov 17	Parsing syntax	RQ19 *Ferreira & Patson, 2007
13	Nov 22	Parsing semantics	RQ20 *Surian et al., 1996
	Nov 24	No Class Thanksgiving Break	

Wk	Date	Lecture Topic	Readings & Assignments
14	Nov 29	Acquiring phonemes	RQ21 *Video: TED Talk on Acquiring Speech
	Dec 1	Acquiring words	RQ22 *Entry on Vocabulary Learning *Video: Gleitman on early word learning
15	Dec 6	Acquiring syntax	RQ23 *Lidz et al. 2003 on the poverty of the stimulus Lidz & Waxman defending the poverty of the stimulus
	Dec 8	Universal grammar	No RQ Video: Chomsky on UG Problem Set 5 due 12/10
		Unit 3 Exam in 12/14	

Additional Course Details

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 enrolled in the class after the term began, what should I do?

First, make sure to introduce yourself to the instructors. Second, check on the syllabus for assignments you may have missed. *Missed assignments can be submitted by October 1st via Canvas for full credit.*

How should I address the instructors?

This varies from person to person. The best advice is to simply ask “How would you like to be addressed?” When in doubt, I recommend being more formal rather than less: it is almost always appropriate to use “Professor [Last name].” This U–M/reddit thread offers more perspectives

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 by the deadline (keep in mind the *grace periods* for different assignments.)

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

We ask that you not make your own recordings of classes or distribute any class materials 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.

COVID-19 and a Classroom Culture of Care

Your health and safety matters. To minimize the spread of COVID-19 please follow the guidelines laid out in the Wolverine Culture of Care and the University’s Face Covering Policy for COVID-19 If you would like to request an accommodation related to the face covering requirement under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you should contact the Office for Institutional Equity.

All students are expected to adhere to the required safety measures and guidelines of the State of Michigan and the University of Michigan, including sanitizing their work areas, maintaining appropriate personal distance, wearing a face covering that covers the mouth and nose in all public spaces, and not coming to class when ill or in quarantine. **Class will not be held unless safety protocols are being followed.**

Any student who is not able to comply with campus safety measures for this course should contact the course instructor *prior to class* to discuss alternate participation. They may also choose to meet with an academic advisor and consider other course options. Students who do not adhere to these safety measures while in a face-to-face class setting, and do not have an approved exception or accommodation, will be asked to participate on a remote basis.

For additional information refer to the LSA Student Commitment to the Wolverine Culture of Care and the OSCR Addendum to the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities on the OSCR website.

Course Recordings

Course lectures may be audio/video recorded and made available to other students in this course. As part of your participation in this course, you may be recorded. If you do not wish to be recorded, please contact the instructor the first week of class (or as soon as you enroll in the course, whichever is latest) to discuss alternative arrangements.

A note on 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.