LINGUISTICS 533: THEORIES OF LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

INSTRUCTOR: Diane Ohala
Email: ohalad@email.arizona.edu

OFFICE HOURS: By Appointment
Location: Douglass 212

Readings & Course Website
A reading list is provided at the end of this document. This may change depending on the will and interests of the class (myself included!). All readings will be made available on the course website (d2l.arizona.edu).

Course Description and Goals
This course is designed for graduate students in linguistics and related fields who are interested in learning more about the acquisition of language. Students will read classic and current articles to explore specific issues that arise in attempting to untie the complex knot that is language development. The issues we will discuss represent a microcosm of similar issues that arise in the study of the cognitive sciences in general, and must be resolved for any theory of language development to be successful in accounting for the data at hand.

Materials will be presented in a seminar style format, where student participation in discussion is both encouraged and expected. In addition, students will develop or strengthen basic scholarly skills, such as how to develop and write a proposal for a research investigation, how to read papers critically, and how to present research both individually and as part of a group. All of these skills are ones that are in constant use in the academic arena and are critical to one's success in any discipline.

Course Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance &amp; Participation</th>
<th>70</th>
<th>At least 5 questions for open discussion of the relevant readings must be submitted to the D2L dropbox by 9 AM on each class day.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group Presentations</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Presentation of group-selected material; each student will present as part of a group only once.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Writing Assignments</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4 Assignments (25 points each); 2-3 page commentary on select material covered to that date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester Project</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Research project (one of various options detailed on the next page).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Possible Points</td>
<td>450</td>
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Group Presentations
Because it is impossible to cover all material that may be of interest to students and because I also believe that one key to successful learning is being able to express and share ideas with others, some portion of our class time during the semester will be devoted to discussions of particular interest to YOU. Each of you is required to work with a small group of your classmates (only once) during the semester to present a body of material of the group’s choice. The body of material presented by a group is subject to negotiation by the individual members. It can be a single paper or a group of papers.

The paper(s) must be cleared with me TWO WEEKS prior to the scheduled presentation date so that I may review them and your peers have time to read them. The material need not be cohesive if unanimous agreement on a topic is impossible. Examples might be an examination of similar or related phenomena in
another domain, such as second language acquisition or word-learning, or the exploration of different phenomena (not already discussed in class) in the same domain, or a special issue of a journal with a main article and replies. In addition, each group – preferably all members together – need to meet with me ONE WEEK prior to the scheduled presentation so that we can discuss the content of the papers and your plan for presenting them.

Ideally, the topic covered by the group will be relevant to the particular area of language development reviewed just prior, but as it is of primary importance to me that each group get the chance to present something near and dear to their collective heart, this is not a firm requirement. Material may be presented in any format, but should you require copying or special equipment, please let me know one class period in advance. You need not think of this as a formal presentation but as an opportunity to share your interests with your classmates. Presentation style can be casual just so long as it is clear you are well-prepared. As the class is large, group-size may be as great as four persons per group. Group membership and presentation dates will be assigned when class enrollment is finalized.

**Short Writing Assignments (SWA)**

As indicated earlier, there are 4 short writing assignments to be completed during the term. These assignments should be submitted to the dropbox on D2L by the date indicated in the schedule; you should aim for 2-3 pages per assignment. In most cases, you will be asked to provide a written commentary on AND synthesis of (some of) the material covered in class up to the date of the assignment. This will allow you to air any remaining questions, thoughts, and insights you may have on what has been covered so far. In addition, your writing will provide me with an assessment of your grasp of the material as a whole at regular intervals throughout the course. Further details on each SWA will be provided no later than a week before the relevant due date.

**Semester Project**

Each student must also complete a semester project, the nature of which can take any of the forms suggested below. It is of the utmost concern to me that your project be something you are a) incredibly interested in, b) capable of completing in one semester, and c) going to be able to use in some way, shape, or form after the course is over (even if it is simply the set of skills you used to complete the project). Please check the schedule for submission dates regarding this project. The first two submissions are designed to help you choose and begin brainstorming about your project, the third will require a rough-draft or annotated bibliography, and the last is the submission of your completed project:

1. A research paper that addresses one of the philosophical or theoretical issues central to the course; the paper **must** contain more than just a literature review.

2. Summaries and a synthesis of 6-10 research articles (may include some articles from the class bibliography but should also include new material). The synthesis of the article content should be the bulk of your paper.

3. An experiment proposal that springboards from the readings and that speaks to one or more of the issues central to the course.

4. A draft of an NSF Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant, which basically will consist of the Project Description. As with all previous options, the proposal must be related to course content and ideas.

5. Something different: you can mix components from the previous four or you can talk me into Something Completely Different (SCD). The only limitations are that there is some synthesis of ideas and that it relate, at least tangentially, to the course topic.
GRADING
Each student has the opportunity to earn a total of 450 points, distributed across the four categories as shown above. However, a student's grade will be calculated only out of 420 points (378-420=A, 336-377=B, 294-335=C, 252-293=D, 0-251=E). Where relevant, students should expect written feedback from the instructor intended to inform students of strengths and weaknesses in their work. Students should expect to be alerted in these comments if his/her performance is below graduate level – and the grade should be expected to reflect this as well. Students should feel free to discuss their progress with me AT ANY TIME.

University policy regarding grades and grading systems is available at: http://catalog.arizona.edu/2014-15/policies/grade.htm. Requests for incompletes (I) and withdrawal (W) must be made in accordance with university policies which are available at http://catalog.arizona.edu/2014-15/policies/grade.htm#I and http://catalog.arizona.edu/2014-15/policies/grade.htm#W, respectively.

EXPECTATIONS
1. **Academic Integrity.** Students are encouraged to share intellectual views and discuss freely the principles and applications of course materials. However, graded work/exercises must be the product of independent effort unless otherwise instructed. Students are expected to adhere to the UA Code of Academic Integrity as described in the UA General Catalog. See: http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/academic-integrity/students/academic-integrity.

2. **Code of Conduct.** The Arizona Board of Regents’ Student Code of Conduct, ABOR Policy 5-308, prohibits threats of physical harm to any member of the University community, including to one’s self. See: http://policy.arizona.edu/threatening-behavior-students.

3. **Attendance.** Students are expected to attend class and to contribute regularly to class discussion. Your participation grade is based, in part, on your timely submission of relevant questions as indicated earlier. However, I expect that you will have other comments and questions to contribute as we go along. Any question is welcome, no matter how big or small (even “Whaaaaat?”). Please don’t be shy. In a graduate class, especially one that is over two hours in length, I expect not to be talking all the time. An exchange of ideas is how great research proposals are borne!

   Attendance will not be taken daily but excessive absence or lateness will be noted and I reserve the right to ask you about these behaviors if you have not already informed me of expected attendance issues. Unexplained tardiness or absence may contribute to a lowered participation grade. The UA’s policy concerning Class Attendance and Administrative Drops is available at: http://catalog.arizona.edu/2014-15/policies/classatten.htm. The UA policy regarding absences on and accommodation of religious holidays is available at http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/policies-and-codes/accommodation-religious-observance-and-practice. Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean designee) will be honored. See: http://uhap.web.arizona.edu/chapter_7#7.04.02.

4. **Late Policy.** Each student is expected to complete all written and oral assignments by the date indicated on the syllabus. Where relevant, students should turn material in to the D2L dropbox (preferably as PDF) by the beginning of class. Hard copies will not be accepted. Please note that absence on the day something is due does not exclude the timely submission of the relevant assignment unless there are documentable and extenuating circumstances. Assignments not turned in on time will be considered late and penalties may be invoked in the form of points lost. Still, I am very well aware that graduate school and our own personal lives sometimes make exacting and conflicting demands on our time. If you at all anticipate a problem with turning in an assignment by a particular due date, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can work out an alternate schedule. In the case of group assignments, however, students should make every endeavor to contribute equally and in a timely fashion to the work required.
5. **Confidentiality of Student Records.** [http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/ferpa/default.htm](http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/ferpa/default.htm).

6. **Accessibility & Accommodation.** It is the University’s goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability or pregnancy, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options. You are also welcome to contact Disability Resources (520-621-3268) to establish reasonable accommodations. For additional information on Disability Resources and reasonable accommodations, please visit [http://drc.arizona.edu/](http://drc.arizona.edu/). If you have reasonable accommodations, please plan to meet with me by appointment or during office hours to discuss accommodations and how my course requirements and activities may impact your ability to fully participate.

7. **Schedule & Course Syllabus Changes.** Please note that information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policy, is subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

**Schedule** (details on subtopics and readings follow the schedule)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Written Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>8/26</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>9/2</td>
<td>Phonological Development</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>9/9</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>SWA1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>9/16</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>9/23</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>SWA2</td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>9/30</td>
<td>Group Presentation (x2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Project Sub 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>10/7</td>
<td>NO CLASS - MYMF</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>10/14</td>
<td>Lexical Development</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>W</td>
<td>10/21</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>W</td>
<td>10/28</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>SWA3</td>
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<td>W</td>
<td>11/4</td>
<td>Group Presentation (x2)</td>
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<td>Project Sub 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>11/11</td>
<td>NO CLASS – VETERAN’S DAY</td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>11/18</td>
<td>Syntactic Development</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Project Sub 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>11/25</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>12/2</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>SWA4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>12/9</td>
<td>Group Presentation/Wrap-up</td>
<td></td>
<td>Project Sub 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Readings

Reading 1 – Terminology & Issues in Language Acquisition (~ 44 pp):

Reading 2 – Phonological acquisition (~ 66 pp):

Reading 3 – The role of prosody, phonotactics, and native language (~ 69 pp):

Reading 4 – Statistical & distributional learning, generalization, and emerging phonology (~ 57 pp):

Reading 5 – The interplay of phonological and lexical development (~ 57 pp):

Reading 6 – The interplay of phonological and lexical development - continued (~ 54 pp):
**Reading 7 – The role of cognitive development in building a lexicon (~ 47 pp):**


**Reading 8 – The influence of theory of mind on lexical development (~ 32 pp):**


**Reading 9 – On the development of syntactic categories (~ 103 pp):**


**Reading 10 – On innateness and the poverty of the stimulus in syntax (~ 28 pp):**


**Reading 11 – A different approach to syntactic development (~ 89 pp):**


