



Faculty of Arts
School of Languages, Linguistics, Literatures and Cultures

LING 633.01
First Language Acquisition
Fall 2018

COURSE OUTLINE

INSTRUCTOR'S NAME: Dimitrios Skordos

OFFICE LOCATION: CHD 413

OFFICE HOURS: T/R 15:30 – 16:30 or by appt.

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DESCRIPTION

Children start out seemingly unable to communicate through language, but typically end up as fully competent adult communicators. First language acquisition is typically seen as quick, effortless and largely complete by the time children go to kindergarten. One aspect of language acquisition, however, seems to have a far more protracted development: The ability to use language appropriately, or the acquisition of linguistic pragmatics. This course is a graduate level seminar on how humans develop the ability to use language appropriately in context and make inferences.

OBJECTIVES

We will explore theoretical issues and approaches regarding language acquisition, including the contributions of the innate endowment of the human mind, as opposed to environmental exposure to language, focusing primarily on pragmatic development, the ability of humans to use language appropriately and make inferences. We will largely focus on typical language development, but we will also look at evidence from bilingualism, as well as atypical language development. In the course, we will critically examine evidence about pragmatic development from a variety of sources. The course will conclude by you putting together your own experimental study of language development on a specific topic.

OUTCOMES

Students will become familiar with theoretical issues and empirical data in first language acquisition, particularly on pragmatic development. They will develop the critical skills necessary to evaluate empirical findings and claims and the basic skill set to ask theoretically interesting questions and to develop sound empirical studies to test those. Finally, they will learn how to present on developmental subjects in front of an academic audience and how to write up their proposal for a study according to disciplinary standards.

DISTRIBUTION OF GRADES

Class Participation: 15%

Presentation of Final Project in class: 25%

Final Project Write-up / Final Paper: 60%



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GRADING SCALE

A+ = 100-97; A = 93-96; A- = 92-88; B+ = 87-83; B = 82-78; B- = 77-73; C+ = 72-68; C = 67-63; C- = 62-58; D+ = 57-53; D = 52-50; F = 49%

REQUIRED TEXTS

There are no required texts other than those provided during the course (via D2L) by the instructor.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

There are several entry-level textbooks on first language acquisition that a graduate student could consult for 'encyclopedic' – level knowledge of fundamental issues on the subject if desired. One such textbook is the following:

- Hoff, Erika. 2013. *Language Development. 5th edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning. Looseleaf edition ISBN = 13: 978-1-133-93909-2*

COURSE NOTES

This is a graduate seminar. Classes typically include presentation of material by the Instructor and students, and extensive class discussion. Barring exceptional circumstances and unforeseen events, you are expected to attend all classes, as the critical in-class discussion of primary research papers forms the backbone of the seminar. Any accommodation for deadline extensions or similar requests will only be considered in cases where sufficient documentation of an unavoidable circumstance of sufficient gravity is provided. Please see the syllabus for an exhaustive list of class policies and expectations.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

1. **Plagiarism** is a serious offence, the penalty for which is an F on the assignment and possibly also an F in the course, academic probation, or requirement to withdraw. Plagiarism exists when:
 - a) the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test);
 - b) parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author;
 - c) the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source, and/or
 - d) a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted."

Plagiarism occurs not only when direct quotations are taken from a source without specific acknowledgement but also when original ideas or data from the source are not acknowledged. A bibliography is insufficient to establish which portions of the student's work are taken from external sources; footnotes or other recognized forms of citation must be used for this purpose.

2. **Cheating** at tests or examinations includes but is not limited to dishonest or attempted dishonest conduct such as speaking to other candidates or communicating with them under any circumstances whatsoever; bringing into the examination room any textbook, notebook, memorandum, other written material or mechanical or electronic device not authorized by the examiner; writing an examination or part of it, or consulting any person or materials outside the confines of the examination room without permission to do so, or leaving answer papers exposed to view, or persistent attempts to read other students' examination papers.



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3. **Other academic misconduct** includes, but is not limited to, tampering or attempts to tamper with examination scripts, class work, grades and/or class records; failure to abide by directions by an instructor regarding the individuality of work handed in; the acquisition, attempted acquisition, possession, and/or distribution of examination materials or information not authorized by the instructor; the impersonation of another student in an examination or other class assignment; the falsification or fabrication of clinical or laboratory reports; the non-authorized tape recording of lectures.

4. Any student who voluntarily and consciously aids another student in the commission of one of these offences is also guilty of academic misconduct.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

The student accommodation policy can be found at: ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy.

Students needing an Accommodation because of a Disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.

Students needing an Accommodation based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the course instructor.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION ASSEMBLY POINTS

Craigie Hall: Professional Faculties food court (alternate: Education Block food court)

Education Block and Tower: Scurfield Hall atrium (alternate: Professional Faculties food court)

Kinesiology: north courtyard, MacEwan Student Centre (alternate: University Theatres lobby)

For the complete list of assembly points please consult <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

FACULTY OF ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING AND STUDENT INFORMATION RESOURCES

Have a question, but not sure where to start?

The Arts Students' Centre is the overall headquarters for undergraduate programs in the Faculty of Arts. The key objective of this office is to connect students with whatever academic assistance they may require.

In addition to housing the Associate Dean (Undergraduate Programs and Student Affairs) and the Associate Dean (Teaching, Learning & Student Engagement), the Arts Students' Centre is the specific home to:

- Program advising
- Co-op Education Program
- Arts and Science Honours Academy
- Student Help Desk

Location: Social Sciences Room 102

Phone: 403-220-3580

Email: ascarts@ucalgary.ca

Website: arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate.

For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at 403-210-ROCK [7625] or visit them at the MacKimmie Block.

Contacts for the Students' Union Representative for the Faculty of Arts: arts1@su.ucalgary.ca, arts2@su.ucalgary.ca, arts3@su.ucalgary.ca, arts4@su.ucalgary.ca.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PRIVACY (FOIP) ACT

Graded assignments will be retained by the Department for three months and subsequently sent for confidential shredding. Final examinations will be kept for one calendar year and subsequently sent for confidential shredding. Said material is exclusively available to the student and to the department staff requiring to examine it.



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Please see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy> for complete information on the disclosure of personal records.

INTERNET AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES

Devices such as laptops, palmtops and smartbooks are allowed provided that they are used exclusively for instructional purposes and do not cause disruption to the instructor and to fellow students. Cellular telephones, blackberries and other mobile communication tools are not permitted and must be switched off.

SAFEWALK

To request a Safewalk escort anywhere on campus, 24 hours a day and seven days a week, please call 403-220-5333 or use one of the Help Phones.

Web: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk>

STUDENT UNION INFORMATION

Representatives and contact details: <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/home/contact.html>

Student Ombudsman: <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/services/student-services/student-rights.html>

WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Writing skills should cross all disciplines. Students are expected to do a substantial amount of writing in their courses and, where appropriate, instructors can and should use writing and the grading thereof as a factor in the evaluation of student work. The services provided by the Writing Centre in the Effective Writing Office (<http://www.efwr.ucalgary.ca/>) can be utilized by all undergraduate and graduate students who feel they require further assistance.