LINGUISTICS 200
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF LANGUAGE
Fall 2012

This course outline contains important information – please read it carefully.

Goals
This course is intended for students interested in human language, and more broadly in the human mind. We will compare prescriptive versus descriptive approaches to language, ultimately taking a biolinguistic approach. We explore how a scientific approach to language can shed light on and predict certain aspects of human verbal behaviour, on the way people acquire first and second languages, and the nature of language change. We also address the neurological basis of language and the way in which linguistic theory can help understand language breakdown (aphasia) and language processing. Finally, we discuss some social implications of biolinguistics.

At the end of this course the student should have an understanding of the following basic questions: What is “language”? How do human languages differ? How do they resemble each other? What is the biological basis of human language? How does language relate to thought? How do children acquire language, and how do first and second language acquisition differ? Why (and how) do languages change over time? What is the distinction between knowledge of language and its use?

Method
Two (at times three) lectures per week; mandatory conferences.

Lectures
MW(F) 13:35-14:25 Arts W-120

Conferences
In most weeks a mandatory conference, conducted by T.A.s, will provide you with some hands-on exercises and time for questions & discussion. The class will be split up into six sections; three of them coincide with normal Friday lecture times, the other three are held outside lecture time, also on Friday, as follows:

Section 1: F 12:35-13:25 BIRKS 111 Fiona Campbell
Section 2: F 14:35-15:25 BIRKS 111 Fiona Campbell
Section 3: F 11:35-12:25 BIRKS 205 Matthew Masapollo
Section 4: F 13:35-14:25 ARTS W-120 Matthew Masapollo
Section 5: F 11:35-12:25 WONG 1030 Tokiko Okuma
Section 6: F 12:35-13:25 BIRKS 017 Tokiko Okuma

Conferences begin Friday, September 21. You need to register for a conference on Minerva.

Instructor
Moti Lieberman

Email
mordecai.lieberman@mail.mcgill.ca

Office
1085 Dr. Penfield (corner of Dr. Penfield and Peel), Room 204

Office hours
Wednesdays, 12-1 PM (tentative), and by appointment

Teaching Assistants
Fiona Campbell fiona.campbell@mail.mcgill.ca
Matthew Masapollo matthew.masapollo@mail.mcgill.ca
Tokiko Okuma tokiko.okuma@mail.mcgill.ca

T.A. drop-in hours
Time: Thursdays, 12-1 PM.
Place: 1085 Dr. Penfield room 002
Drop-in hours start September 20. Please see myCourses Calendar for details.

MyCourses chat hour: Wednesdays, 7-8 PM. (see myCourses Calendar for details).

Evaluation:
Two-hour Midterm exam 31 % (Nov. 5, 6-8 p.m. ENGMC 204)
Three-hour final exam 42 % (final exam period)
Three homework assignments 27 % (9% each)

Please note: In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.
MyCourses: This course has a website on myCourses, which is accessible from:

Lecture slides are posted there before lectures. All material, including assignments, will be posted on myCourses. The lectures are recorded and also accessible through myCourses. I will use the Calendar tool to post important dates. It is your responsibility to monitor the course website on a regular basis.

Discussion tools: There are three discussion tools on myCourses. We encourage you to use the Student Discussion Tool for questions concerning the course material. The T.A.s and I will monitor and join in through guiding comments or clarifications of potentially misleading or wrong answers provided by fellow students. For questions concerning the course material that you want to direct specifically to the instructor/T.A., please consider using the tool entitled Questions about course content for instructor and T.A.s. This way, the whole class benefits from your questions and our answers. Finally, there is an anonymous discussion board for the provision of feedback regarding the class over the course of the term. This should be constructive criticism that can better the course; abuse of this function will lead to its deactivation.

myCourses Chat: A weekly chat drop-in hour (Wednesdays, 7-8 PM) where you can ask questions which will be answered in weekly rotation by your instructor and the T.A.s. The myCourses Chat hour is held only if there is sufficient demand. (If fewer than three students a week use it, we may cancel it.)

Please note that all course material (notes, slides, problem sets, etc) is copyrighted material and may NOT be passed on to anyone. Furthermore, keep in mind that obtaining any material from students who have taken this course previously constitutes an academic offence.

E-mail policy: E-mails should be answered within 48h (barring weekends and holidays) by all (instructor, T.A.s, and students). Please do not use myCourses email to contact me, but use normal e-mail to mordecai.lieberman@mail.mcgill.ca. I will not respond to myCourses e-mail. (The T.A.s will establish their own e-mail guidelines.)

Note: please do not send separate e-mails with identical questions to both me and your T.A. This only generates double work for us. You may send one single e-mail to both me and your TA. One of us will then respond.


Some other selected articles (t.b.a.)


All books are on reserve at the Redpath Reserve Desk.

Conferences and homework assignments
In weeks with conferences, a practice assignment will be posted on myCourses on Monday or Tuesday. You are responsible for printing out the assignments and completing them before the Friday conference. You will be discussing them in your conferences held by teaching assistants. These practice assignments are not graded.
Three graded homework assignments will be collected during class or during the conference by your T.A.s. Assignments will be posted on myCourses a week before their due date. **It is your responsibility to download and print them.**

No answer sheets will be posted on myCourses. You are responsible to check whether your answers to the practice assignments were correct in your conferences. If you miss the conference, go to the T.A. drop-in hour or come to my office hours.

**Format of assignments and exams**

Assignments: Problem set solving and short essay questions. The assignments can be done in group work. Maximum group size is three students, and the students must be in the same conference section. Group work means **equal participation** of all group members toward **finding** and **writing up** the solution to the problems.

Exams: Part multiple choice, part short answers, part problem sets and short essay questions.

**You may be examined on anything that was covered in the lectures, conferences, or in the required reading.**

**Note:** This is **not** the type of course where you can ‘get by’ without doing all the assignments and required reading **on a weekly basis.** The concepts that we will be covering are difficult, at times technical, and not suitable for learning in a cram session before assignments or exams. Your participation in lectures and conferences is required. Failure to keep up on a regular basis will almost guarantee a low grade for this course. If you feel lost, please act upon this **immediately!** Our weekly drop-in hours, appointments, e-mail, and myCourses chat will provide you with ample resources to catch up and clarify issues for you. If you let yourself fall behind, it will be very difficult to catch up before exams to get a good grade.

The posted slides provide a skeletal framework for your note taking. I will frequently be covering material not covered in the text, and you are responsible for everything covered in lectures and conferences.

The final exam schedule will be available on Minerva. It is your responsibility to ensure that you know the precise date & time of the exam and to bring your card ID to the exam. In case of exam conflicts, it is your responsibility to notify the Student Affairs Office as soon as you know of the conflict so that special arrangements can be made.

**Make-ups**

Students who miss the midterm for an acceptable reason (e.g., sickness or a family tragedy) MUST contact me by phone or email within **two days** of the exam. If necessary, you may leave a message with the departmental secretary. Then, contact me through email within **five days** to arrange for a make-up date. You need to provide **appropriate documentation** (e.g. doctor’s note) in order for the makeup to be approved. **Other than that, there will be no opportunity for make-up work.**

Students who miss a conference where an assignment was collected for an acceptable reason (e.g. sickness or a family tragedy) must inform **their T.A. within two days.** Again, you need to provide appropriate documentation in order for makeup work to be approved.

In case of a Midterm exam conflict, you must notify me by **September 26 in writing** (through e-mail).

**Deferred and supplemental**

Students who miss the final exam for a reason acceptable to the Associate Dean will be able to write a deferred exam. Students who obtain a D or F will be able to write a supplemental exam for **100%** of the final grade. (Note that the supplemental will **not** replace your grade on the transcript, but will allow you to pass the course). The student must contact the Student Affairs Office in Dawson Hall (NOT the instructor) in order to gain approval to write the deferred or supplemental.

**Cheating**

No student shall:

a) In the course of an examination obtain or attempt to obtain information from another student or unauthorised source or give or attempt to give information to another student or possess, use or attempt to use any unauthorised material;
b) Represent or attempt to represent oneself as another or have or attempt to have oneself represented by another in
the taking of an examination, preparation of a paper or other similar activity.
Furthermore, no answer to any test/exam will be reassessed unless;
a) it is written in ink;
b) it has not been written over;
c) what is to be reassessed is clearly marked as such.

Right to submit in English or French written work that is to be graded:
In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in
English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Statement of Academic Integrity
McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and
consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and
Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information).

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l’honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les
étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les
conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures
disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/integrity).

No special arrangements for final exams
According to Senate regulations, instructors are not permitted to make special arrangements for final
exams. Please consult the Calendar, section 4.7.2.1, General University Information and Regulations at
www.mcgill.ca.
## CLASS SCHEDULE (subject to adjustment)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>Reading &amp; work due</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PART I</strong></td>
<td><strong>THE OBJECT OF INQUIRY</strong></td>
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| 1-2 | - Overview and introduction to course  
- Two concepts of grammar  
- “Mental grammar”: I-language  
- Language as an internalised computational system *part I*: word formation rules | Isac & Reiss, chapter 1 |
| 3 Fri Sep 21 | - Language and cognitive science  
- Language *versus* thought; language *versus* communication  
- The autonomy of syntax  
- The scientific approach | Isac & Reiss, chapters 2-3 |
| **PART II** | **REPRESENTATION & COMPUTATION** | |
| 4 Fri Sep 28 | - Language as an internalised computational system *part II*: stress rules  
- Generative grammar: - ‘grammatical’ vs. ‘ungrammatical’  
- infinite use of finite means  
- Biolinguistics  
- The articulatory apparatus  
- writing versus speech  
- the production of consonants | Isac & Reiss, chapter 4; chapter 5 section 1; chapter 6 sections 1-2 |
| 5 Fri Oct 5 | - The articulatory apparatus cont.  
- the production of vowels  
- Mental representation in sound patterns: phonological knowledge  
- Phonemes and allophones | Isac & Reiss, chapter 6, section 3. |
| 6 Fri Oct 12 | Monday, Oct. 8: No Class (Thanksgiving)  
- Phonology cont.: Phonological processes  
- Morphophonemics: word formation conditioned by phonology | Isac & Reiss, chapter 6, section 4. |
| 7 Fri Oct 19 | - Mental representation in sentence patterns: syntactic knowledge  
  o Linear versus hierarchical structure  
  o Heads and phrases  
  - Selection and modification | Isac & Reiss, chapter 7 sections 1-3 & handout |
| 8 Fri Oct 26 | - Movement rules and their constraints  
- Syntactic typology and parameters | Isac & Reiss, chapter 7 sections 4-5 |
| 9 | - Anaphors, pronouns, and binding theory.  
- Negative Polarity Items | Isac & Reiss, chapter 8 |
| **PART III** | **ACQUISITION, PROCESSING AND CHANGES IN LANGUAGE** | |
| 10 | Child language acquisition.  
- phonological development  
- syntactic development  
- positive evidence and learnability  
- the innateness hypothesis (UG)  
- Principles and Parameters | Isac & Reiss, chapter 10 |
| 11 Fri Nov 16 | Second language acquisition  
- first vs. second language acquisition  
- child vs. adult second language acquisition  
- different outcomes in second languages | Readings TBA |
<p>| <strong>Conference 7</strong> | Exercises in first language acquisition | PS2 due |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fri Nov 23</td>
<td>Psycholinguistics</td>
<td>Readings TBA</td>
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<td>- processing language</td>
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<td>- methodologies for testing language and thought</td>
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<td><strong>Conference 8</strong> Exercises in second language acquisition</td>
<td>PS3 Posted</td>
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<td>Fri Nov 30</td>
<td>Neurolinguistics</td>
<td>Readings TBA</td>
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<td>- Language and the Brain - Modularity</td>
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<td>- Language and the Brain - Aphasia</td>
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<td><strong>Conference 9</strong> Exercises in psycho- and neurolinguistics</td>
<td>PS3 Due</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Language change and variation</td>
<td>- <em>Isac &amp; Reiss, chpt 12-14 (selected sections)</em></td>
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<td>- Language acquisition and change</td>
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<td>Social implications</td>
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<td>- Prescriptivism and language prejudice</td>
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