McGILL UNIVERSITY
Faculty of Medicine
School of Communication Sciences & Disorders
Fall 2019

SCSD 624
Language Processes
Number of Credits: 3 Credit
Course Time: Thursdays; 1:30-3:30 pm
Location: SCSD, Room 869

Instructor: Professor Laura Gonnerman
Office: SCSD, Room 865; **Office Phone:** 514-398-3878
Office Hours: Thursdays, 3:30-4pm or by appointment (set up by phone or by email)
Email: laura.gonnerman@mcgill.ca

COURSE OVERVIEW: Survey of themes and methods from psycholinguistics: how humans perceive, process, and produce language. Following levels of linguistic description, study progresses from the building blocks of phonemes and morphemes up to discourse and conversation. Connections drawn between basic science research and clinical populations, highlighting relevance of material for speech-language pathology.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

ROLE 1: CENTRAL ROLE/CONTENT EXPERT

Foundational Principles	
Apply basic knowledge of cognitive, linguistic, and socio-behavioral sciences relevant to human communication processes, including knowledge of their cultural and linguistic bases.	
Identify the cognitive and linguistic mechanisms that underlie the comprehension and production of language at different levels of complexity, e.g., sounds, words, sentences, discourse, conversation.	Midterm Exam Final Exam

ROLE 2: COMMUNICATOR

Oral and written communication	
Use language appropriate to the communicative situation. Provide relevant information. Present effectively in small and large group settings.	
Present findings from literature review to the group.	Oral presentation

ROLE 5: SCHOLAR

Evidence-informed Practice	
Appraise research and other evidence critically to address client service or practice questions.	
Describe experimental techniques used in psycholinguistics and interpret the results of experimental studies. Evaluate the methods and results of experiments with respect to the research question posed.	Written Assignment

INSTRUCTIONAL METHOD:
While the structure of the course is based on a lecture format, I expect students to ask questions and actively participate in being sure they understand the material. There will be written exams and assignments, as well as an oral presentation.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS:
Traxler, M. (2012), *Introduction to Psycholinguistics: Understanding Language Science.* Wiley-Blackwell. Small packet of selected readings.

The textbook is available at the McGill bookstore or online. Packet readings will be available either as files to be downloaded from the course web site or handed out in class.

COURSE CONTENT
This course is intended as a broad yet rigorous introduction to the major themes in psycholinguistics. Psycholinguistics is taken to include language acquisition, comprehension and production, as well as impairments, although the topics that we will cover will focus primarily on comprehension and production. The primary goal is to help you to think about language processing, to integrate empirical findings in support of various theories, and to develop your ability to evaluate normal adult processing.

We will approach these topics from the perspective of levels of description in Linguistics, moving from the building blocks of phonemes and morphemes up to the larger units of discourse and conversation. We will consider processing of spoken language, as well as the modalities of sign and written languages.

COURSE SCHEDULE (Subject to change)

September 5: Language and Thought

Readings: Traxler, Chapter 1.

September 12: Speech Production, Speech Errors

Readings: Traxler, Chapter 2.

September 19: Word Knowledge: Lexical access and lexical semantics

Readings: Traxler, Chapter 3.

September 26: Sentence Processing

Readings: Traxler, Chapter 4.

October 3: Visual Word Recognition and Skilled Reading

Readings: Traxler, Chapter 10.

October 10: Morphological Processing

Seidenberg, M.S. & Gonnerman, L.M. (2000). Explaining derivational morphology as the convergence of codes. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 4,* 353-361.

October 17: Midterm

October 24: Discourse Processing

Readings: Traxler, Chapter 5.

October 31: Conversation/Language & Gender

Readings: Traxler, Chapter 8.

November 7: Bilingual Processing

Readings: Traxler, Chapter 11.

November 14: Research Day

November 21: Processing Signed Languages & Student Presentations I

Readings: Traxler, Chapter 12.

November 28: Student Presentations II

December 9 (Monday): Final Exam, 1:00-3:00pm

EVALUATION:
Written Assignment – There will be one written assignment given out during the semester, specific details will be made available at that time. – 25%.

Oral Presentation – Each student will give an oral presentation to the class. These presentations will be given during the last two class sessions. – 10%.

Midterm Exam – There will be an in-class midterm exam. Since different people have different strengths when it comes to written exams, the exam will include short answer, identification, multiple choice, true-false, and essay questions. – 30%.

Final Exam – There will be a final exam, the details of which will be described later in the semester – 35%.

Assignment	Date	Sub Roles Targeted	Expected Performance Level
Midterm Exam	Oct 17	Foundational Principles	Advanced Beginner
Written Assignment	Nov 21	Evidence-informed Practice	Novice
Oral Presentation	Nov 21 or 30	Oral and written communication	Novice
Final Exam	Dec 9	Foundational Principles	Intermediate

McGILL POLICY STATEMENTS:

Academic Integrity

Language of Submission