



**McGILL UNIVERSITY**  
**Faculty of Medicine**  
**School of Communication Sciences & Disorders**  
**Fall 2022**

**SCSD 624**

**Language Development and Processes**

Number of Credits: 3

Course Time: Wednesdays 10am to noon and 3:15-4:15 (3hrs/wk)

Location: SCSD, 2001 McGill College, Room 862 "Teaching Lab"

**Instructor: Professor Aparna Nadig**

**Office:** SCSD, Room 863; **Office Phone:** 514-398-4141

**Office Hours:** by appointment (set up by email)

**Email:** [aparna.nadig@mcgill.ca](mailto:aparna.nadig@mcgill.ca)

**COURSE OVERVIEW:** Typical language development across the lifespan, progressing from the building blocks of speech perception to conversation and narrative production. Attention will be paid to the role of input, individual differences in acquisition, and language socialization. In parallel, we will cover skilled perception, processing and production of these aspects of language in adulthood. Relevance of material for speech-language pathology will be highlighted.

**LAND AND FIRST PEOPLE'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** McGill University is situated on the unceded territory of the Kanien'kehá:ka, a founding nation of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, who have contemporary communities in proximity to McGill University's downtown campus. This land has long served and continues to serve as a site of meeting and exchange amongst diverse Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg. The City of Montreal where we now gather is known as Tiohtià:ke in Kanien'kéha and Mooniyang in Anishinaabemowin. I express gratitude towards the Kanien'kehà:ka for being able to live among these lands and waters.

Recognizing and respecting the presence, knowledge, and resilience of Indigenous communities is a first step towards [decolonization](#). I share this acknowledgement as a starting point to provide context for further [learning](#) and [action](#).

**EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION:** Our goal as a learning community is to create a safe environment that fosters open and honest dialogue. We are all expected to contribute to creating a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive environment. To this end, classroom discussions should always be conducted in a way that shows honor, respect, and dignity to all members of the class. Moreover, disagreements should be pursued without personal attack and aggression, and instead, should be handled with grace and care. This will allow for rigorous intellectual engagement and a deeper learning experience for all. Lastly, please remember to practice self-care, which, according to Audre Lorde 'is not an act of self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare. (Statement credits, Prof. Carolyn Roberts, Yale University).

[McGill University anti-racism and equity resources](#)

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

**EXPERT ROLE**

<b>1.1 Knowledge Expert</b>	
<b>b. Apply basic knowledge from relevant fields that apply to communication and feeding and swallowing across the lifespan.</b>	
Factors and processes associated with the development of normal language (e.g., motor, perceptual, cognitive, affective, environmental, and cultural).  Typical changes in language and cognitive-communication function throughout the lifespan, related factors and processes  Normal communication behaviour throughout the lifespan in both auditory and visual modalities (e.g., sign language) in the following areas: phonetics and phonology, morphology and syntax, semantics, pragmatics, nonverbal communication, and sociolinguistics. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Milestones children achieve at different ages across domains of language</li></ul> Methods of observation and analysis useful for describing in the description of communicative behaviour.  The nature and theories of monolingual as well as bilingual language development.	Course readings and class discussions  Language Milestones Lab Report  Midterm Exam

**COMMUNICATOR ROLE**

<b>a. Communicate respectfully and effectively using appropriate modalities.</b>	
Present final paper to the class in a brief and concise manner.	Blitz talk

**SCHOLAR ROLE**

<b>a. Maintain currency of professional knowledge and performance in order to provide optimal care.</b>	
Develop a research question of interest that compares 2 populations, or theories, with respect to an aspect of language development or processing. Find research articles providing evidence on this research question. Critically evaluate the evidence with respect to population differences, or differences in the explanatory capacity of the theories.	Final paper

**COURSE CONTENT:** This course provides an overview of psycholinguistics or psychology of language, including both child language development and adult/skilled language processing and production. We will approach these topics from the perspective of levels of description in Linguistics, moving from the building blocks of morphemes and words, moving up to the larger units of discourse and conversation. We will learn about prominent theories of language development and the evidence currently supporting them. Throughout the course we will place an emphasis on linguistic diversity, considering spoken as well as signed languages; and cultural diversity, to better understand affective, environmental and cultural factors that impact human communication.

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHOD:** myCourses will be used as the course website – course content will be found and assignments will generally be submitted there. The first 2-hour portion of our class time will concentrate on the readings in the syllabus. We start each class with a 15 minute small group discussion of review questions on the assigned reading to engage with the material, followed by a lecture. It is essential that you stay on top of readings. The third hour of our class time will be a lab where we approach language through a whole-person lens, learning about diverse cultural groups that are a part of the populations you will serve as a health professional, or engaging in application activities in small groups related to the material covered in readings. \*In cases of (warranted) absence, please notify me and make plans to cover the material you missed.

**REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS:** Readings are taken primarily from two textbooks, with course readings available to you online.

**Rowland, C. (2013). *Understanding child language acquisition*. Routledge.**

- Available to download in entirety through the McGill library  
<https://www-taylorfrancis-com.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/books/mono/10.4324/9780203776025/understanding-child-language-acquisition-caroline-rowland>

Additional resources on textbook website:

<https://routledgetextbooks.com/textbooks/author/rowland-9781444152654/students.php>

**Sedivy, J. (2020). *Language in Mind: An Introduction to Psycholinguistics*, 2nd edition, Sinauer Associates.**

- Pdf of selected sections available on MyCourses, copyright obtained through McGill Library

Additional resources on textbook website:

[https://learninglink.oup.com/access/sedivy-2e-student-resources#tag\\_chapter-01](https://learninglink.oup.com/access/sedivy-2e-student-resources#tag_chapter-01)

**EVALUATION:** More detail on the lab report, oral presentation, and final paper will be provided in the *Assignments* content folder on myCourses. Work submitted for evaluation as part of this course may be checked with text-matching software within myCourses.

Assignment	Contribution to final grade	Date	Sub Roles Targeted	Expected Performance Level
Participation in class discussions and lab activities	10 %	ongoing	Oral and written communication	Intermediate
Language development milestones group lab report	10 %	Oct 3	Foundational Principles	Novice
Midterm Exam	30 %	Oct 19	Foundational Principles	Advanced Beginner
Blitz talk (brief presentation of final paper topic)	15 %	Nov 30	Oral and written communication	Advanced Beginner
Final Paper	35 %	Dec 12	Foundational Principles Evidence-informed Practice	Advanced Beginner

## McGILL POLICY STATEMENTS:

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

© Instructor-generated course materials (e.g., handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions, etc.) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

No audio or video recording of any kind is allowed in class without the explicit permission of the instructor.

As the instructor of this course I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment.

- If you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the [Office for Students with Disabilities](#), 514-398-6009.
- If you find that aspects of the content or methods can be improved, please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups.
- Please email me if you would like me to refer to you by a different name than the name indicated in your student record or to inform me of your preferred pronouns.

### 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](#). (Approved by Senate on 29 January 2003) (See McGill's [guide to academic honesty](#) 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 procédures disciplinaires](#). » (Énoncé approuvé par le Sénat le 29 janvier 2003) (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le [guide pour l'honnêteté académique de McGill](#).)*

## COURSE SCHEDULE (Subject to change)

Week	Date	Lecture topic	Readings	Lab topic
1	31-Aug	Introduction to course format and methods; intro to field of psycholinguistics	xxx	Indigenous languages and peoples of Canada
2	07-Sep	Conditions needed for language learning; Language variation and universals	Rowland Chapter 1, Chapter 9	Sedivy text web activities - Origins of Human Language
3	14-Sep	Word learning	Rowland Chapter 3; Chapter 8 pgs. 203-214	Rowland Extension Activity 3 - How to collect data on early language from children
4	21-Sep	Skilled word recognition and organization of the mental lexicon	Sedivy Chapter 8, scanned subsections	Childhood language development milestones -- discuss LinguiSystems reference
5	28-Sep	Acquiring syntax and morphology	Rowland Chapter 4, Chapter 5 pgs. 115-122, 131-142	Childhood language development milestones -- watch videos in lab groups, prepare report
6	05-Oct	Skilled understanding of sentence structure and meaning	Sedivy Chapter 9, scanned subsections	Sedivy text web activities - Understanding Sentence Structure and Meaning
Reading break	12-Oct	NO CLASS MEETING	xxx	xxx
7	19-Oct	In Class MIDTERM EXAM	xxx	Gender-diverse populations
8	26-Oct	Speaking: Planning to articulation	Sedivy Chapter 10, scanned subsections	Sedivy text web activities - From Planning to Articulation
9	02-Nov	Discourse and inference	Sedivy Chapter 11, scanned subsections	Sedivy text web activities - Discourse and Inference
10	09-Nov	Dialogue and social aspects of language	Rowland Chapter 6 (skip 6.4); Sedivy Chapter 12, scanned subsections	Normal aging -- video discussion
11	16-Nov	Multilingual language acquisition	Rowland Chapter 7	Perspectives of immigrants and refugees
12	23-Nov	Sign language development and processing	Pichler <i>chapter, The Development of Sign Language</i>	Deaf culture; consultations on final projects
13	30-Nov	Final project oral presentations	xxx	Final project oral presentations