

# SCSD 624: Language Processes

## Fall 2018

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**Time:** Thursdays, 1-3 pm

**Place:** 2001 McGill College, Room 869

**Instructor:** Professor Laura Gonnerman  
2001 McGill College, Rm 865  
(514) 398-3878  
laura.gonnerman@mcgill.ca

**Office Hours:** Mondays, 2:30-3pm or by appt

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### Course Goals

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 a particular constellation of mysteries 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 questions from the perspective of spoken language as well as the modalities of sign and written languages.

#### LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of this course you will be able to:

- Characterize the levels and major questions of language processing
- Analyze central themes of psycholinguistics, supporting with experimental findings
- Evaluate the role of language processing factors in communication disorders
- Describe experimental techniques used in psycholinguistics
- Interpret the results of experimental studies
- Evaluate the methods and results of experiments with respect to the research question posed

### Course Requirements

1) Attend class – With the volume of information covered, class attendance is very important. This importance is amplified by the structure of the course. 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. Also, the material covered in lecture includes some of the information from the readings, but there will be additional information provided that is not in the reading. You are responsible for all of it!

2) Read each assigned chapter or article carefully and thoughtfully in order to participate fully in the class discussions and understand the lectures.

3) You will have one written assignment and one oral presentation. There will also be a midterm exam in class. On the final exam you will be asked to think through and integrate issues raised during the semester. More detailed information about the assignments will be distributed later in the semester.

**Credit Hours: 3**

## Course Grading Scheme

**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 class session. – **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%**.

*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.*

## 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 <http://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 <http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity/>).

## Course Readings:

Harley, T. (2014), *The Psychology of Language: From Data to Theory, 4th edition*. Psychology Press.  
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.

