



**McGill**

Faculty of  
Medicine and  
Health Sciences

School of  
Communication Sciences  
and Disorders

**Fall 2025**

**SCSD 637-Developmental Language Disorders**

**Number of Credits: 3 credits**

**Course time: Wednesdays 9-11am**

**Location: SCSD Room 869**

**Lab times: September 5,12,19,26, October 24, 31 Fridays 9-11**

**Location: SCSD Room 862**

**Lab Instructor: Eve-Julie Rioux**

**Instructors: Elin Thordardottir and Martha Crago, Professors**

**Office: SCSD Room 820**

**Office hours: by appointment arrange by email at**

**[elin.thordardottir@mcgill.ca](mailto:elin.thordardottir@mcgill.ca), [martha.crago@mcgill.ca](mailto:martha.crago@mcgill.ca), [eve.rioux@mcgill.ca](mailto:eve.rioux@mcgill.ca)**

#### **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:**

McGill University is located on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. McGill honors, recognizes and respects these nations as the traditional stewards of the lands and waters on which we meet today.

#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION/OVERVIEW:**

This course will develop knowledge and skills about the nature of developmental language disorders. The assessment of language competencies and performance in both speaking and nonspeaking children will be studied. It includes information on cultural and language diversity.

#### **INSTRUCTOR MESSAGE REGARDING COURSE DELIVERY:**

This course and its examinations will be delivered in class, in person unless circumstances make on-line delivery necessary.



## LEARNING OBJECTIVES/COMPETENCIES:

### **UNIT TWO: Knowledge Expert**

#### **2.3 Developmental Language Disorders**

2.2.v Numerous neurological or developmental disorders that may accompany motor speech disorder (e.g., cerebral palsy, Down Syndrome) and their impact on assessment, intervention and prognosis.

2.3.iii Different theoretical frameworks relevant to spoken and written language disorders.

2.3.iv Characteristics of oral and written developmental language disorders for different age levels. These include phonologic, morphosyntactic, semantic, and pragmatic abilities in oral language, reading, and writing.

2.3.v Profiles of special populations at risk for developmental language disorders (e.g., autism spectrum disorder, hearing impairment, Down syndrome).

2.3.vi The impact of developmental language disorders on learning and educational achievement.

2.3.vii The impact of developmental language disorders on psychosocial development, and vocational opportunities of the client

### **UNIT THREE: Clinical Expert - Cross-Cutting Assessment and Intervention Standards**

#### **3.2 Plan, conduct, and adjust an assessment:**

3.1.i Collect and review information from relevant sources (e.g., referrals, reports, consultation) to determine an individual's need for a speech-language pathology assessment.

3.2.ii Use principles of assessment to develop assessment plans (e.g., tools, strategies, resources, environment) that reflect background information about the client (including personal and environmental factors), known or suspected primary and concomitant disorders (e.g., medical, emotional), knowledge of normal and disordered communication or swallowing as well as risk factors for communication or swallowing disorders; modify this plan when appropriate.

3.2.iii Demonstrate knowledge of principles underlying clinical assessment, including standardized and non-standardized procedures and their advantages, disadvantages, limitations, representativeness, and applicability to the individual management plan.

3.3.i Analyze formal, informal, quantitative, and qualitative assessment results, including accurate scoring and interpretation of standardized tests.

3.7 Consider sociodemographic and sociocultural factors in all aspects of assessment and intervention, including but not limited to factors such as race, ethnicity, gender identity, and differential access to services by Indigenous and other underserved populations; and intersections among these factors, communication, and swallowing.



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**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS:** This course consists of class lectures, class discussions, practical activities, readings, a written assignment, midterm and final exam and lab participation.

**EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT PARTICIPATION:** Students are required to be prepared for in-class discussions, complete required readings and submit the assignment within the given time frame. Students who are unable to do so need to inform the instructor promptly.

**REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS:**

Paul, R., Norbury, C. & Goose, C. (2024). *Language Disorders from infancy through adolescence: Listening, speaking, reading, writing, communicating* (6ed.). St. Louis, MO: Mosby.

This textbook is available at the McGill bookstore as well as from on-line bookstores and is available at McGill libraries (the 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> edition is acceptable as well). Note that you will use this book also in SCSD 643 in the winter semester of 1st year. This book is costly, but it is a very good resource on clinical procedures and clinical materials and so you may find it to be a good investment, in particular, if you plan to work with children.

Certain additional weekly readings will be posted on **myCourses**. Others are available through the McGill library.

**COURSE CONTENT:**

This course is concerned with Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) in the developmental period (birth through adolescence to young adulthood), focusing on the nature and manifestations of such impairments and on various methods used to assess them. The course addresses the theoretical and practical underpinnings of assessment methods and diagnostic criteria and discusses the significance of research findings on language disorders in children for theories of language development and for clinical decision making.



After taking this course, students should 1) have a good idea of what DLD looks like in children from preschool age through adolescence and into young adulthood, 2) be able to plan clinical assessments of DLD in children, administer several language tests, conduct naturalistic assessments and know how to report assessment results, and 3) be familiar with current research issues in this area and understand how they relate to clinical issues.

The course is concerned with the definition and theoretical underpinnings of DLD, including major theoretical accounts of presumed underlying causes. It surveys historical perspectives, past and current controversies, and DLD in a local and global context.

The course also focuses on the clinical assessment of various aspects of language using standardized tests and language sampling methods to assess vocabulary, morphology, complex syntax, conversational and narrative skills as well as language processing. For each skill assessed, findings on that skill in typical and disordered language development will be discussed, together with the clinical applicability of each measure (diagnostic accuracy for the identification of DLD). This part includes a discussion of assessment from pre-school through school aged children and youth. .

In addition, the course addresses cultural and linguistic diversity and their implications for the assessment of language impairment in bilingual and multilingual children, the assessment of populations that speak different dialects of the same language and the impact of socio-economic status on language development and DLD.

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.

Class/Date	Description	Course Materials
<b>1- Aug 27</b> <b>Elin Thordardottir</b>	-Introduction: logistics of course  -An Introduction to Developmental Language Disorders and Standardized Testing	Textbook Chapter 1: Models of child language disorders  Bishop, D.M.V., Snowling, M., Thompson, P., Greenhaigh,T., CATALISE consortium (2016). A multinational and multidisciplinary Delphi consensus study. Identifying language impairments in children. <i>PlosOne</i> , July 8 2016, DOI:1-.1371/journal.pone.0159753, pp.1-26



2- Sept 3 Elin Thordardottir	-Assessment of language disorders -Purposes of assessment - Assessment using standardized tests -Properties of tests Diagnostic accuracy -Cut-off criteria & interpretation	Textbook: Chapter 2 and Chapter 7 (focus only on assessment section of the chapter, not on intervention or management)
Class/Date	Description	Course Materials
3- Sept 10 Elin Thordardottir	-Naturalistic assessment - Language sampling: how to collect a language sample - SALT analysis: how to, theoretical basis and interpretation	<p>Class handout on Language Sample Analysis Miller, J. (1981). <i>Assessing language production in children: Experimental procedures</i>. Austin, TX: Pro-ed.</p> <p>Chapter 2: Procedures for analyzing free-speech samples: syntax and semantics (pp. 21-27 and 32-40).</p> <p>Heilmann, J., Miller, J. &amp; Nockerts, A. (2010). Using language sample databases. <i>Language, Speech and Hearing Services in Schools</i>, 41, 84-95.</p> <p><b>Assignment: Take Home Language Sample Analysis</b></p> <p><b>DUE: September 24 for 15%</b></p>
4- Sept 17 Martha Crago	-Language Processing Measures	<p>Textbook Chapter 8, Assessment of developing language section of the chapter (not on intervention or management.)</p> <p>Elin Thordardottir et. al. (2011) Sensitivity and Specificity of French</p>



		Language and Processing Measures for the Identification of Primary Language Impairment at Age 5. <i>Journal of Speech Language and Hearing</i> , 54, 580-597
<b>5- Sept 24</b> <b>Martha Crago</b> <b>Guest Lecturer: Dr. Diane Pesco</b>	Parental Questionnaires and Dynamic Assessment	<p>Paradis, J. Emmerzael, K., Duncan, T.S. (2010) Assessment of English language earners: Using parent report of first language development. <i>Journal of Communication Disorders</i>, 43(6), 474-497.</p> <p>Li'el N., Williams, C., Kane, R. (2019). Identifying developmental language disorder in in bilingual children from diverse backgrounds. <i>International Journal of Speech Pathology</i>, 21(6), 613-622</p> <p>Orellana, C.I., Wada, R., Gillam, R.B. (2019) <i>American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology</i>. 28(3), 1298-1317.</p>
<b>6- Oct 1</b> <b>Martha Crago</b> <b>Podcast: Mabel Rice</b>	-Developmental Language Disorders – nature and possible causes -Major theoretical frameworks over time	<p>Textbook: Chapter 1: pp. 12-21</p> <p>Leonard, L. (2014). <i>Children with specific language impairment</i>. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press: Part IV</p> <p>Theoretical Issues:</p> <p>9: SLI as a deficit in linguistic knowledge</p> <p>10: Processing Limitations and SLI</p> <p>6: The genetics of SLI</p>



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7- Oct 8 Martha Crago	MIDTERM Examination	<b>This is an in-class examination covering material worth 30 % of the grade</b>
Class/Date	Description	Course Materials
8- Oct 22 Martha Crago	(Developmental) Language Disorder in children with other identified conditions -Children with cognitive impairments: Down syndrome, Fragile X, children with visual and hearing impairment, children with cerebral palsy, gifted children	Textbook Chapter 4. Special considerations for special populations
9- Oct 29 Martha Crago	- Language impairment in young children and late talkers	Textbook: Chapter 11. Assessing students' language for learning  Rescorla, L. Late talkers: Do good predictors of outcome exist? <i>Developmental Disabilities Research Reviews</i> , 17, 141-150
10- Nov 5 Martha Crago	Language impairment in school age children and adolescents	Textbook: Chapter 13, Assessing advanced language



11- Nov 12  
Martha Crago

DLD: Cultural and  
Language Diversity Issues

Textbook: Chapter 5.  
Assessing language in a  
pluralistic society

Paradis, J., Genesee, F.  
Crago, M. (2021) *Dual  
Language Development and  
Disorders: A handbook on  
bilingualism and second  
language learning*.  
Baltimore, MD: Paul H.  
Brookes, Chapters 1  
and 2

Thordardottir, E. (2014).  
Effects of exposure on  
vocabulary, morphosyntax and  
language processing in typical  
and impaired language  
development. In J. Paradis &  
T. Grüter (Eds), *Input and  
Experience in Bilingual  
Development* (pp. 141-160),  
Amsterdam, NL: John  
Benjamins, Trends in  
Language Acquisition  
Research (TiLAR) Series





<p>12- Nov 19 Martha Crago</p>	<p>-Language impairment in bilingual children -Assessment of culturally diverse populations - Assessment of bilingual children</p>	<p>Thordardottir, E. (2024) Developmental Language Disorders, Chapter 72 in Swaiman's <i>Pediatric Neurology, Principles and Practice</i> (7<sup>th</sup> Edition). S. Ashwal and P. Pearl (Editors in Chief) Philadelphia, PA: Elsevier</p> <p>Paradis, J., Schneider, P. and Duncan, Tamara S. (2013). Discriminating Children with Language Impairment among English-Language Learners from Diverse First Language Backgrounds. <i>Journal of Speech Language and Hearing</i>, 56, 971-981.</p> <p><a href="https://www.bi-sli.org/pabiq">https://www.bi-sli.org/pabiq</a></p>
<p>13- Nov 26 Martha Crago Recorded Talk: Dr. Johanne Paradis with virtual Q and A</p>	<p>Canadian Examples</p>	<p>Paradis, J., Genesee, F. Crago, M. (2021) <i>Dual Language Development and Disorders: A handbook on bilingualism and second language learning</i>. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes, Chapter 10 (Assessment section only)</p> <p>Paradis, J., Crago, M., Genesee, F., Rice, M. (2003). French-English bilingual children with SLI: How do they compare with their monolingual peers. <i>Journal of Speech Language Hearing</i>, 46, 113-27.</p>



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Assignment/Exam	Targeted Competencies	Due Date	% of Final Grade
Take home Written Language Assessment Assignment (EPA)	1.3.ii; 1.5.i; 1.5.ii; 2.3.iv; 3.3.i	September 24, 2025	15



<b>In-Class Midterm Exam</b>	1.3.ii; 1.4.iv; 1.5.i; 1.5.ii; 1.9.vi; 2.3.ii, 2.3.iv,2.3vi	Oct 8, 2025	30
<b>In-class Final Exam</b>	1.3.ii; 1.4.iii; 1.5.i; 1.5.ii; 1.9vi; 2.3ii; 2.3.iv; 2.3.v; 2,3.vi; 3.2.ii; 3.2.iii; 4.3.i	TBD (final exam period)	40
<b>Lab Participation</b>	1.3ii; 1.5i; 1.5.ii; 3.2.ii; 3.2.iii; 3.3.i; 4.3.i	See Lab outline	15

## MCGILL POLICY STATEMENTS

### Language of Submission

“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. This does not apply to courses in which acquiring proficiency in a language is one of the objectives.”

(Approved by Senate on 21 January 2009)

### 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). “The work submitted is expected to be your own.

“Instructor-generated course materials (e.g. slides, 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.”

### Artificial Intelligence

The knowing use of generative artificial intelligence tools or apps, such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, Microsoft Co-pilot and other AI writing and coding assistants for the completion of, or to support the completion of an examination, midterm test, assignment or any other form of academic assessment are prohibited in this course and may be considered an academic offense. This policy is designed to promote your learning and intellectual development and to help you reach the course learning outcomes.

### Remote Teaching

Instructional methods are subject to change based on public health protocols. In the event of



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



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### **Additional Statements**

Disclaimer: The instructor will notify students if any components of the class will be recorded. By staying in class (or on-line if the class is virtual) and participating in activities, the student consents to being recorded. Students who are uncomfortable being recorded can choose not to engage with the instructor during the recording or can choose not to attend the class and instead view the recording later.

Additional policies governing academic issues which affect students can be found in the **McGill Charter of Students' Rights** (See the handbook on Student Rights and Responsibilities)