Developmental Psycholinguistics

Psyc 452, Fall 2017
Tuesday 11:30 – 1:00
Friday 1:00 – 2:30

Instructor: Dr. Stanka A. Fitneva
Office: Humphrey 349
Office hours: Friday 2:30-3:30 or by appointment
Phone: 613- 533-2363
E-mail: fitneva@queensu.ca

Course Description
This seminar focuses on the human ability to produce and comprehend language and its development. Using original empirical articles the participants in the seminar will examine topics like syntactic and lexical disambiguation, structural priming, the development of reading, and cultural variability in language ability.

Learning outcomes
Successful students will be able to:
1. identify and discuss key questions and methods in language development research
2. communicate current information about language development
3. evaluate primary research and formulate new research questions for developmental psycholinguistics

Readings
The syllabus provides compete references for all readings and you can retrieve them using your library account. The library is currently setting up an eReserves system for the course. Note that copyright law prohibits the direct distributions of article pdfs by instructors.

As a seminar, this course requires a substantial amount of independent work. Depending on your background, you may or may not need to supplement the required readings with other sources in order to participate fully in class discussion. For example, you may encounter unfamiliar terminology beyond the concepts we tackle in class. Virtually all readings require good grasp of experimental design issues. The Internet provides a convenient way to find definitions quickly and the reference sections of the papers we read are helpful in figuring out where to look for further information. Finally, Stauffer Library has a number of textbooks on language development and psycholinguistics that you can consult if you feel you need background on a particular issue, e.g.:


Course Requirements and Grading Scheme
Discussion facilitation 12% objectives 1, 3
Reaction papers 14% objectives 1, 2, 3
Participation 14% objectives 2, 3
Presentation 20% objectives 2, 3
Research proposal paper 40% objectives 1, 2, 3

Discussion facilitation (12%). About half of the course meetings will be in the form of a discussion. The goal of these meetings will be to clarify the methodologies, questions, and controversies in a particular area of research.

You will be responsible for facilitating one of the seminar’s discussions with a group of your classmates. More information on the format of the discussion hours is available in the enclosed handout. The grade will be largely determined by your self-evaluation and your classmates’ evaluation of how the discussion went. Please email me any materials you use for my records (e.g., handouts, slides).

Reaction papers (14%) To prepare for discussion, everybody except the discussion facilitators has to post a short, two to five paragraphs long, “reaction paper” on the course’s Discussion Board. The deadline for posting those is
noon on the day before the class discussion meeting. Discussion meeting days are shaded in the syllabus. In your reaction papers you may discuss 1) applications of the findings in the readings to the real world, 2) whether the questions posed by the researchers are answered to your satisfaction, 3) connections with other research you know about, 4) any ideas you have for extending the research presented in the paper, etc. Reaction papers will be graded 0 – 2 points (so disregard letter grades or % that may appear on onQ). The seven best papers will count toward your grade. (You don’t have to submit a reaction paper when you are a discussion facilitator and you can miss one more.)

 Participation (7%) Your participation grade will reflect the quantity and quality of your contribution to class discussions. As evaluation is an integral part of learning, you will be also asked to evaluate every class meeting (discussions and presentations alike, see below). In these evaluations, you have to provide constructive feedback those of your classmates who presented a paper or facilitated the discussion. You can miss two evaluations (i.e., two classes) with no penalty. One (1) point will be deducted for each additional missed class. Beyond that, your grade will be based on the consistency of your participation, your ability to extend the discussion by offering critical analysis and bridges to other knowledge, and your adherence to the Ground Rules for discussion.

 Use of Mobile Technology in the Classroom
 You may use electronic devices in this class to consult online readings or to take notes. However, any other use of these devices is strictly prohibited. Place your phone on mute before you come to class. Violating this policy will negatively impact your participation grade.

 Using your laptop or tablet to take notes often leads to checking email and social media or browsing the internet. This hinders your learning and has also been shown to distract those around you.

 (7%) Finally, your participation grade will also reflect your participation on-line. On presentation days, non-presenters will be randomly assigned to provide 1) an extension or 2) a critique of one of the papers. These comments/questions have to be posted online by the beginning of class. I expect that after class (best right after but ok within a week) you will review the posts and comment or respond to the one or two that pique your interest (your own is ok!). I expect that some of the posted questions will be preempted or answered by the presentations but we will not have time to get to others that are worth touching on. My primary goals here though are to foster a sense of community in the class and for you to help each other with the development of research proposal ideas. Individual posts and responses will not be graded. Rather, I expect at a minimum 8 original posts and 8 responses (do not have to be the same weeks; there are 11 presentation days). Your grade will reflect the level of close, critical reading of the papers and your classmates’ posts and the clarity/quality of your writing.

 I also invite you to participate in an anonymous voting system for both the reaction papers and posts. This is an excellent way to single out good or promising ideas and contributions that can be developed into research proposals. In addition to rewarding the best contributions, the voting system singles out examples that others may want to emulate.

 Presentation. The rest of our course meetings will involve student presentations. The goal of these meetings will be to gain fuller and more in-depth understanding of a particular research area. As a presenter, they are an opportunity for you to develop your skills and confidence in analyzing primary articles and in presenting the material concisely but without losing sight of the important nuances of the research. They are also an opportunity for you to pose questions of interest to you and lead your classmates in a discussion.

 You will be responsible for presenting one paper. Your presentation should be less than 15 minutes long so that there are at least 5-10 minutes for discussion. Your classmates’ evaluations will largely determine your presentation grade. It will also reflect the thoughtfulness of your self-evaluation. Please email me any materials you use for my records (e.g., handouts, slides).

 Research proposal paper. This paper is an opportunity for you to develop an original research idea related to the topic of the seminar. The paper should present evidence for critical analysis and synthesis of the literature and identify a point of controversy. The paper should be up to ten (10) pages long, excluding the title and abstract pages and excluding the reference section. Please follow APA style. The paper is due on Tuesday, December 5th, 2017, at noon in my mailbox.
I will be available to discuss your paper outline/draft around November 17th (date will be settled once course enrolment is finalized). You are welcome to talk to me about your paper ideas earlier – the earlier you start working on it the better. I can provide feedback on your outline/draft if you turn it in 24 hours before your appointment.

For this paper you have to be able to research the primary literature on a particular topic. Our library session will be tailored to the needs of the class with respect to using psychology databases, narrowing and expanding literature searches, etc.

**Grading method**

Unless otherwise stated, course components will be graded using numerical percentage marks. Your course average will be converted to a final letter grade according to Queen’s Official Grade Conversion Scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Numerical Course Average (Range)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>90-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>85-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>80-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C+ | 67-69 |
C  | 63-66 |
C- | 60-62 |
D+ | 57-59 |
D  | 53-56 |
D- | 50-52 |
F  | 49 and below |

**Late policy.** As students can choose when to do reaction papers, original paper posts and responses, late submissions are *not* allowed. Consider building a reserve as school work tends to pile up in the middle and the end of the term.

**Accommodation**

Queen's University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you are a student with a disability and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact Student Wellness Services (SWS) and register as early as possible. For more information, including important deadlines, please visit the Student Wellness website at: [http://www.queensu.ca/studentwellness/accessibility-services/](http://www.queensu.ca/studentwellness/accessibility-services/)

Students who may require accommodation on assignments should contact me as soon as possible even if not registered with SWS.

**Academic Considerations for Students in Extenuating Circumstances**

The Senate Policy on Academic Consideration for Students in Extenuating Circumstances ([http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.uslcwww/files/files/policies/ExtenuatingCircumstancesPolicyFinal.pdf](http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.uslcwww/files/files/policies/ExtenuatingCircumstancesPolicyFinal.pdf)) was approved in April, 2017. Queen’s University is committed to providing academic consideration to students experiencing extenuating circumstances that are beyond their control and which have a direct and substantial impact on their ability to meet essential academic requirements. The Faculty of Arts and Science is developing a protocol to provide a consistent and equitable approach in dealing with requests for academic consideration for students facing extenuating circumstances, which will be posted on the Faculty of Arts and Science website in Fall, 2017.

**Academic Integrity**

_Academic integrity both on my part and yours is essential to the success of this course._

Know your rights and responsibilities: [http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academics/academic-integrity](http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academics/academic-integrity)

Integrity is constituted by the six core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, Respect, responsibility and courage (see [www.academicintegrity.org](http://www.academicintegrity.org)). These values are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Adherence to the values expressed through academic integrity forms a foundation for the "freedom of inquiry and exchange of ideas" essential to the

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the regulations concerning academic integrity and for ensuring that their assignments conform to the principles of academic integrity. Information on academic integrity is available in the Arts and Science Calendar (see Academic Regulation 1 http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academic-calendars/regulations/academic-regulations/regulation-1), on the Arts and Science website (see http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academics/undergraduate/academic-integrity), and from the instructor of this course. Departures from academic integrity include plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials, facilitation, forgery and falsification, and are antithetical to the development of an academic community at Queen’s. Given the seriousness of these matters, actions which contravene the regulation on academic integrity carry sanctions that can range from a warning or the loss of grades on an assignment to the failure of a course to a requirement to withdraw from the university.

**Turnitin**

Queen's University has partnered with the third-party application Turnitin to help maintain our standards of excellence in academic integrity. Turnitin is a suite of tools that provide instructors with information about the authenticity of submitted work and facilitates the process of grading. Submitted files are compared against an extensive database of content, and Turnitin produces a similarity report and a similarity score for each assignment. A similarity score is the percentage of a document that is similar to content held within the database. Turnitin does not determine if an instance of plagiarism has occurred. Instead, it gives instructors the information they need to determine the authenticity of work as a part of a larger process.

**Communication**

1. You must activate notifications for the News forum on the course’s onQ page. I will use it to distribute important information and updates about the course. “Important information” means information that you are responsible for, e.g., deadlines, details about assignments, etc. To ensure that you do not miss any important communications, here is how you should set up email/SMS notifications:
   1. Log into onQ.
   2. Click on the drop-down arrow, next to your name, in the top right corner of your screen.
   3. Select Notifications.
   4. Under Contact Methods enter your mobile number, if you would like to receive texts.
   5. Under Instant Notifications check the boxes to choose which notifications will be sent by email/SMS.
      You have to select the two News items; the rest are optional.
   6. Select the Save button to confirm changes.

2. onQ: 1) Participation in the electronic Discussion Board is strongly encouraged: post questions, read and respond to your fellow classmates. 2) The Board is intended to be used ONLY as a forum for discussion of topics relating to Psychology 452. 3) I prefer that you use regular email to contact me regarding course-related issues. Please use “Psyc 452:” in the subject line.

3. The best way to contact me is via email. Please use “Psyc 452:” in the subject line. I aim to respond to student email within two business days.

4. Do come to office hours if I can help you with anything (including grad school/career questions) or just want to chat about the course! You do not need to check if it’s ok to come or give me a heads up unless you would like me to check or review something before the meeting.
## Schedule of readings (subject to change)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/12</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/15</td>
<td>What is language?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information integration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/6</td>
<td>No class</td>
<td>explore NetLogo – language phenomena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/13</td>
<td>Library workshop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
children create partner-specific referential pacts with peers. 
*Developmental Psychology, 50(10), 2334-2342.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/17</td>
<td>No class</td>
<td>Research proposal meetings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* optional reading
Discussion Guidelines

Facilitators
A group of two or three students will act as facilitators of each discussion. The role of the team is not as much to serve as an “expert” but as a “guide” of the discussion. As discussion facilitators, you don’t have to give a lecture, or to make a presentation. Rather your task is to lead a discussion of the material so that as many students of the class as possible participate. You may find it necessary to summarize some of the information. However, this should be done with the goal of directing the discussion rather than as a goal in itself.

Your team should read the assigned material and then get together to decide what major points you will focus on, and what techniques and strategies you will use to stimulate and guide the discussion. Make sure that all members of the team are involved in this process, and in the class session itself.

To make sure a discussion and not a presentation takes place: 1) if using PowerPoint, your team should have no more than 6 slides with text, and 2) the team should not hold the floor for more than 15 minutes altogether.

Other suggestions:
- Read the postings of your classmates. They will provide you with information about what to focus on and what might need to be explained in class.
- You may want to split your group and prepare to lead your classmates in a debate over the position(s) expressed in your reading.
- Be creative. Demonstrations are fun (but make sure they work!).
- Your goal should be first, to get to “the big picture” and second, to critically examine methodological issues.

I’ll be glad to discuss your plans with the entire team, or its representatives in my office hours or if there is another mutually convenient time. You will find a lot of useful tips about leading a discussion on the Web as well.

Ground Rules for Class Discussion
- Come prepared.
- Listen openly to what is said, rather than who says it. Try to understand the others as much as you hope they try to understand you.
- The person who is speaking should not be interrupted.
- If you disagree with someone, disagree with their ideas but don’t attack the person.
- Do not monopolize discussion.

Electronic Discussion Boards - Good Practice
- Sign your posts. This shows respect for the time and thought readers puts in and makes it more likely for them to reply. Address your posts too. (The exception is original reaction papers. They only need a subject line/title.)
- If you are introducing a new topic choose a new subject line that makes the subject of your message clear to all.
- Be thoughtful and generous in your response to other people’s posts – try to consider what might be useful in what they are trying to say even if you disagree with it.
- Never be rude or dismissive about someone’s posts. If you have any complaints about other people’s behaviour take it up with the instructor.
Discussion Evaluation

Please comment on the following aspects of today’s discussion and give an overall mark. Your comments will be given to the discussion facilitators without identifying you.

1. Apparent knowledge of content and preparedness of the facilitators

2. Efforts and success of involving the class in a discussion

3. What issues were discussed particularly well, i.e., what is the most memorable point of today’s discussion?

4. What questions and topics could have been handled better? Any suggestions about how that could have been done? Were there any topics that you wish were discussed and were not?

5. Did all facilitators contribute in a meaningful way?

Please consider all of your answers above. Indicate a grade for the facilitators by circling a letter grade or a vertical mark.

F   D   C-   C   C+   B-   B   B+   A-   A   A+
Self-evaluation

Please comment on the following aspects of your role in today's class.

1. The strengths of your contribution

2. What are the most significant challenges you encountered in your preparation?

3. If you could change anything in your contribution to today's class, what would that be?

4. If you worked in a group, was the burden of the work fairly distributed?
Presentation Guidelines

Content
The papers we are going to discuss vary widely in topics and methods used to address these topics. As such, I expect that the content of each presentation may have different emphasis. For instance, some papers may have a more pronounced theoretical importance, whereas others might represent significant methodological advances. Nonetheless, many of the following content guidelines may prove useful in developing your presentation.

1. Provide a clear, concise statement of the research question being investigated (What did they do?)

2. Provide a clear description of the theoretical background. (Why did they do what they did?)

3. Include a brief but meaningful summary of the research methods. Your reporting of methods should be tailored to include just the most important aspects that relate to the research question.

4. A clear summary of what they found.

5. A conclusion stating what the authors think it all means.

6. Points for discussion. You may discuss anything you want, but make sure that it is something that you want to discuss! You will be expected to get the ball rolling.

* Visual illustration of methods and results is very helpful. Consider including demonstrations and interactive elements.

Length
Your presentation should not be more than 15 minutes long so that there is enough time left over for discussion.

Materials
Presenters may use whatever materials they have access to. PowerPoint will be available on the PC laptop in the room or you can bring your own computer.

PowerPoint tips and hints.
In an educational setting, PowerPoint can be used to effectively and succinctly present visual material that helps the audience understand the main point of the presentation. There are many aspects of PowerPoint that can actually get in the way of your doing this. Here are some examples:

• too much information/text on a slide
• too many slides
• a long series of slides that all have the same title (e.g., "introduction")
• a long series of slides that all have the same format (e.g., title & bullets).
• unnecessary use of animations (e.g., things sliding in from the side…)
• unnecessary use of clip art
• sloppy use of scanned graphics direct from research papers
• inclusion of data tables scanned from research papers
• bad color schemes and busy backgrounds
• "cute" fonts that are hard to read
• reading from slides (using slides the way you might use index cards).

Search the Web for information about putting together strong and effective PowerPoint presentations.
Presentation Evaluation

Please comment on the following five aspects of the presentation and give it an overall mark. Your comments will be given to the presenter without identifying you.

1. Apparent knowledge of content and preparedness

2. Logical organization of presentation

3. Appropriateness of visual aids (i.e., use of Power Point)

4. Clarity of expression

5. Creativity

In assigning a grade, please consider all of the above five criteria. Indicate a grade for the facilitators by circling a letter grade or a vertical mark.