

# PSYCH 457: Psychology of Language

Evan D. Bradley

Fall 2015, Penn State Brandywine



## 1 Basics

### 1.1 Class

**day** TR

**time** 2:30–3:45pm

**place** Main 219

**www** <https://psu.instructure.com/courses/1660383>

### 1.2 Instructor

**email** [evan.d.bradley@psu.edu](mailto:evan.d.bradley@psu.edu)

**phone** 610.892.1458

**office** Main Hall 207D

**hours** TR 10:00–11:30am, 1:00–1:30pm; or by appointment

**www** <http://www.evanbradley.net>

### 1.3 Teaching Assistant

**Jacqueline Brown**

**email** [jmb6590@psu.edu](mailto:jmb6590@psu.edu)

**office** Vairo lounge

**hours** F 10:30–11:20am; or by appointment

### Instructor or TA?

Here is a handy guide to who to contact for various issues.

#### Instructor

- Registration
- Grades

#### either

- Content questions
- Assignment help

#### TA

- Attendance
- Materials

## 2 Course

### 2.1 Overview

This course introduces major aspects of language perception and production. We will also illustrate experimental methods for examining language behavior (including speech, acquisition, and disorders). Key themes include the competence/performance distinction, links between linguistic structure and perception/production, and the relationship between language and other psychological functions (e.g., perception, memory).

### 2.2 Objectives

#### 2.2.1 Learning Goals

After taking this course, you should be able to:

1. Identify and describe cognitive capacities (*e.g.*, perception, memory, learning) important for language behavior.
2. Explain links between measures of linguistic performance and elements of linguistic structure.
3. Evaluate and compare theories of processing, production, and acquisition based on experiments and observable data.
4. Identify biological/neurological components of language and describe their involvement in language disorders.

## 2.2.2 Academic Goals

In addition to acquiring specific points of knowledge, it is my hope that by participating in the course, you will improve your academic skills in a number of areas which will benefit you in your future studies. After taking this course, you should improve your ability to:

1. read primary and secondary research literature and interpret the results of experiments;
2. synthesize multiple sources of information into a coherent view of a topic;
3. communicate scientific information to others effectively using a variety of media;
4. apply scientific reasoning to social/behavioral phenomena;
5. skeptically examine folk beliefs about language and human behavior.

## 2.3 Prerequisites

You should have already taken PSYCH 100 prior to this course; the prerequisite of LING 100: Introduction to Linguistics, has been waived for this term. We will cover this material in abbreviated form in the first unit of the course.

## 2.4 Materials

The textbook for the course is:

Fernández, E. M., & Cairns, H. S. (2010). *Fundamentals of psycholinguistics*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Your primary readings assignments will come from this book, and are outlined in the course schedule. Additional materials, such as book chapters, journal articles, and multimedia, will be provided to you in class or electronically, or placed on reserve at the library. See the course schedule for preliminary assignments.

## 2.5 Assignments

Below is an overview of the types of assignments you will complete; specific instructions for each assignment will be provided as they are assigned.

### 2.5.1 Classwork

My goal is to keep lecture time to the minimum necessary; to that end, we will complete many individual and small-group activities during class time, including laboratory exercises, short writings, or mini-presentations.

- Major classwork assignments are listed in the schedule, but **additional classwork may be assigned**.
- Classwork assignments may be made up or excused for **approved absences only**.
- Some classwork assignments may include **preparation to be completed before class**.

**Article Presentations** Periodically, individuals or small groups will be assigned to present research articles to the class and lead the discussion. This involves planning discussion-starting questions. You should be excited about this, because it means you get more say over what we talk about! I will discuss details of the discussion for each assignment. You will do this twice during the term.

### 2.5.2 Homework

Homework will be assigned regularly (about once per week when there is not a quiz). The goal of these assignments is to help you prepare for and/or reflect on what happens in class.

- You will usually submit homework assignments via Canvas, but sometimes I will ask you to bring them to class printed or handwritten. If you handwrite any assignments, please make sure they are **legible!**
- You are encouraged to discuss your assignments with other students, but you must turn in your own work.

**Reading Questions** These will usually be assigned for supplemental (non-textbook) readings. Before the class for which the reading is assigned, you will either respond to questions designed to guide you through the important concepts in a reading or formulate your own questions about the reading to prompt class discussion.

**Lab Reports/Reflections** After lab demonstrations, you will summarize the findings demonstrated in the experiment in the form of a short lab report, and synthesize this with concepts discussed in lecture.

### 2.5.3 Tests

**Quizzes** At the conclusion of each major unit, there will be a short quiz designed to check your recall and understanding of important concepts. Your lowest quiz score will be dropped from your grade.

**Exams** There will be a cumulative final exam during the exam period.

### 2.5.4 Project

Instead of individual papers, the class will work together to create a wiki-based online research project. The topics for the project will be based on the 2014 Edge.org question, “**What scientific idea is ready for retirement?**”. Project components will take place throughout the term.

## 2.6 Grades

### 2.6.1 Grading Scheme & Assignment Weighting

Each assignment carries a different weight in determining your overall grade (see table).

Your grade for the course will be determined based on a hybrid norm- and criterion-referenced grading scheme. *Criterion* refers to the fact that should you achieve a certain score, you will earn a corresponding grade (see table); *norm* refers to the fact that I take the class distribution of scores into account when assigning grades. This is not grading ‘on a curve’ *per se*, in that it is possible for everyone in the class to get an A, or for everyone to get a C; this simply means that I may adjust the cutoffs for each letter grade at my discretion, depending on the overall distribution of scores. I will only adjust these cutoffs downward—that is, you are guaranteed to receive a grade at least as high as that listed in the table corresponding to your score, but you may receive a higher grade. I also take individual improvement over the course of the semester into account.

category		assignment	weight
homework	20%	lab assignments	$2 \times 5\% = 10\%$
		other	10%
classwork	20%	article presentations	$3 \times 5\% = 15\%$
		other	5%
tests	40%	quizzes	$4 \times 5\% = 20\%$
		final	20%
project	20%		20%

score $\geq$	grade $\geq$
93%	A
90%	–
87%	+
83%	B
80%	–
77%	+
70%	C
60%	D

### 2.6.2 Extra Credit

You may also have the opportunity to attend psychology talks or participate in research outside of class for a small amount of extra credit (along with the completion of a related written assignment). More details will be provided as opportunities become available. **Extra credit opportunities will not be assigned in-lieu of satisfactory performance on regular class assignments, or as a substitution for missing/late work.**

### 2.6.3 Grade Appeals

I am human, and I do make mistakes when grading assignments. If you feel I’ve made a mistake, or been unfair in grading your work, or if you’d just like further explanation so that you can improve your work, please speak to me; **be prepared to justify your appeal—grade cutoffs and improvement adjustments are not subject to appeal!**

### 2.6.4 Missed/Late Work

It is important to stay up-to-date with readings and assignments. I have done my best to design the course to be flexible and manageable, but with the schedule mostly set by design, it is easy to fall behind quickly. Please let me know early on if you are having trouble with any particular assignment, or the workload in general. You must complete all assigned work in a timely fashion in order to receive full credit.

#### Important guidelines:

- Assignments will be penalized 5% (a half-letter grade) for each 24 hours late.
- Late work will not be accepted more than two weeks after the original due date.
- Some assignments (*e.g.*, preparation for or participation in class) will not be accepted late.
- All outstanding assignments at the end of the term (the last day of class) will receive a zero.

## 3 Policies

### 3.1 Attendance

Attendance is **required**. That said, I will not routinely record attendance, nor assign any part of your grade just for showing up; however, your understanding of course concepts will surely suffer due to poor attendance, and you will miss the chance to participate in discussion and other graded class activities. If you miss class, please contact me (and your classmates) as soon as possible to find out what you've missed. Makeup opportunities for in-class work (if possible) will be permitted at my discretion for **approved absences only** (documentation may be required—see <http://www.psu.edu/oue/aappm/classabs.pdf>). **If you know you are going to miss class, it is better to speak to me beforehand to make arrangements than to ask for help after missing something important!**

### 3.2 Academic Integrity

Academic honesty is of the utmost importance in the academic world. Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty are serious offenses, and ignorance is no excuse; therefore, I urge you to become familiar with the University's Code of Conduct (<http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/conduct/codeofconduct/>) and statement on academic integrity (<http://www.psu.edu/dept/oue/aappm/G-9.html>), and encourage you to seek my advice if you are unclear about any part.

*All students are expected to act with civility and personal integrity; respect other students' dignity, rights and property; and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their own efforts. An environment of academic integrity is requisite to respect for self and others and a civil community. Academic integrity includes a commitment not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty include cheating or copying, plagiarizing, submitting another person's work as one's own, using Internet sources without citation, fabricating field data or citations, "ghosting" (taking or having another student take an exam), stealing examinations, tampering with the academic work of another student, facilitating other students' acts of academic dishonesty, etc.*

Students charged with a breach of academic integrity will receive due process and, if the charge is found valid, academic sanctions may range from a grade of *F* for the assignment to a grade of *F* for the course, depending on the severity.

### 3.3 Academic Accommodations

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, it is Penn State's policy to provide reasonable academic adjustments for students with documented disabilities. Any student who thinks he/she may need an accommodation based on a disability should speak to me and contact Sharon Manco at 610.892.1461 or [sam26@psu.edu](mailto:sam26@psu.edu). This notification should occur by the end of the first week of the semester. Please visit [www.equity.psu.edu/ods/](http://www.equity.psu.edu/ods/) for complete information.

### 3.4 Instructor Availability

The best way to get in touch with me outside of class is by email. My usual policy is to answer student emails within 24 hours; I will, however, do my best to answer emails sent before the close of business (usually 5pm) the same day, but I make no guarantees. Of course, you can always ask questions during or after class, or schedule a time to meet in person.

### 3.5 Campus Closure/Delayed Opening

In the event of a weather emergency, you may obtain official information on the status of classes by doing one of three things:

1. Sign up for PSUAlert <https://psualert.psu.edu/psualert/>
2. Check the Penn State Brandywine website for announcements [www.bw.psu.edu](http://www.bw.psu.edu)
3. Follow the Facebook page and watch for alerts [www.facebook.com/PennStateBrandywine](http://www.facebook.com/PennStateBrandywine)

Classes may be announced as canceled, or there may be an opening delay for day classes (in which case we will meet as scheduled). Specific make up dates and times will be announced for any missed classes. These may be in person classes, or alternative/online make-up assignments. **The same attendance policies apply to official make-up classes.**

### 3.6 Classroom Technology

Please silence your cell phone before entering lecture or discussion, and **please refrain from texting during class!** If you experience an emergency requiring you to receive/make a call/text, please be polite and quietly excuse yourself from the classroom before doing so. Laptop computers should be used for note-taking purposes only. **I reserve the right to limit computer use in the classroom if it becomes disruptive to the learning process.**

## References

- Aronson, J. (2001). *Sound and fury*. Aronson Film Associates.
- Bauer, L., & Trudgill, P. (Eds.). (1998). *Language myths*. Penguin Books.
- Byrd, D., & Mintz, T. H. (2010). *Discovering speech, words, and mind*. John Wiley and Sons.
- Chambers, K., Onishi, K., & Fisher, C. (2003). Infants learn phonotactic regularities from brief auditory experience. *Cognition*, *87*(2), 69–77. doi: 10.1016/S0
- Colapinto, J. (2007). The interpreter. *New Yorker*, *120*.
- Fernández, E. M., & Cairns, H. S. (2010). *Fundamentals of psycholinguistics*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Goldrick, M., & Larson, M. (2008). Phonotactic probability influences speech production. *Cognition*, *107*(3), 1155–1164.
- Hestvik, A., Maxfield, N., Schwartz, R. G., & Shafer, V. (2007). Brain responses to filled gaps. *Brain and Language*, *100*(3), 301–316. doi: 10.1016/j.bandl.2006.07.007
- Mihalicek, V., & Wilson, C. (Eds.). (2011). *Language files 11: Materials for an introduction to language and linguistics* (11th ed.). Ohio State University Press.
- Papfragou, A., Hulbert, J., & Trueswell, J. (2008). Does language guide event perception? evidence from eye movements. *Cognition*, *108*(1), 155–184.
- Pinker, S. (1994). *The language instinct: How the mind creates language*. HarperPerennial ModernClassics.
- Regier, T., & Kay, P. (2006). Language, thought and color: recent developments. *Trends in cognitive sciences*, *10*(2), 51–54.
- Seidl, A., Hollich, G., & Jusczyk, P. (2003). Early understanding of subject and object wh-questions. *Infancy*, *4*(3), 423–436. doi: 10.1207/S15327078IN0403.06
- Slobin, D. I. (1996). From “thought and language” to “thinking for speaking”. In J. J. Gumperz & S. C. Levinson (Eds.), *Rethinking linguistic relativity* (Vol. 17, pp. 70–96). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ullman, M. T., & Pierpont, E. I. (2005). Specific language impairment is not specific to language: The procedural deficit hypothesis. *Cortex*, *41*, 399–433.
- van Der Lely, H. K., & Christian, V. (2000). Lexical word formation in children with grammatical SLI: a grammar-specific versus an input-processing deficit? *Cognition*, *75*, 144–171. (00078)
- Zongker, D. (2006). Chicken chicken chicken: Chicken chicken. *Annals of Improbable Research*, *12*(5), 16–21.

## Schedule

Below, you will find the preliminary schedule for the course. **The schedule is subject to changes and additions.** I'll alert you to changes in plans, but please check the course website frequently for updates to readings and assignments. **Please read the assigned material before the day for which it is assigned.**

week	day	unit	topic(s)	reading(s)	due
1	T 8/25	Introduction	Introduction	Syllabus	Preliminary Survey
	R 8/27		Psycholinguistics	F&C 1	
2	T 9/1	LING 100	Language & Science	Byrd and Mintz (2010, chs.1,4)	Byrd & Mintz Qs
	R 9/3		Linguistic Competence	F&C 2	
3	T 9/8		Linguistic Structure	Language Files	LF Exercises
	R 9/10		<i>Project Workshop</i>	<i>Edge.org</i> readings	
4	T 9/15	Acquisition	Biology	F&C 3	Wiki Profile
	R 9/17		Language Development	F&C 4	Wiki Groups
5	T 9/22		<i>Project Workshop</i>	Pinker (1994, chs. 9–10)	Pinker Qs
	R 9/24				<b>Quiz #2</b>
6	T 9/29	Production	Speech	F&C 5	Wiki Intro
	R 10/1		<i>Production Lab</i>		Midterm Feedback
7	T 10/6		Structure & Meaning		Production Lab
	R 10/8		<i>Project Workshop</i>		<b>Quiz #3</b>
8	T 10/13	Perception	Speech	F&C 6	Wiki Outline
	R 10/15		<i>Perception Lab</i>		
9	T 10/20		Sentences	F&C 7	Perception Lab
	R 10/22		Presentation #1	Hestvik et al. (2007); Goldrick and Larson (2008)	Wiki Draft #1
10	T 10/27		Chambers et al. (2003); Seidl et al. (2003)	Wiki Feedback #1	
	R 10/29	<i>Project Workshop</i>		<b>Quiz #4</b>	
11	T 11/3	Thought		Slobin (1996); Colapinto (2007)	Thought Qs
	R 11/5		Presentation #2a	Papafragou et al. (2008); Regier and Kay (2006)	
12	T 11/10	Disorders	Neurolinguistics		Wiki Draft #2
	R 11/12		Disorders		Wiki Feedback #2
13	T 11/17		Presentation #2b	van Der Lely and Christian (2000); Ullman and Pierpont (2005)	
	R 11/19		Film: <i>Sound and Fury</i>		
<i>Thanksgiving Break</i>					
14	T 12/1	In Action	<i>Project Workshop</i>		
	R 12/3				<b>Quiz #5</b>
15	T 12/8		Myth Presentation	Bauer and Trudgill (1998, chs. TBD)	Wiki Final
	R 12/10		<i>Final Review</i>		SRTE; Course Feedback
F	R 12/17	<b>2:30–4:20</b>	<i>Final Exam</i>		Final Exam