

LIN 4721: Second Language Acquisition  
MWF 7<sup>th</sup> Period

AND 13

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& by appointment

**Course Description:** Second Language Acquisition examines the neurological, psychological and social processes involved in acquiring a second language, by both children and adults. In doing so, we will consider the various theories, past and present, that have been offered to explain the complex procedures involved in learning a second / foreign language. We will explore the concept and nature of Interlanguage, along with individual and collective factors that may influence one's success in acquiring a second language. We will also examine the impact of instruction on both the route and the rate of language acquisition, with comparisons and contrasts to first language acquisition, where appropriate.

**Course Requirements.** There are two required textbooks for this course:

- Lightbown, Patsy and Nina Spada. *How Languages are Learned*. (2006) 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. Oxford: OUP.
- Mitchell, Rosamond and Florence Myles. *Second Language Learning Theories* (2004) 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. New York: Arnold.

These textbooks are available at all local bookstores. Additionally, all students will be required to read several journal articles throughout the course of the semester, as listed on your syllabus. These articles are all available for consultation online; details concerning how to access these articles electronically will be provided in class. The day that these articles are discussed, students are asked to bring a copy of the article to class with them. This article may be electronic or hardcopy, but to facilitate discussion, all students must have a copy in front of them.

Students are expected to come to class having read all material listed for that class period, and prepared to discuss it in detail. Active participation in this discussion is an essential component of the course, and will therefore constitute a considerable portion of your final grade. Attendance will be taken daily; unexcused absences will result in a 0 for participation for the day. Weekly reading assignments will generally not exceed 60 pages.

Essays: Students will be required to turn in three essays throughout the semester, as noted on your syllabus. These essays should be approximately 2 pages in length, typed (double-spaced, 1” margins and 12 point font), and will be based on readings discussed in class and/or assignments required of students.

Data analysis: Students will complete an analysis of second language data on three separate occasions (see calendar below for specific dates). This data will be presented in the form of a “problem,” with a data set and specific questions to answer. Your analysis should be typed (double-spaced, 1” margins and 12 point font), and should respond to all questions completely.

Article summaries: On each of the days when we read a journal article for class, students will come to class with a typed, one page summary of the article to facilitate discussion. This summary should contain an explanation of the research questions examined in the article, the methodology followed and the general findings. The summary will be turned in at the end of class for a grade. It is expected that all details of the article may not be understood, but that a sincere effort will be made to read and summarize the main points of each article before coming to class.

Exams: There will be three exams in this course, including the final. Format of the exams will be discussed in class.

Grading System: Course participants will receive letter grades for all required work, with the exception of the article summaries. The final grade for this course will be distributed in the following way:

Essays: 20%

Data analysis: 20%

Exams: 40% (2 @10% each, final 20%)

Article summaries 10%

Participation 10%

Final Letter Grade: A=93-100; A-=90-92; B+=87-89%; B=83-86%; B-=80-82; C+=77-79%; C=73-76%; C-=70-72; D+=67-69%; D=63-66%; D-=60-62; E=below 60%. S is equivalent to C or better. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences requires that students earn a final grade of C or better (or S) in order satisfy general education requirements. Note that a C- does not satisfy this requirement; students must earn a C or better in the course in order to move on to the next course and satisfy general education requirements.

According to university guidelines, letter grades will convert to GPA as follows: A = 4.0; A- = 3.67; B+ = 3.33; B = 3; B- = 2.67; C+ = 2.33; C = 2.0; C- = 1.67; D+ = 1.33; D = 1.0; D- = .67; E = 0; WF = 0; I = 0 NG = 0; S-U = 0 For more information about grade calculation and GPA, refer to the UF undergraduate catalog: <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

**This syllabus may be adjusted at any time for pedagogical purposes.**

### **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

The University of Florida statement regarding academic honesty and more specifically “giving and/or receiving unauthorized aid on student’s work” reads as follows:

- “Giving information includes, but is not limited to, allowing other students to use or copy work or answers to exam questions either while the exam is being given or after having taken the exam.
- Further, the taking of information includes, but is not limited to, copying from the answers provided in the book or ancillary materials, copying from another student’s paper [...], using information already written in books, [...], or asking anyone, students or not to review and/or correct assignments.
- Students found in violation of this policy will be referred to the appropriate administration for appropriate action according to the student judicial process.

Students may view the entire UF honor code at :  
<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

The University of Florida policy related to accommodations for students with disabilities reads as follows:

“Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.”

Students who believe they may qualify for accommodations should contact the Dean of Students Office: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/current.php>

Syllabus abbreviations: **LS** = Lightbown & Spada

**MM** = Mitchell & Myles

**SSLA** = Studies in Second Language Acquisition

**MLJ** = Modern Language Journal

**ARAL** = Annual Review of Applied Linguistics

## Weekly Calendar:

Week 1 Jan. 7 Monday: Intro.

Wed/Fri **LS** Introduction, Ch. 1: Language learning in early childhood

Week 2 Jan. 14 Mon/Wed. **MM**: Ch. 1: Second language learning: Key concepts and issues

Fri: **LS** Ch. 2: Explaining second language learning

Week 3 Jan. 21 Mon: MLK, Jr. Day No class

Wed: **MM** Ch. 2: Recent history of second language learning research

Fri: **LS**: Ch. 3: Individual differences in second language learning *Essay 1 due*

Week 4 Jan. 28 Mon/Wed: **LS**: Ch. 3: Individual differences in second language learning

Fri: Harley and Hart. (1997). "Language Aptitude and Second Language Proficiency in Classroom Learners of Different Starting Ages." *SSLA*: 19(3): 379-400. *Article summary due*

Week 5 Feb. 4 Mon: Gatbonton et al. (2011). "Ethnic Group Affiliation and Patterns of Development of a Phonological Variable." *MLJ*: 95(2): 188-204. *Article summary due*

**Wed: Exam 1** (Weeks 1-4)

Fri: **LS** Ch. 4: Learner language

Week 6 Feb. 11 Mon. **LS** Ch. 4: Learner language

Wed.: Analyzing learner language. First data set assigned

Fri: **LS** Ch. 5: Observing learning and teaching in the second language classroom.

Week 7 Feb. 18 Mon: **LS** Ch. 5: Observing learning and teaching in the second language classroom. *Data analysis 1 due*

Wed/Fri. **LS** Ch. 6 Second language learning in the classroom

Week 8 Feb. 25 Mon. / Wed. **MM** Ch. 3: Linguistics and language learning: Universal Grammar

Fri: **Exam 2** (Weeks 5-8, Harley & Hart and Gatbonton et al. articles) *Take Home, to be submitted electronically – due Friday, Mar. 1 by 3:00 pm No exceptions!*

*Spring Break March 4-10 No class*

Week 9 Mar. 11 Mon/Wed.: **MM** Ch. 4: Cognitive Approaches to second language learning

Fri: Ellis, Nick and Diane Larsen-Freeman (2009). "Constructing a Second Language: Analyses and Computational Simulations of the Emergence of Linguistic Constructions from Usage." **Language Learning** 59 (Supplement 1): 93-128. Article summary due

Week 10 Mar. 18 Mon/Wed: **MM** Ch. 5: Functional / Pragmatic perspectives on second language learning Essay 2 due

Fri: Taguchi, Naoko (2011). "Pragmatic Development as a Dynamic, Complex Process: General Patterns and Case Histories." *MLJ* 95(4): 605-627 Article summary due

Week 11 Mar. 25 Mon/Wed: **MM** Ch. 6: Input and interaction in second language learning

Fri: Leow, Ron. "A Study of the Role of Awareness in Foreign Language Behavior: Aware vs. Unaware Learners." *SSLA* 22(4): 557-584. Article summary due

Week 12 Apr. 1 Mon/Wed: **MM** Ch. 7: Socio-cultural perspectives on second language learning

Fri: Analyzing learner language: second data set assigned Essay 3 due

Week 13 Apr. 8 Mon/Wed: **MM** Ch. 8: Sociolinguistic perspectives

Wed: Data analysis 2 due

Fri: Van Compernelle and Williams (2012). "Reconceptualizing Sociolinguistic Competence as Mediated Action: Identity, Meaning-Making, Agency." *MLJ* 96(2): 234-250. Article summary due

Week 14 Apr. 15 Mon. Analyzing learner data – third data set assigned

Wed: Tarone, Elaine and Martha Bigelow. (2005). "Impact of Literacy on Oral Language Processing: Implications for Second Language Acquisition Research." *ARAL* 25: 77-97. Article summary due

Fri: **LS** Ch. 7: Popular ideas about language learning revisited Data analysis 3 due

Week 15 Apr. 22, Mon: **MM** Ch.9: Conclusion

Wed: Classes end: review

**Final exam -- Thursday, May 2 10 am – noon. (Weeks 9-15, including articles)**