



PSY315H5F – Language Acquisition

Wednesday 12:00pm – 3:00pm

Room Location: DH 2080 (Deerfield Hall)

Contact Information

Dr. Angela Nyhout

angela.nyhout@utoronto.ca

Teaching Assistant:

Carla Correa

carla.correa@mail.utoronto.ca

Office Hour: Wednesday 3:00pm – 4:00pm

Office Location: DH4023

Course Description

An examination of language acquisition from a psychological perspective. Topics include the acquisition of speech sounds, words, sentence structure, and conversational abilities, as well as patterns of development in special populations. *Exclusion:*JLP15H1 *Prerequisite:* [PSY201H5/equivalent](#), [PSY210H5/213H5/270H5/274H5/LIN100Y5/200H5](#)

Language is incredibly complex. The fact that children typically become full participants of a language community (and sometimes multiple!) by the age of 5 is a remarkable feat. In this course, you will come to appreciate the many complexities of language and communication that you may not have noticed before, and will study how it is that children come to achieve such proficiency in language in such a short span of time.

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Describe and appreciate the various areas of development that take place in childhood in the process of language acquisition;
2. Describe common experimental methods used for studying language development, and identify which may be most appropriate for addressing specific questions;
3. Compare theories of language development, and their empirical support (or lack thereof);
4. Access transcripts of child language and interpret them to gain insight into different areas of language development;
5. Critically analyze media coverage of language research;
6. Identify gaps in knowledge about child language development, and frame research questions and outline methods to address these gaps.

Reading Material

- Hoff, E. (2009). *Language Development*, 5th Edition (available at the bookstore).
- Additional readings (chapters and articles) will be posted on Blackboard.

Course Evaluation

Evaluation component	Due date	% of grade
Test 1	September 28	20
Comparison paper	October 19	15
Test 2	November 2	20
Research paper	November 23	25
Test 3	November 30	20

Term tests: There will be three non-cumulative in-class tests (90 minutes each). Each test will cover material from the preceding 3 lectures, associated readings, and supplemental material (e.g., videos).

Assignments: Assignments are due on Blackboard *before* the beginning of class on the day they are due (i.e., by 12:00pm). See “Penalties for Lateness” for details on late assignments. Specific guidelines for each assignment will be provided in class and posted on Blackboard. In-class, ungraded activities will help to prepare you for these written assignments, so attendance in class is very important.

- For the **Comparison paper**, you will compare a popular press article about child language research to its corresponding academic article.
- For the **Research paper**, you will identify a research question of interest about language acquisition, situate this question within previous research, and outline (or carry out) steps to investigate your question.

Course Webpage

The website associated with this course is accessible via <http://portal.utoronto.ca>

Note: You don't need to create a new login for Blackboard; it already knows who you are. You just need your UTORid and password. This is the same login that gets you onto the wireless network with your laptop, and the same one that you use to check your email. If you're confused about your UTORid or don't remember your password, go to: <https://www.utorid.utoronto.ca/>

In order to access course material, monitor course information, and view your grades you must log into Blackboard. If you have any general questions regarding Blackboard, please visit the following help site: <http://www.portalinfo.utoronto.ca/content/information-students>

IMPORTANT COURSE POLICIES **PLEASE READ**

Contacting the instructor

If you have questions about course content outside of class time, use the discussion board on Blackboard. There, students can benefit from one another's questions and answers. If you have administrative questions that are not covered in the course syllabus, please contact me by email from your [utoronto email address](#) (emails from non-utoronto addresses could end up in the junk folder). Begin the subject line with “PSY315”. You are more than welcome to make an appointment to see me in person at my office in the OISE building (252 Bloor St W, Room 9-108), but this is of course a bit of a trek from Mississauga. The only time I will be available for in-person meetings at UTM is in the hour after class time.

Missed Test Special Consideration Request Process

Students who miss a test due to circumstances beyond their control (e.g. illness or an accident) can

request that the Department grant them special consideration. Students must present their case to the Department (NOT the Instructor) by submitting a request via the online Special Consideration Request form at: <https://utmapp.utm.utoronto.ca/SpecialRequest>.

Students are to submit original supporting documentation (e.g., medical certificates, accident reports, etc.) to the Psychology Academic Counselor or drop it in the drop box located outside the Psychology office, Deerfield Hall, 4th Floor. Students have up to one week from the date of the missed test to submit request. Late submissions will NOT be considered without a letter of explanation specifying and documenting the reasons for the lateness.

Medical certificates or physician's notes must be completed by the Physician and MUST include the statement "This Student [name] was unable to write the test on [date(s)] for medical reasons". This documentation must show that the physician was consulted within one the day of the missed term test. A statement merely acknowledging a report of illness made by the student to the physician is NOT acceptable. For further information on this procedure please see: <http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/psychology/undergraduate-studies/missed-testslate-submissions>

If you missed your test/assignment deadline for a reason connected to your registered disability, please be advised that the department will accept documentation supplied by the UTM AccessAbility Resource Centre.

IMPORTANT: The Department of Psychology verifies the authenticity of medical certificates by contacting medical offices. Students are NOT to make any changes or alteration to completed medical certificates. Students who submit forged or altered documentation are subject to severe academic penalties.

If your request is approved by the department, a make-up test will be offered within 2 weeks of the original test date. Please contact Jodie Stewart (jodie.stewart@utoronto.ca) for further information pertaining to the make-up details.

Extension of Time Special Consideration Request Process

Students who seek to be granted more time to complete their term work beyond the due date without penalty, owing to circumstances beyond their control (e.g., illness, or an accident), must do so by submitting a request directly to the Instructor for the period up to and including the last day of the term. The decision as to whether or not to apply a penalty for the specified period rests with the Instructor.

Students who seek to be granted more time to complete term work beyond the last day of the term must submit their request directly to the Department. This request covers the period following the last day of classes and ends the last day of the exam period. This is done by submitting a request via the online Special Consideration Request form at <https://utmapp.utm.utoronto.ca/SpecialRequest>.

You are advised to seek advising by the departmental Undergraduate Counsellor prior to the deadline.

Original supporting documentation (e.g., medical certificates, accident reports, etc.) must be submitted to the Psychology Academic Counselor or dropped off in the drop box located outside the Psychology office Deerfield Hall, 4th Floor. Students are expected to submit requests to the Department before the

last day of the term, unless demonstrably serious reasons prevent them from doing so. In the event of an illness, medical certificates or doctor's notes must confirm that student was ill on the due date of the assignment (for a one-day extension). For a longer extension, documentation must specify the full duration during which academic work could not be carried out.

For extensions of time beyond the examination period you must submit a petition through the Office of the Registrar. <http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/registrar/current-students/petitions>

Penalties for Lateness

A penalty of 10% per calendar day (i.e., including week-ends and holidays, during which students are not able to submit term work) up to and including the last day of classes, will be applied by the Instructor. After the last day of classes, the penalty of 10% per calendar day will be applied by the Undergraduate Counsellor on behalf of the Department. No penalty will be assigned if request for special consideration, described above, was successful.

Academic Guidelines

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have met all prerequisites listed in the UTM Calendar for this course. If you lack any prerequisites you WILL BE REMOVED from the course up until the last day to add a course. Further information about academic regulations, course withdrawal dates and credits can be found in the University of Toronto Mississauga Calendar at: <http://www.erin.utoronto.ca/regcal/>.

You are encouraged to read this material. If you run into trouble and need advice about studying, preparing for exams, note taking or time management, free workshops and advice are available from the Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre at 905-828-5406.

AccessAbility Services

Students requiring academic accommodations for learning, physical, sensory, or mental health disabilities or medical conditions should contact the AccessAbility Office (2037B Davis Building), 905-828-3847. <http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/accessability/>

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Honesty and fairness are considered fundamental to the university's mission, and, as a result, all those who violate those principles are dealt with as if they were damaging the integrity of the university itself. When students are suspected of cheating or a similar academic offence, they are typically surprised at how formally and seriously the matter is dealt with -- and how severe the consequences can be if it is determined that cheating did occur. The University of Toronto treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. Please take the time to review the Academic Integrity website: <http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/academic-integrity/students>.

- Common trends in academic offences:
- Plagiarizing/concocted references
- Collaboration/unauthorized assistance
- Purchasing work
- Recycling work - "double-dipping"
- Resubmitting of altered work for re-grading

- Electronic devices (cell phones) or any unauthorized aids
- Altering medical certificates and UofT documents

From the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters: “It shall be an offence for a student to knowingly: represent as one’s own any idea or expression of an idea or work of another in any academic examination or term test or in connection with any other form of academic work, i.e. to commit plagiarism. Wherever in the Code an offence is described as depending on “knowing”, the offence shall likewise be deemed to have been committed if the person ought reasonably to have known.” All students must refer to this website to obtain information on what constitutes plagiarism.

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>.

If questions arise after reading the material on the website, consult your instructor.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated.

Turnitin.com

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.

Equity Statement

The University of Toronto is committed to equity and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect. As a course instructor, I will neither condone nor tolerate behaviour that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of any individual in this course and wish to be alerted to any attempt to create an intimidating or hostile environment. It is our collective responsibility to create a space that is inclusive and welcomes discussion. Discrimination, harassment and hate speech will not be tolerated. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns you may contact the UTM Equity and Diversity officer at edo.utm@utoronto.ca or the University of Toronto Mississauga Students’ Union Vice President Equity at vpequity@utmsu.ca.

Academic Rights

You, as a student at UTM, have the right to:

- Receive a syllabus by the first day of class.
- Rely upon a syllabus once a course is started. An instructor may only change marks’ assignments by following the University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy provision 1.3.
- Refuse to use turnitin.com (you must be offered an alternative form of submission).
- Have access to your instructor for consultation during a course or follow up with the department chair if the instructor is unavailable.
- Ask the person who marked your term work for a re-evaluation if you feel it was not fairly graded. You have up to one month from the date of return of the item to inquire about the mark. If you are not satisfied with a re-evaluation, you may appeal to the instructor in charge of the course if the instructor did not mark the work. If your work is remarked, you must accept the resulting mark. You may only appeal a mark beyond the instructor if the term work was worth at least 20% of the course mark.

- Receive at least one significant mark (15% for H courses, 25% for Y courses) before the last day you can drop a course for H courses, and the last day of classes in the first week of January for Y courses taught in the Fall/Winter terms.
- Submit handwritten essays so long as they are neatly written.
- Have no assignment worth 100% of your final grade.
- Not have a term test worth 25% or more in the last two weeks of class.
- Retain intellectual property rights to your research.
- Receive all your assignments once graded.
- View your final exams. To see a final exam, you must submit an online Exam Reproduction Request within 6 months of the exam. There is a small non-refundable fee.
- Privacy of your final grades.
- Arrange for representation from Downtown Legal Services (DLS), a representative from the UTM Students' Union (UTMSU), and/or other forms of support if you are charged with an academic offence.

Please note that this outline is subject to change depending on the needs of the class (we may need additional time to cover a topic). Any changes to the syllabus will be announced in class one week before.

Course Outline

Date	Topics	Readings/Assignments
Sept 7	Introduction	Chapters 1 & 3
Sept 14	Phonological development: Speech and sound systems	Chapter 4
Sept 21	Lexical development: Identifying and learning words	Chapter 5
Sept 28	Test 1	
Oct 5	The development of syntax and morphology: Learning the grammar and structure of language	Chapter 6
Oct 12	<i>Reading week – no classes</i>	
Oct 19	Communication and pragmatic language development: Using language in social contexts	Chapter 7 Assignment 1 due
Oct 26	Later Language Development + Language and Biology	Chapters 10 & 2
Nov 2	Test 2	
Nov 9	Language development in special populations	Chapter 11
Nov 16	Bilingualism: Learning more than one language	Chapter 9
Nov 23	Language and thought	Chapter 8 Assignment 2 due
Nov 30	Test 3	

Important term dates

Classes Begin: September 6, 2016

Thanksgiving: October 10, 2016

Fall Reading Week: October 11–14, 2016 University OPEN/No Classes

Last day to drop without academic penalty: November 9, 2016

Classes end: December 5, 2016

Study Period: December 6–7, 2016

Examination Period: December 8 -20, 2016