

## **PSY474H5 S – Special Topics in Human Communication:** **How age-related changes in hearing and cognition affect spoken language comprehension in older adults.**

**Wednesday: 5:00pm – 8:00pm DV 1147 (Davis Building)**

### **Contact Information**

**Professor Bruce Schneider**

**Office Location: CCT 4073**

Phone: 905-828-3963

**Teaching Assistant:**

Robert Redford

[r.redford@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:r.redford@mail.utoronto.ca)

**Office Hours: Tuesdays: 3-5 pm**

**Wednesdays, 2-4 pm**

### **Course Description**

To listen to a lecture, story, or play, and/or to participate effectively in multi-talker conversations, listeners need to do more than simply recognize and repeat speech. They have to keep track of who said what, extract the meaning of each utterance, store it in memory for future use, integrate the incoming information with what each conversational participant has said in the past, and draw on the listener's own knowledge of the topic under consideration to extract general themes and formulate responses. In other words, to acquire and use the information contained in spoken language requires the smooth and rapid functioning of an integrated system of perceptual and cognitive processes. In this course we will investigate the reasons why the operation of this integrated system of perceptual and cognitive processes is more easily disrupted in older than in younger adults, and how such disruptions adversely affect the quality of life for older adults.

In the first four weeks of the course I will briefly review how aging affects hearing and cognition in order to provide a theoretical framework within which we can examine how aging affects spoken language comprehension in older adults. A list of journal articles or book chapters related to the topics discussed in these lectures are listed below. You are expected to read them in advance of the lecture. Before each lecture begins, there will be a short quiz (10-15 minutes) consisting of a single question related to one of the readings. For example I might ask you to briefly describe the rationale for performing the study, or I might ask you to give a brief description of the method, or of the results. Possible questions will be posted on Blackboard 3 days before the lecture. Each quiz will be worth five points each. Please read carefully the section below on plagiarism. On February 10 there will be a comprehensive midterm on the material covered up until then. (25 points).

During the last four weeks of the course two to three students (a different set each week) will be responsible for conducting a seminar related to a particular theme. The themes are identified below. Each of students will give a 20-minute presentation on an article related to the theme of the session. This will be followed by a 15 minute question period concerning the article, its contents, and its implications. There will be a break following

the presentations, followed by a general discussion (led by the student presenters) on the theme for the session. I expect each student to meet with me individually prior on or before February 24th to select the topic that they will be working on. The final decision as to the assignments of students to themes is mine, although I will make every effort to accommodate individual preferences. These presentations will begin on March 2. Your participation in these theme sessions (which includes your individual presentation) will be worth 25 points. You will also be responsible for preparing a 10 page double-spaced paper on the relationship of the article you reported on to the theme of the session (30 points).

---

## Reading Material

**There is no textbook for this course.** You will be instructed on how to download or obtain the book chapters and journal articles that are required reading for the course in the Introductory Lecture. The readings for the seminars to be conducted by the students will be assigned in consultation with the Instructor.

---

## Course Evaluation

There are four short quizzes, each worth 5 points. There is one midterm worth 25 points. Your participation in the four theme sessions (which will include your individual presentation) will be worth 25 points. You will also be responsible for preparing a 10 page double-spaced paper on the relationship of the article you reported on to the theme of the session (30 points).

---

## 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\*\***

### Office Hours and Email Communication

Please note that I keep four office hours per week. Students are encouraged to use these office hours to discuss any issue related to the content of this course. I will also accept phone calls from students during these hours. However, students who show up in person will have priority and I will not answer the phone or return calls during office hours if there are students waiting to talk to me. I will not answer email questions at any time.

### Missed Tests Special Consideration Request Process

**No make-up tests are offered in this course.** If you miss a 5-point quiz without adequate excuse, you will receive a mark of zero for that quiz. However, if you have an adequate excuse for missing a 5-point quiz, the scores on your remaining three quizzes will be rescaled so that total number of points earned in the short quizzes will equal 20. If you miss the 25-point quiz, and have a valid excuse, the summed value of the 5-point quizzes will be increased to 30 points, and the value of the paper will be raised to 45 points. If you cannot give your

presentation on the scheduled date for legitimate reasons it will be rescheduled. **Students must present their case to the Department (not the Instructor)** by submitting a request via the online Special Consideration Request form at:

<https://endor.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.

### **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.**

## **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](mailto:edo.utm@utoronto.ca) or the University of Toronto Mississauga Students' Union Vice President Equity at [vpequity@utmsu.ca](mailto: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	Topic	Reading Assignment
January 3	Introduction	
January 10	How Age Affects the Auditory Periphery	Schmeidt (2010)
January 17	Cognitive Processes Involved in Speech Comprehension	McDowd and Shaw (2000)
January 24	Interactions between perception and cognition in communication	Lindenberg and Baltes (1994) Schneider & Pichora Fuller (2000)
January 31	Speech Understanding and Comprehension in Older Adults	Humes and Dubno (2010) Schneider, Pichora-Fuller, and Daneman (2010)
February 7	Midterm	
February 14	Meet with students to confirm seminar assignments	
February 28	<b>The effects of Age and Language Status on Energetic versus Informational Masking</b>	Readings to be determined
March 7	<b>Comprehension of Spoken Material: Lectures, Dialogues, and Trialogues</b>	Readings to be determined
March 14	<b>The Effects of Noise and Competing Speech on Memory</b>	Readings to be determined
March 21	<b>The Social Consequences of Age-Related Changes in Hearing</b>	Readings to be determined
March 28	General Discussion and Conclusions	