

**Spring 2009 Syllabus**  
**LIN 522: Psycholinguistics of Sign Languages**

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Credits: 3

Class: T/Th 1:00 – 2:20  
Office hours: Tue 3:30-4:40  
or by appointment

Prerequisites: For UG students: LIN101, LIN263, LIN301, LIN302; For Grad students: Permission of Instructor

**Course Description:**

Deaf and hearing people around the world acquire, produce and perceive sign languages. This course takes an in-depth look at how they acquire, produce and perceive sign languages. Psycholinguistics generally covers three domains: acquisition, use (perception and production) and brain studies. This course focuses on perception and production, as well as brain studies (aka neurolinguistics). With respect to production, we will examine studies that focus on “slips of the hands”, both spontaneous and induced. With respect to perception, we will look at both online and offline cases. For brain studies, we will discuss both behavioral and imaging studies.

**Student Learning Objectives:**

Student learning objectives for this course are listed in the table below, showing their alignment with the learning objectives of the Linguistics Department. The table also lists the methods that will be used to assess of student learning. Short papers and final paper will be assessed using the rubric for written assignments; Presentation and co-teaching exercise will be assessed using the rubric for presentations; participation in class discussions will be assessed using the rubric for participation. All rubrics are attached to the end of this syllabus.

Linguistics Department Learning Outcomes:

- I. Students will demonstrate critical thinking and analysis of the constructs, claims, and conclusions of the fields that comprise the study of linguistics.
- II. Students will demonstrate logical argumentation in their coursework, formulating and supporting their claims in a manner that is acceptable in the field of linguistics.
- III. Students will employ all aspects of technical writing, as practiced in the field of linguistics.
- IV. a. Graduate students will demonstrate working knowledge of professional level of scholarly work in the field and be able to lead class discussions on such work.  
b. Undergraduate students will demonstrate a working knowledge of pedagogical materials from the field.
- V. Students will display expressive and receptive competency in the academic uses of ASL and English.

VI. Students will recognize and make use of the principles governing responsible conduct of scholarly inquiry, the principles of academic honesty set forth in the Gallaudet Graduate School Policy on Academic Honesty, and the guidelines and requirements of the Institutional Review Board, where appropriate.

Course Student Learning Outcomes	Assessment	Linguistics Department Learning Outcomes					
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI
At the end of this course, students will:							
be able to cite the major claims from the field of psycholinguistics as it relates to sign languages and their production by children and adults	Short papers; final paper; presentation				√		
be able to contrast how visual perception works for individuals who use a sign language as a first language, as a second language or as a delayed first language	Short papers; final paper; presentation				√		
be able to describe how the brain functions during the production and perception of a sign language	Short papers; final paper; presentation				√		
be able to identify and critique the central conceptual or theoretical framework of scholarly work on the psycholinguistic study of sign languages	Short papers; final paper; presentation	√	√				
have completed a library or empirical research study on the psycholinguistics of sign languages	Final paper	√	√	√	√	√	√
be able to apply the standards for methodology in the psycholinguistics of sign languages	Experiment for final paper (grad students only)				√		
know how to participate in reasoned and informed discussions on the content of the course	Participation in class discussion	√	√		√	√	
With guidance from the instructor, graduate students will guide a class discussion on one of the major topics of the course	Co-teaching exercise (to be assessed using Presentation rubric)	√	√		√	√	√
recognize and abide by all principles of responsible conduct of inquiry, including those of the Gallaudet Graduate School and the IRB	Final paper	√	√				√

**Communication commitments:**

The people in this class come from many different backgrounds, and sometimes we may have difficulty understanding each other. We all have good ideas, however, and we all have an important contribution to make to the class.

Everyone in the class (including the teacher) will make the following three commitments:

1. To respect each person and do your best to understand what he or she is saying.
2. To communicate clearly and slowly if necessary, so that all will understand you.
3. To ask for an explanation right away if you don't understand what someone said.

**Class materials:**

There is an 'electronic' reading packet of articles to read for the course. It is available on Blackboard. You may print the articles to read. I will provide links to the assigned articles for each homework.

**Attendance:**

Missing class will seriously affect your final grade. You are allowed to miss 3 classes, **for any reason**. When you miss class for the fourth time, **for any reason**, your grade will start to go down. I will deduct 15 points for each class you miss (50 points = 1 letter grade). Strong attendance will earn you extra credit points at the end of the semester! The following table outlines the number of extra points you can earn.

<b>Number of Absences</b>	<b>Extra Credit points earned</b>
0	20
1	15
2	10
3	5

**Four short papers:**

Each student will cover four main topics: child production, adult production, perception, and brain studies. For each paper, undergraduate students are to select an article from the syllabus related to the topic, seek two other articles related to the same topic, and give a comparison of the three articles in 3 to 4 pages. Graduate students are expected to give a brief summary synthesizing the articles and then provide an in-depth critique of the articles. Papers will be evaluated using the Written Assignment rubric at the end of this syllabus.

**Final paper and presentation:**

The final paper will expand on one of the four short papers. For undergraduate students, the final paper will synthesize all the articles from the syllabus that are related to the topic. In addition, the final paper will add three to five more articles not already listed

on the syllabus. Based on the literature review, the final paper will identify issues that remain to be resolved, and design a proposed research study to address these issues. This component will include sections on hypotheses, methods and expected results. The final paper will be about 15 pages in length. For graduate students, the final paper will be similar except that it will be about 30 pages in length, and they will actually run a pilot test of their designed research study. At the end of the semester, students will present the main points of their final papers in class. The final paper will be evaluated using the Written Assignment rubric, and the Presentation will be evaluated using the Presentation rubric; both are provided at the end of this syllabus

**Grades:**

Grades for undergraduate students will be based on attendance as well as grades on the four short papers, the final paper, class participation and the class presentation. Graduate students will have an extra assignment, the co-teaching exercise (worth an additional 20 points, for a total of 120 points for the course). The weight of each assignment is given as follows:

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Points</b>
4 Short Papers	40
Final Paper	40
Participation	10
Presentation	10
Co-teaching (grads only)	20
<b>Total</b>	100 for UG 120 for G

Letter grades will be assigned according to scale A for undergraduate students, and scale B for graduate students:

<b>Scale for UG students</b>		<b>Scale for G students</b>	
<b>Grade</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A	= 90% and above	A	= 90% and above
B+	= 85% to 90%	B+	= 85% to 90%
B	= 80% to 85%	B	= 80% to 85%
C+	= 75% to 80%	C+	= 75% to 80%
C	= 70% to 75%	C	= 70% to 75%
D+	= 65% to 70%	F	= less than 70%
D	= 60% to 65%		
F	= less than 60%		

**Blackboard/my.gallaudet.edu:**

All lecture notes, readings and assignments will be posted on Blackboard.

**Academic Integrity Policy:**

The policy published in the Graduate and Undergraduate School Catalogs will be adhered to. Students are expected to have read and become familiar with the policy that applies to them. The policy can be found online at:

[http://gradschool.gallaudet.edu/gradschool/catalog/catalogs/2007\\_08/pdf/standards.pdf](http://gradschool.gallaudet.edu/gradschool/catalog/catalogs/2007_08/pdf/standards.pdf) and at <http://www.gallaudet.edu/x581.xml>.

**Academic accommodations:**

Students that require accommodations should visit the Office of Student's with Disabilities (OSWD) at the beginning of the semester to request services. Faculty are not permitted to provide accommodation without the proper OSWD documentation.

**Overview of Course Schedule:**

<b>UNIT 1 : PRODUCTION</b>	
Week 1	Course Introduction
Week 2	Child errors
Week 3	Adult L1 errors
Week 4	Adult L2 errors
Week 5	Theory of production
<b>UNIT 2 : PERCEPTION</b>	
Week 6	Categorical perception
Week 7	Categorical perception, continued
Week 8	Lexical access
Week 9	Lexical access, continued
Week 10	Other perception studies
<b>UNIT 3: BRAIN STUDIES</b>	
Week 11	Behavioral studies - aphasia
Week 12	Behavioral studies - continued
Week 13	Imaging studies
Week 14	Imaging studies, continued
Week 15	In-class presentations

**Bibliography:**

### Production

- Klima, E. and U. Bellugi (1979). *Signs of language*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Hohenberger, A., D. Happ, and H. Leuninger (2002). Modality-dependent aspects of sign language production: evidence from slips of the hands and their repairs in German Sign Language. In R. Meier, K. Cormier and D. Quinto-Pozos (eds.), *Modality and structure in signed and spoken languages*, 112-142. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Levelt, W., A. Roelofs, and A. Meyer (1999). A theory of lexical access in speech production. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 22, 1-75.
- Mirus, G., C. Rathmann, and R. Meier (2001). Proximalization and distalization of sign movement in adult learners. In A. Baer, V. Dively, M. Metzger and S. Taub (eds.), *Signed languages: discoveries from international research*, 103-119. Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press.
- Mayberry, R. (1994). The importance of childhood to language acquisition: Insights from American Sign Language. In Goodman, J. and Nusbaum, H. (Eds.), *The development of speech perception: The transition from speech sounds to words*, 57-90. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

### Perception

- Emmorey, K., S. McCullough, and D. Brentari (2003). Categorical perception in American Sign Language. *Language and Cognitive Processes* 18, 21-45.
- Corina, D. and U. Hildebrandt (2002). Psycholinguistic investigations of phonological structure in ASL. In R. Meier, K. Cormier and D. Quinto-Pozos (eds.), *Modality and structure in signed and spoken languages*, 88-111. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dye, M, and S. Shih (in press). Phonological priming in British Sign Language. In L. Goldstein, D. Whalen and C. Best (eds.), *Papers in Laboratory Phonology 8*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Emmorey, K. and D. Corina (1990). Lexical recognition in sign language: effects of phonetic structure and morphology. *Perceptual and Motor Skills* 71, 1227-1252.
- Poizner, H., U. Bellugi and V. Lutes-Driscoll (1981). Perception of American Sign Language dynamic point-light displays. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance* 7, 430-440.

### Brain studies

- Brentari, D., H. Poizner, and J. Kegl (1995). Aphasic and Parkinsonian signing: differences in phonological disruption. *Brain and Language* 48, 69-105.
- Corina, D. (1998). Aphasia in users of signed language. In P. Coppens, Y. Lebrun, and A. Basso (eds.), *Aphasia in atypical populations*, 261-310. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Corina, D. and S. McBurney (2001). The neural representation of language in users of American Sign Language. *Journal of Communication Disorders* 34, 455-471.

Rubric for written assignments

	<b><i>Unacceptable</i></b>	<b><i>Borderline</i></b>	<b><i>Good</i></b>	<b><i>Excellent</i></b>
<b><i>Subject Knowledge</i></b>	Answers demonstrate inadequate knowledge of the topic or contain insufficient information that is relevant and supportive.	Answers demonstrate fair knowledge of the topic with limited information that is relevant and supportive.	Answers demonstrate good knowledge of the topic and information that is relevant and supportive.	Answers demonstrate a high level of knowledge and mastery of the topic and information that is relevant and supportive.
<b><i>Idea Development</i></b>	Ideas are underdeveloped or answers show inadequate evidence of analysis, reflection, insight, critical thinking, and synthesis of ideas.	Ideas are developed with limited evidence of analysis, insight, or synthesis of ideas.	Ideas demonstrate depth and complexity supported by elaborated, relevant details, and answers show well developed analysis, reflection, critical thinking, and synthesis of ideas.	Ideas demonstrate depth and complexity supported by engaging and pertinent details, and answers show strong analysis, reflection, insight, synthesis, and critical thinking skills.
<b><i>Claims and Arguments</i></b>	Answers reveal significant weakness in posing and supporting claims.	Answers pose claims and arguments inconsistently and do not acknowledge alternative arguments/claims.	Answers pose a claim in response to the question and back claims with reasons. Reasons are supported by accurate and reliable evidence. The answers acknowledge and respond to a few alternative arguments/claims.	Answer poses a well-defined claim in response to the question. Backs the claim with relevant reasons. Reasons are supported by sufficient evidence that is accurate, reliable, and precise. Answers explicitly explain the relevance of the reasons to the claims with a principle or warrant. Answers acknowledge and respond to alternative arguments/claims.
<b><i>Support</i></b>	Answers reveal significant gaps in relevant knowledge and literature. Positions are not adequately supported by reasoning or appropriate references.	Answers reflect some use of relevant literature and focus primarily on secondary sources for support. Use of support may always now follow logically.	Answers reflect good use of relevant literature, most of which are primary sources. Positions are supported by reasoning and appropriate references.	References are substantial and carefully chosen to support positions, with a strong use of primary sources. Answers reflect current and historical knowledge and understanding of relevant literature.
<b><i>Organization</i></b>	The answers do not fully address the question or address it indirectly. The presentation is disordered and does not show adequate planning, organization, or flow of ideas and material.	The answers address the question. Issues regarding planning, organization, and logical flow affect the general quality of the response.	The answers largely address the question, They are well planned and organized, and demonstrate logical flow from point to point.	The answers directly address the questions. Very careful planning, organization, and flow of ideas are obvious.
<b><i>Quality of Writing</i></b>	Simplistic, imprecise, or substandard technical aspects of writing seriously undermine the quality and impact of the answer.	Use of language may compromise clear and effective conveyance of meaning, thus, limiting understanding of the response.	The writing conveys meaning clearly and effectively, and supports understanding.	Precision and rich language enhance the quality of the answer.

<b>LIN rubric for presentations and co-teaching</b>	<b>Unacceptable</b>	<b>Borderline</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>Content</b>				
Clear and early presentation of main points, with subsequent linking through talk	No overview or clear statement of what the proposal aims to accomplish	Main goal surface late in talk, but when it does, it is clear and identifiable. Some links to main points throughout talk, but not always explicitly	Main goal of proposal is clearly stated early in the talk; later material links back to the main goals most of the time, but not always explicitly	Main points of proposal are clearly stated early in talk to orient audience; later material is explicitly and consistently linked to main points
Lay out necessary background information	Refers to background technology or theory without defining first, even when audience complains that they are lost	One or two failures to clearly define background concepts, but most are explained, or presenter is willing to fill in information when audience complains	Presenter defines all vocabulary before using, although not all explanations are sufficiently clear	Presenter defines all vocabulary before using, and does so in a clear manner, highlighting only aspects that are important to the proposal, and knowing when to leave out distracting details
Coherently walk audience through the steps of the main proposal	Jumps around in a way that is hard to follow and suggests presenter is not comfortable with material	Some problems in order and clarity of presentation, but mostly coherent and easy to follow	Good ordering of topics and clear presentation; general complex derivations or arguments	Walks audience step-by-step through important derivations, complete with trees or other heuristic devices.
Explain technical material in accessible terms	None or inaccurate use of technical terms, lack of definitions	Correctly uses technical terms most of time, but displays only surface-level comprehension	Correct use of technical terms, demonstrates comprehension, even if definitions not always provided	Correct use of technical terms, able to define and explain them clearly to audience
Shows how proposal extends to other domains	None or faulty/inaccurate	Only one point of extension to other domains	A couple points of extension to other domains	Successfully and consistently ties proposal in with material previously discussed in class
Provides evaluation and critique	None or fault/inaccurate	Only one point of evaluation/critique	Some points of evaluation or critique, but not consistent	Successfully links evaluation or critique with material previously discussed in class
<b>Style</b>				
Slides	Spotty coverage (many important points not included in slides); too much or too little text on each slide; text not animated; text too small; poor or distracting graphics; no examples	Coverage a little uneven or biased, but mostly good; too much text on some slides; little or no graphics or examples when they would really help.	Coverage generally good (one or two omissions); text mostly well balanced across slides and animated; some good use of graphics and examples.	Balanced content; comprehensive coverage; legible font; animated text; text simplifies and/or summarizes key ideas; original, interesting graphics or examples
Presentation speed & Eye contact	Much too fast or too slow; virtually no eye contact	Some speed problems throughout talk, but bearable; some eye contact, but audience has some trouble getting your attention	Too fast or too slow at certain points of talk, but usually self-corrected; maintained good eye contact most of time	Good pace that is sensitive to audience; consistent eye contact and ability to take cues from audience reactions
<b>Other</b>				
Response to audience questions and discussion	Hostile to or ignores audience	Take all questions, but does not answer them all well (too quick)	Takes time to answer questions thoroughly, even if unsure of self	Good answers to questions, able to use questions/comments as links to other material
Respects time limit	More than 10 minutes off limit	6-10 minutes off limit	Within 5 minutes of limit	Within 5 minutes of limit

LIN Rubric for Class Participation

(Modified from models provided by: Dr. John Tyler at Brown University and Dr. Alice J. Robinson at MIT)

Score	Description
Outstanding	<p>You contribute on a regular basis in every class, and your contributions reflect exceptional preparation. Your ideas are always substantive, provide one or more major insights as well as direction for the class. Challenges are well substantiated and persuasively presented.</p> <p>If you were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be significantly diminished.</p>
Good	<p>You contribute regularly, but not as consistently or often as the person described above. You may have a bad day or forget your notes once or twice. Your contributions reflect thorough preparation. Ideas offered are usually substantive, provide good insights and sometimes direction for the class. Challenges are well substantiated and often persuasive.</p> <p>If you were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished.</p>
Satisfactory	<p>You do not contribute in every class, but your contributions reflect satisfactory preparation. Mostly you participate only when called upon, but in those cases you tend to answer well because you are paying attention. Your ideas are sometimes substantive, provide generally useful insights but seldom offer a new direction for the discussion. Challenges are sometimes presented, fairly well substantiated, and are sometimes persuasive.</p> <p>If you were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished somewhat.</p>
Poor	<p>You arrive to class on time, but rarely contribute. You participate only when called upon, and then only reluctantly. Your contributions in class reflect inadequate preparation. When called upon, you are unable to give a strong answer because you were not paying attention or are not keeping up with assignments. Your arguments tend to be based on opinion, not evidence.</p> <p>If you were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would not be affected.</p>