Ling 3701H / Psych 3371H: Lecture Notes 1
Course Outline

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1.1 What is this course about?

This course will cover fundamental questions about what language is.

This course differs from other psychology courses because:

- it covers language.

This course differs from other linguistics courses because:

- it covers linguistic performance; whereas other courses cover competence [Chomsky, 1965].
  - competence: mental representations of linguistic knowledge (e.g. rules to combine signs)
  - performance: how language is actually used (e.g. regularities in how speech errors happen)
- it models phenomena at an algorithmic level; others use a computational level [Marr, 1982].
  - computational: model the problems a behavior solves, e.g. identify phrases in speech.
  - algorithmic/representational: model processes/structures behaviors use, e.g. stack memory.
  - implementational: model physical implementation of behaviors, e.g. neural firing.

The course therefore covers some of the same material as other linguistic courses, but differently.

The course is organized into three parts:

1. background (what we will assume about how the brain works):
   - neural firing
   - mental states
   - cued associations
   - complex ideas

2. acquisition (how babies learn language):
• learning speech sounds
• learning words and meanings
• learning to encode and decode complex ideas

3. the processes of language:
• **decoding** complex signs into complex ideas
  – lexical access
  – parsing
  – interpretation
• **encoding** complex ideas into complex signs

1.2 Why study psycholinguistics?

It’s interesting: Conscious thought is still poorly understood. Language is a tool to observe it.

It’s useful: You use language every day to communicate. It may help to know what can go wrong.

It’s a living: You may end up wanting to do research in this field. It happened to me…

1.3 Course Prerequisites

From the course guide…

1. You should be:
   • in the honors program, or
   • permission of instructor (if you have similar standing somewhere else).

2. You should have taken one of the following courses:
   • Ling 2000 (Intro to Language in the Humanities), or
   • Ling 4000 (Intro to Linguistics for graduate students), or
   • Psych 1100 (General Psychology), or
   • permission of instructor (if you took something similar somewhere else).

3. You should not have taken the other of Ling 3701 or Psych 3371 (same course, cross-listed).

This is a GEC ‘Social Sciences: Individuals and Groups’ course.

Status of wait list?
1.4 What will you need to do?

There are four course requirements:

1. Pre-lecture readings, each about 20 pages.
2. Pre-lecture postings about readings on electronic forum: 20% of grade
   - about 100 to 200 words (not a whole essay but likewise not just ‘it was good’)
   - things from the reading that you would like to discuss
   - questions about the reading
   - answers to questions about the reading
   - speculation about causes of phenomena described the readings
   - submit in Carmen
   - due by midnight before class

   Why? I will use these to guide discussion in lecture.

3. Five problem sets: total 25% of grade
   - focus on technical points of models
   - submit via Carmen dropbox
   - due by midnight before class

4. Two midterm exams: total 50% of grade
   - exams will be held in class
   - exams will be short answer
   - the second midterm is not cumulative
   - there will be a study guide

5. Linguistics Outside the Classroom program requirement: 5% of grade
   - volunteer twice to attend either colloquium talk or linguistics experiment

1.5 Course materials / infrastructure


Status of textbook?

Web site: https://www.asc.ohio-state.edu/schuler.77/courses/3701H/3701LN01.pdf
There’s a calendar, with links to all supplementary readings.
It’s not on Carmen, so there’s no login (but library e-holdings may need it).

Electronic forum: on Carmen — http://carmen.osu.edu

Can everyone view it?

Instructor: William Schuler — email: schuler at ling.osu.edu

Office hours as posted on syllabus, or by appointment (email me).

Questions about administrative stuff?

Students: who are you and why are you here?

References
