EDHD 840: LANGUAGE AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT
Fall 2015

Thursday 9:30am – 12:15pm
Benjamin Building 2101

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Office Hours: by appointment
Telephone: 301-405-3604
Office: Room 3304T Benjamin Building

Course Description
This course is designed to introduce students to early language and literacy development from a developmental science perspective. My goal is to familiarize you with how language development is studied, why it is important to study. We will focus on cognitive mechanisms of learning and connect the study of language to the study of development more generally.

Course Components
Weekly Participation 50%
Leading Discussion 15%
Final Paper & Presentation 35%

Participation
I expect everyone to participate every week. My goal is to foster a culture of free intellectual exchange and exploration. If you have difficulty talking in class, please meet with me as soon as possible so that we can discuss strategies. Each class will be a mixture of me “lecturing” and general discussion, for which strong preparation (a thorough and critical reading of all the papers) will be required. You should come prepared to class with at least 2 questions/comments/ideas to share each week.

In-class discussion leaders
Each week one student will serve as the discussion leader. Your goal in this role is to facilitate the class discussion about the articles we have read and related topics. The discussion leader should 1) briefly summarize the main points of the articles (working under the assumption that everyone has read them and given them some thought already). You are not expected to bring in additional sources, though if you come across something you want to include you are welcome to; 2) make connections to readings/topics in other weeks as appropriate; 3) pose questions to the class and help direct the flow of the conversation. Putting together slides or handouts is NOT required, though you may if you wish (for example, if there are figures or tables from the papers you want to highlight, or if you want to lay out a visual representation of a theoretical model or
sequence of findings). Please do not make slides that include bulleted lists of points, as these tend to squelch rather than facilitate discussion.

**Things to consider while reading**
(whether you are leading the discussion or not)

- What is the main idea or big-picture take-away from the article? How would you explain it to your grandmother?
- What is the hypothesis? Why is *that* the hypothesis?
- Does the method adequately test the hypothesis? Are there alternative explanations for the findings? How would you tease those apart?
- What other *kinds* of evidence would be nice/necessary to fully support the argument? (e.g., a corpus analysis to complement an experiment; a computational model to articulate a theory; an experiment that could investigation causation)
- What is the next/another experiment to do to follow-up on these findings?
- In what ways do the assigned papers relate to one another? How do the studies/approaches/hypotheses relate to the developmental theories we’ve discussed, or to topics we’ve covered in other weeks?

**Final Project: Paper & Presentation (MSGE)**
The final project is a proposal (in both oral presentation and written form) for an empirical study of language and/or literacy development. The project should directly engage the course material by critiquing and/or elaborating on one of the papers read for class. Any topic covered in class is acceptable, and any form of study is acceptable (e.g., experiment, corpus analysis, computational model). You are not required to do extra reading, but you may bring in additional sources if you wish. You should not spend significant time summarizing any papers included in the course, but any additional sources should be summarized (as I may not be familiar with them!). Your hypothesis must be clear, as must the way in which it relates to the focal paper. While you do not need to fully describe every detail of your proposed method, you must make it clear how you will test your hypothesis (e.g., provide multiple examples of stimuli, a justification for a particular participant sample, a justification for the type of computational model, etc.). You should also consider how you will interpret your results (i.e., what types of alternative explanations might be possible and what would they imply).

**Presentation (MSGE):** All students will give a presentation during the final class session that covers their proposed study. Presentations will be approximately 10 minutes long with an additional 5 minutes for discussion. Extensive PowerPoints are not required, but you should think carefully about what kind of visual material will help your classmates (and me) follow your reasoning.

**Paper (MGSE):** The paper describing your proposed research should be no more than 2000 words. You may include figures as necessary. All citations should adhere to APA format. You are encouraged to incorporate the feedback from the class discussion of your project into your paper as appropriate.

*No extensions will be granted for the paper or presentation (other than those adhering to the university policy for MSGE, see below). It is possible to turn in the paper and do the presentation early if you anticipate a conflict with the dates provided in the syllabus.*
**Overview of Course Content**

*Exact dates of each topic subject to change based on class interest.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Discussion Leader</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3-Sep</td>
<td>Organization and background</td>
<td>Alexa</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10-Sep</td>
<td>Theories of development</td>
<td>Alexa</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>17-Sep</td>
<td>Input to infants and early speech processing</td>
<td>Sara</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>24-Sep</td>
<td>Recognizing words in fluent speech</td>
<td>Lauren</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1-Oct</td>
<td>Linking words to referents</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>8-Oct</td>
<td>Basic Syntax: Sequence learning &amp; lexical categories</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>15-Oct</td>
<td>Syntactic structure and what is learned/learnable</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>22-Oct</td>
<td>Predicting variation in language acquisition</td>
<td>Nicole</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>29-Oct</td>
<td>Group differences in language acquisition</td>
<td>Matt</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>1-2 paragraph overview of project proposal due</em></td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>5-Nov</td>
<td>Foundations of Literacy</td>
<td>Ann</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>12-Nov</td>
<td>Individual Differences in Learning to Read</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>19-Nov</td>
<td><em>Peer feedback on project proposals</em> (Alexa at Psychonomics)</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>26-Nov</td>
<td>NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>3-Dec</td>
<td>TBD (possibly Neuroscience of Language &amp; Literacy Development)</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>10-Dec</td>
<td><em>Presentations (MSGE)</em></td>
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<td>14-Dec</td>
<td>Final paper due by midnight to Canvas (MSGE)</td>
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Readings by Week

WEEK 1: Organizational issues and background

WEEK 2: Theories of development
These papers don’t deal specifically with language per se, but rather set up different frameworks for conceptualizing and studying development in general. These ideas are central to much of the debate about how language is acquired by human infants.

Also read the commentary on this article and the response by Spencer et al.

Optional:

WEEK 3: Input to infants and early speech processing

WEEK 4: Recognizing words in fluent speech
WEEK 5: Linking words to meanings


WEEK 6: Basic syntax: sequence learning & lexical categories


WEEK 7: Syntactic structure: what is learned and what is learnable


WEEK 8: Predicting variation in language acquisition [N.B. READINGS MAY CHANGE]


**WEEK 9: Group differences in language acquisition [N.B. READINGS MAY CHANGE]**


**WEEK 10: Foundations of literacy [N.B. READINGS MAY CHANGE]**

Snow, C., Burns, S., & Griffin, P. (Eds.) *Preventing reading difficulties in young children*. Chapter 2 (pp 41-83).


**WEEK 11: Individual differences in learning to read [N.B. READINGS MAY CHANGE]**

Snow, C., Burns, S., & Griffin, P. (Eds.) *Preventing reading difficulties in young children*. Chapters 3-4 (pp 87-133).


**WEEK 12: Peer feedback on project proposals – Psychonomics Society Meeting**

**WEEK 13: NO CLASS – Thanksgiving**
WEEK 14: TBD

WEEK 15: Project Presentations
Course Policies

Academic integrity
The University of Maryland, College Park has a student-administered Honor Code and Honor Pledge. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/whatis.html. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. The code prohibits students from cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism. Instances of this include submitting someone else’s work as your own, submitting your own work completed for another class without permission, or failing to properly cite information other than your own (found in journals, books, online, or otherwise). Any form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated, and any sign of academic dishonesty will be reported to the appropriate University officials.

Special needs
If you have a registered disability that will require accommodation, please see the instructor so necessary arrangements can be made. If you have a disability and have not yet registered with the University, please contact Disability Support Services in the Shoemaker Building (301.314.7682, or 301.405.7683 TTD) as soon as possible.

Religious observances
The University of Maryland policy on religious observances states that students not be penalized in any way for participation in religious observances. Students shall be allowed, whenever possible, to make up academic assignments that are missed due to such absences. However, the must contact the instructor before the absence with a written notification of the projected absence, and arrangements will be made for make-up work or examinations.

Course evaluations
As a member of our academic community, students have a number of important responsibilities. One of these responsibilities is to submit course evaluations each term through CourseEvalUM in order to help faculty and administrators improve teaching and learning at Maryland. All information submitted to CourseEvalUM is confidential. Campus will notify you when CourseEvalUM is open for you to complete your evaluations for fall semester courses. Please go directly to the website (www.courseevalum.umd.edu) to complete your evaluations. By completing all of your evaluations each semester, you will have the privilege of accessing online, at Testudo, the evaluation reports for the thousands of courses for which 70% or more students submitted their evaluations.

Missed single class due to illness
Once during a semester, a student’s self-authored note will be accepted as an excuse for missing a minor scheduled grading event in a single class session if the note documents the date of the illness, acknowledgement from the student that information provided in the note is correct, and a statement that the student understands that providing false information is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct. Students are expected to attempt to inform the instructor of the illness prior to the date of the missed class.
**Major scheduled grading events**

Major Scheduled Grading Events (MSGE) are indicated on the syllabus. The conditions for accepting a self-signed note do not apply to these events. Written, signed documentation by a health care professional, or other professional in the case of non-medical reasons (see below) of a University-approved excuse for the student’s absence must be supplied. This documentation must include verification of treatment dates and the time period for which the student was unable to meet course requirements. Providers should not include diagnostic information. Without this documentation, opportunities to make up missed assignments or assessments will not be provided.

**Non-consecutive, medically necessitated absences from multiple class sessions**

Students who throughout the semester miss multiple, non-consecutive class sessions due to medical problems must provide written documentation from a health care professional that their attendance on those days was prohibited for medical reasons.

**Non-medical excused absences**

According to University policy, non-medical excused absences for missed assignments or assessments may include illness of a dependent, religious observance, involvement in University activities at the request of University officials, or circumstances that are beyond the control of the student. Students asking for excused absence for any of those reasons must also supply appropriate written documentation of the cause and make every attempt to inform the instructor prior to the date of the missed class.