This is an introductory course in psycholinguistics. Whereas linguistics is the study of language (including such topics as the structure of language and the history of language change) psycholinguistics is the study of the mental processes underlying language. Both linguistics and psycholinguistics are part of the broader field of cognitive science (along with philosophy, cognitive psychology, and computer science).

In this course we will examine several current questions regarding the nature of human language and discuss what is known about how humans speak, listen, read, comprehend, and converse. We will also discuss some of the ways in which language serves as a window into human thought. The course will consist of lectures, videos, discussions, and demonstrations designed to teach concepts and methods in psycholinguistics and to examine some controversial claims.

Psycholinguistics applies the scientific method to the study of language processing. It is a theory-based discipline; therefore, in this course we will examine theories of language processing in terms of the specific predictions they make. We will also discuss experiments designed to test these predictions. Many of the questions we will examine do not have definitive answers at this time, so the focus of the course will often be as much on the important questions and methods of psycholinguistics as on the as-yet tentative “answers”.

**Required text:**


Additional readings will be available on Blackboard.

**Course requirements:**

Grades will be based on the results of weekly quizzes (35%), a class presentation (25%), a term paper (30%) and class participation (10%).

**Quizzes.** A short quiz will be given once each week, starting on the third week of classes. The quiz will be administered at the beginning of class on either Tuesday or Thursday, and the day will not be announced in advance. Each quiz will cover material from the previous week, including any assigned reading. In your reading, focus on the broad issues, in particular any claims made and any evidence.
presented in favor of or against those claims. The “review questions” and “thought questions” at the end of each chapter of the text will also be helpful in focusing your reading. There are no make-ups for missed quizzes; however, your lowest three quiz grades will be dropped (including missed quizzes).

**Term Paper.** The term paper assignment is designed to allow students to pursue a topic in more depth. The paper should be no more than 10 pages (typed - double spaced). The topic is open, but the paper must examine a current claim or theory in psycholinguistics and the sources used as evidence for or against the claim/theory must be empirical studies drawn from standard psycholinguistics or cognitive psychology journals. More details about the term paper assignment are provided on a separate handout.

**Presentation.** Each student will prepare a 15-minute class presentation based on the paper topic. All presentations will be given during the last five weeks of the course. More details are provided on a separate handout.

**Class participation.** A class participation grade will be assigned on the basis of attendance (you can't participate if you don't attend) and participation in activities and discussions. Participation can often make a difference in the final grade if you are on the borderline between grades.

**Course policies.**
If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me soon. Please request that a Disability Resources staff member send a Student Academic Accommodation Request (SAAR) form verifying your disability and specifying the accommodations you will need. The Disability Resources office is located in the Student Services Building, Room 1076. Their phone number is 515-294-7220, TTY: 515-294-6635.

Procedures for dealing with academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, etc.) will follow university guidelines. See the ISU student handbook for details.

**Tentative schedule of topics and readings (subject to change):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1 – Jan 15-17</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Ch. 1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language in Animals?</td>
<td>Ch. 13 pp 379-392</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tentative schedule of topics and readings, continued:

Week 2 – Jan 22-24
Perception of Language
Ch. 4 pp. 68-90


Week 3 – Jan 29-31
BEGIN WEEKLY QUIZZES
Perception of Language, cont.
Ch. 4 pp. 91-101


Week 4 – Feb 5-7
The Internal Lexicon
Ch. 5


Week 5 – Feb 12-14
Sentence Comprehension
Ch. 6

Week 6 – Feb 19-21  
Discourse Comprehension  
Ch. 7


Language Production  
Ch. 8


Week 7 – Feb 26-28  
PAPER TOPIC DUE 2/28

Issues in Language Acquisition  
Ch. 12


Week 8 – Mar 5-7  
Bilingualism  
Ch. 11 pp. 310-323


Week 9 – Mar 12-14  
Language and brain  
Ch. 13 pp 354-379

Week 10 – Mar 19-21
SPRING BREAK!!!

Week 11 – Mar 26-28
Language and Thought

Ch. 14


Week 12 – Apr 2-4
Student presentations

Week 13 – Apr 9-11
Student presentations

Week 14 – Apr 16-18
Student presentations

Week 15 – Apr 23-25
Student presentations

Week 16 – Apr 30- May 2
TERM PAPERS DUE 5/2
Student presentations