Instructor: Dr. Alison Morris
Office: Room 490, Science I
Phone: 294-7532
Email: almorris@iastate.edu

Class meeting: T-TH 12:40-1:55 pm
Office Hours: Tues & Thurs 10:00-11:30 a.m.

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Industrial Ed 2 0224

Phone: 294-7532

Email: almorris@iastate.edu

Course website: Blackboard Learn

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:

There is no required text for the course. Instead, we will read and discuss a number of classic and contemporary articles from journals in psychology and psycholinguistics. The journal articles will be available on Blackboard.

Course requirements:

Grades will be based on the results of two exams (30%), a class presentation (30%), a research proposal (30%) and class participation (10%).

Grading scale:

A  90-100  
B  80-89  
C  70-79  
D  60-69  
F  < 60

Plus or minus grades will be assigned as appropriate.
Exams. There will be two mandatory in-class exams for this course, consisting of short answer and/or short essay questions. Makeup exams will be given only in extreme circumstances and only when the student has contacted me prior to the scheduled time of the exam and received my approval. Failure to do so will result in a grade of zero on the missed exam.

Research proposal. The research proposal assignment is designed to allow students to demonstrate knowledge of research methods in psycholinguistics. You will need to present a clear research question (citing appropriate literature), and explain how your proposed experiment will address the question, describing the materials and procedures you will use in detail. More details about the research proposal are provided on a separate handout.

Presentation. Each student will prepare a class presentation describing a published psycholinguistic study relevant to their research proposal. All presentations will be given during the last four 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 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>
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<tr>
<th>Week 1 – Jan 14-16</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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Tentative schedule of topics and readings, continued:

Week 2 – Jan 21-23

**Perception of Language, continued**


Week 3 – Jan 28-30

**The Mental Lexicon/Lexical Ambiguity**


Marslen-Wilson & Welsh (1978) - reread

**Week 4 – Feb 4-6**

**Sentence Comprehension**


**Week 5 – Feb 11-13**

**Figurative Language/Pragmatics**


Week 6 – Feb 18-20

EXAM 1 Feb 18th

Discourse Comprehension


Week 7 – Feb 25-27

Language Production


Issues in Language Acquisition


Bilingualism and second-language learning


Aphasia


Language and Thought


Week 12 – Apr 1-3
Catch-up, TBA

**EXAM 2 April 3rd**

Week 13 – Apr 8-10
Student presentations

Week 14 – Apr 15-17
Student presentations

Week 15 – Apr 22-24
Student presentations

Week 16 – Apr 29- May 1

**RESEARCH PROPOSALS**
**DUE 5/1**

Student presentations