

Psychology 5054: The Psychology of Language Spring, 2006 Syllabus

Lectures:

Mon Wed 9:45 - 11:00
N647 Elliott Hall

Instructor:

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Teaching Assistant:

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Grading:

Grades will be based on three midterm exams and a final. Each midterm exam will be worth 30 points, but only your two highest scores will count toward your final grade. The final exam will be worth 40 points. In addition, you will be able to earn up to six extra credit points. At the end of the course your points will be converted to letter grades as follows:

- A requires a minimum of 90 points.
- A- requires a minimum of 85 points.
- B+ requires a minimum of 80 points
- B requires a minimum of 75 points.
- B- requires a minimum of 70 points.
- C+ requires a minimum of 65 points.
- C requires a minimum of 60 points.
- C- requires a minimum of 55 points.
- D+ requires a minimum of 50 points.
- D requires a minimum of 45 points.
- D- requires a minimum of 40 points.

Readings:

Jay, T. B. (2003). *The Psychology of Language*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education. Available at the bookstore. (Required)

Stanovich, K.E. (2003). *How to think straight about psychology*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon. Available at the bookstore. (Recommended)

Instructor's course notes and old exams. Available on the World Wide Web at <http://www.psych.umn.edu/courses/spring06/fletcherr/psy5054/> (Recommended)

Journal articles (references below). Available through the University of Minnesota Library's Electronic Journals page (<http://www.lib.umn.edu/articles/ej.phtml>) unless otherwise noted. (Required)

Exams:

The course will include three midterm exams. Each midterm exam will consist of 10 multiple-choice questions (1 point each), 5 short definitions (2 point each), and 2 essay questions (5 points each). Each midterm will cover material from the assigned readings and lectures since the previous midterm. The final exam will be comprehensive. It will include 10 multiple-choice questions, 5 definitions, and 4 essays. Because only two of the midterm exams will count toward your final grade, there will be no make-up midterm exams. Students with valid reasons will have the opportunity to take the final exam early.

Extra Credit:

At the end of each midterm exam, you will be required to discuss the essay questions with a small group of students. The composition of these groups will be assigned by the instructors. You will then be asked to answer one of the essay questions over again. If your score improves the second time, you will receive one extra credit point. If at least half of the students in your group improve their scores, everyone in the group will receive one extra credit point. In this way, you will be able to earn up to six extra credit points.

Course Outline and Exam Dates:

- Jan 18: Course Overview. Why Study Language? The Structure of Language. (Ch 1)
- Jan 23: The Human Information Processing System.
- Jan 25: The Human Information Processing System (continued).
- Jan 30: Experimental Methodology.
- Feb 1: Language and the Brain. (Ch 2)
- Feb 6: Language and the Brain (continued).
- Feb 8: Perceptual Processes in Reading. (Ch 4; McClelland & Rumelhart, 1981)
- Feb 13: Perceptual Processes in Reading (continued).
- Feb 15: Speech Perception. (Ch 3; McClelland & Elman, 1986)
- Feb 20: Speech Perception (continued).
- Feb 22: The Lexicon.

Feb 27: Lexical Access. (Seidenberg & McClelland, 1989)
 March 1: *Midterm Exam #1*
 March 6: Semantic Memory. (Farah & McClelland, 1991)
 March 8: Semantic Memory (continued).
 March 13: No Class - Spring Break
 March 15: No Class - Spring Break
 March 20: The Representation of Sentences in Memory.
 March 22: The Representation of Sentences in Memory (continued).
 March 27: Sentence Comprehension: A Historical Perspective. (Ch 5)
 March 29: Sentence Comprehension: Current Models. (Waltz & Pollack, 1985)
 April 3: *Midterm Exam #2*
 April 5: Text Comprehension: A Top-Down Approach. (Ch 8; Kintsch, 1988)
 April 10: Text Comprehension: A Bottom-Up Approach.
 April 12: Pragmatics: Using Language. (Ch 9)
 April 17: Language Production: Speech. (Ch 6; Dell, 1986)
 April 19: Language Production: Composition (Ch 7)
 April 24: Language and Thought. (Ch 12)
 April 26: *Midterm Exam #3*
 May 1: Language in Animals
 May 3: Applied Psycholinguistics. (Ch 13)
 May 9: *Final Exam.* (1:30 – 3:30 p.m.)

Required Journal Articles:

Dell, G. S. (1986). A spreading activation theory of retrieval in sentence production. *Psychological Review*, 93, 283-321.

Farah, M. J., & McClelland, J. L. (1991). A computational model of semantic memory impairment: Modality- specificity and emergent category-specificity. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 120, 339-357.

Kintsch, W. (1988). The use of knowledge in discourse processing: A construction-integration model. *Psychological Review*, 95, 163-182.

McClelland, J. L. & Elman, J. L. (1986). The TRACE Model of Speech Perception. *Cognitive Psychology*, 18, 1-86. (available at <http://www.cnbc.cmu.edu/~jlm/papers/>)

McClelland, J. L. & Rumelhart, D. E. (1981). An interactive activation model of context effects in letter perception: Part 1. An account of Basic Findings. *Psychological Review*, 88, 375-407. (available at <http://www.cnbc.cmu.edu/~jlm/papers/>)

Waltz, D. L. & Pollack, J. B. (1985). Massively parallel parsing: A strongly interactive model of natural language interpretation. *Cognitive Science*, 9, 51-74.

Seidenberg, M. S. & McClelland, J. L. (1989). A Distributed, Developmental Model of Word Recognition and Naming. *Psychological Review*, 96, 523-568.