

Preliminary Course Information

PSYC G4275
Contemporary Topics in Language and Communication
Dr. Michelle Levine
Fall 2013

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I. Course details and description

PSYC G4275. Contemporary Topics in Language and Communication (seminar).
4 pts. Wed. 10:10 – 12 in 405 Schermerhorn Hall.

Prerequisites: A course in perception, cognition, or the psychology of language, plus the instructor's permission.

Bulletin Description: Intensive examination from a social psychological perspective of selected topics relevant to current theory and research on the use of language and other communication behaviors. May be repeated for additional credit.

In the Fall 2013 seminar we will explore the cultural, scientific, and sociological underpinnings of communication. First we will explore language – what it is, how it has evolved and how we comprehend speech. Then we will discuss how information gets from one person to another and how language affects the way we organize information (for speaking and for thinking). The focus will be primarily on spoken language but we will also address nonverbal communication and musical communication. In the last part of the seminar, we will examine how the demands and affordances of various state-of-the-art technologies impact human communication.

II. Rationale for giving the course:

This is an advanced seminar designed for graduate students, advanced undergraduates who are majoring in Psychology or in Neuroscience and Behavior, and for students participating in the Psychology Postbac Certificate Program. These students will have priority in registration, followed by junior majors followed by non-majors.

In completing this seminar, students will have an increased understanding of: 1) the extent that language plays a role in communication; 2) how to evaluate the communication demands and affordances of different media and; 3) how theories of language and communication are used in real world applications. Students will gain experience in: 1) conducting extensive literature reviews across disciplines; 2) reading, analyzing and critiquing scientific articles; 3) presenting

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scientific research and; 4) writing an APA style paper.

It fulfills the following degree requirements:

- For Psychology Graduate Students, PSCY G4275 will apply toward the “two seriously graded seminars” requirement of the Master’s degree.
- For the Psychology major or concentration in the college and in G.S., for the Psychology minor in Engineering, and for the Psychology Postbac, G4275 meets the Group I (Perception and Cognition) distribution requirement.
- For the Neuroscience and Behavior joint major, G4275 will fulfill the 5th Psychology requirement: “one advanced psychology seminar from a list approved by the Psychology Department advisor to the program.”
- For non-majors in the College and G.S., G4275 will count as one term of the natural science requirement, provided that students obtain the necessary permission and have taken the prerequisite psychology courses. Graduate students, and students who are majoring in Psychology or in Neuroscience and Behavior, will have priority over students who are taking the course for the science requirement, and we anticipate the course will rarely be used for the latter.
- For the Psychology Postbac certificate, PSYC G4275 will fulfill the senior seminar requirement.
- For the Barnard Psychology major, PSYC G4275 will fulfill the senior seminar requirement.

III. Schedule of topics and readings (subject to revision)

Assigned readings will be provided as PDF files through Courseworks (<https://courseworks.columbia.edu>).

WEEK 1: Introduction and Overview

WEEK 2: Language and Communication

What is language? What is the difference between language and communication?

Hockett, C.F. (1960). The origin of speech. *Scientific American*, 203(3), pp. 88-96.

Kaminski J, Call J, Fischer J. (2004). Word learning in a domestic dog: Evidence for "fast mapping". *Science*, 304, 1682-1683.

Pepperberg, I.M., & Gordon, J.D. (2005). Numerical comprehension by a grey parrot (*Psittacus Erithacus*), Including a zero-like concept, *Journal of Comparative Psychology*, 119(2), 197-209.

Suggested:

Miller, P. (2010). *The Smart Swarm*. New York: Avery of Penguin Group Inc., Chapter TBA (est. 40 pages).

Pilley JW, Reid AK. (2011). Border collie comprehends object names as verbal referents. *Behavioural Processes*, 86, 184-195.

WEEK 3: Language Origins and Language Change: The Role of Acquisition

Where did language come from? How did it evolve?

Pinker, S. (1994). How language works. Chapter 4 of *The language instinct: How the mind creates language*. New York: Harper Collins, pp. 83-125.

Pinker, S., & Jackendoff, R. (2005). The faculty of language: What's special about it? *Cognition*, 95, 201-236.

Senghas, A. and Coppola, M. (2001). Children creating language: How Nicaraguan sign language acquired a spatial grammar. *Psychological Science*, 12, 323-328.

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WEEK 4: Language Comprehension

How do we produce language? How do we comprehend language in discourse?

Clark, H.H. & Brennan, S.E. (1991). Grounding in communication. In L.B. Resnick, J. Levine, & S.D. Teasley (Eds.), *Perspectives on socially shared cognition*. Washington, DC: APA., pp. 127-149.

Clark, H.H. & Wilkes-Gibbs, D. (1986). Referring as a collaborative process. *Cognition*, 22, 1-39.

Schober, M.F., & Clark, H.H. (1989). Understanding by addressees and overhearers. *Cognitive Psychology*, 21, pp.211-232.

Suggested:

Clark, H.H. & Clark, E.V. (1977). Comprehension of sentences. Chapter 2 of *Psychology and language: An introduction to psycholinguistics*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., pp. 43-85.

WEEK 5: Linguistic Relativity

To what degree does language affect thought? Is thought propositional?

Pullum, G.K. (1991). The great Eskimo vocabulary hoax. Chapter 19 in *The great Eskimo Vocabulary hoax, and other irreverent essays on the study of language*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 159-171.

Boroditsky, L. (2001). Does language shape thought? Mandarin and English speakers' conceptions of time. *Cognitive Psychology*, Vol. 43, 1-22.

Li, P., & Gleitman, L. (2002). Turning the tables: Language and spatial reasoning, *Cognition*, 83, 265-294.

Slobin, D.I. (1996). From 'thought and language' to 'thinking for speaking.' In J.J. Gumperz & S.C. Levinson (Eds.) *Rethinking linguistic relativity*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, pp. 70-96.

Suggested:

Gordon, P. (2004). Numerical cognition without words: Evidence from Amazonia. *Science*, 304, 496-443.

Gelman, R. & Gallistel, C.R. (2004). Language and the origin of numerical concepts. *Science*, 306, 441-443.

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WEEK 6: Nonlinguistic Thought

Is all thought propositional? Or is some thought nonlinguistic?

Reminder: Paper Proposal Due

Vendler, Z. (1977). Wordless thoughts. In W.C. McCormack & S.A. Wurm (Eds.), *Language and Thought: Anthropological Issues*. The Hague: Mouton Publishers, pp. 29-44.

Kosslyn, S.M. & Pomerantz, J.R. (1977). Imagery, propositions, and the form of internal representations. *Cognitive Psychology*, 9, pp. 52-76.

Pylyshyn, Z. (2003). Return of the mental image: Are there really pictures in the brain? *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 7(3), 113-118.

WEEK 7: Nonverbal Communication

How much of our communication is nonverbal? How do we communicate nonverbally?

Laird et al. (1994). Individual differences in the effects of spontaneous mimicry on emotional contagion. *Motivation and Emotion*, 18(3), 231-247.

Dimberg, Thunberg, & Elmehed (2000). Unconscious facial reactions to emotional facial expressions. *Psychological Science*, 11(1), 86-89.

Krauss, R.M. (1998). Why do we gesture when we speak? *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 7, 54-59.

Bavelas, J. B., Gerwing, J., Sutton, C., & Prevost, D. (2008). Gesturing on the telephone: Independent effects of dialogue and visibility. *Journal of Memory and Language* 58, 495-520.

Suggested:

Casasanto, D. & Jasmin, K. (2010). Good and bad in the hands of politicians: Spontaneous gestures during positive and negative speech. *PLoS ONE*, 5(7), e11805.

Chartrand, T.L. & Bargh, J.A. (1999). The chameleon effect: The perception-behavior link and social interaction. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 76(6), 893-910.

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WEEK 8: Musical Collaboration as Communication

How do musicians successfully coordinate in collaborative music-making? What information (auditory, visual, physical) is communicated among musicians and how?

Schober, M.F. (2006). Virtual environments for creative work in collaborative music-making, *Virtual Reality, 10*, 85-94.

Levine, M.F., & Schober, M.F. (in preparation). Copresence and coordination in jazz musicians' collaborative music-making. (est. 20 pages)

Seddon, F. & Biasutti, M.. (2009), A comparison of modes of communication between members of a string quartet and a jazz sextet, *Psychology of Music, 37*(4), 395-415.

WEEK 9: Human-Human Communication Across Media

What is copresence? How do the demands and affordances of media affect communication?

Short, J.A., Williams, E., & Christie, B. (1976). *The social psychology of telecommunications*. New York: John Wiley & Sons. Chapter TBA (est. 15 pages)

Hancock, J. T., & Dunham, P. J. (2001). Language use in computer-mediated communication: The role of coordination devices. *Discourse Processes, 31*, 91-110.

Jiang, L. C., Bazarova, N., & Hancock, J. T. (2011). The disclosure–intimacy link in computer-mediated communication: An attributional extension of the hyperpersonal Model. *Human Communication Research, 37*, 58-77.

Suggested:

Walther, J.B., & Bazarova, B.B. (2008). Validation and application of electronic propinquity theory to computer-mediated communication in groups. *Communication Research, 35*(5), 622-645.

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WEEK 10: Human-Computer Interaction

How does communication with a computer differ from communication with another human?

Reeves, B. & Nass, C. (1996). *The media equation: How people treat computers, television, and new media like real people and places*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter TBA (est. 30 pages).

Nass, C., Moon, Y., Carney, P., (1999). Are people polite to computers? Responses to computer-based interviewing systems. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 29(5), 1093-1110.

Clark, H. H. (1999). How do real people communicate with virtual partners? In *Proceedings of 1999 AAAI Fall Symposium, Psychological Models of Communication in Collaborative Systems*, North Falmouth, MA., pp. 43-47.

WEEK 11: Applications of Scientific Discoveries in Communication and Language

How are theories of language and communication applied to real world applications?

Reminder: Turn in draft of Final Paper

Dinakar, K., Jones, B., Havasi, C., Lieberman, H., & Picard, R.W. (2012). Common sense reasoning for detection, prevention, and mitigation of cyberbullying, *ACM Transactions on Interactive Intelligent Systems*, 2(3), 1-30.

Lee, E. & Oh, S.Y. (2012). To personalize or depersonalize? When and how politicians' personalized tweets affect the public's reactions. *Journal of Communication*, 62, 932-949.

D'Mello, S. K., Dowell, N., & Graesser, A. C. (2011). Does it really matter whether students' contributions are spoken versus typed in an intelligent tutoring system with natural language? *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied*, 17(1), 1-17.

Schober, M.F., Conrad, F.G. (2008). *Survey interviews and new communication technologies*. In F.G. Conrad & M.F. Schober (Eds.), *Envisioning the survey interview of the future*. New York: Wiley., pp. 1-30.

Suggested:

Enos, F., Shriberg, E., Graciarena, M., Hirschberg, J. & Stolcke, A. (2007). Detecting deception using critical segments, *Interspeech*, Antwerp. (4 pages)

WEEKS 12 & 13: Paper Presentations

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IV. Course requirements and grading

25%	Participation (includes Courseworks postings and class discussions)
15%	Leading Discussions/Debates
10%	Paper Proposal and Draft
10%	Final Paper Presentation
40%	Final Paper

Participation:

Students are expected to actively engage with the course material online and during class meetings. Students will be evaluated by the quality of their contributions in and outside of the classroom.

For Weeks 2-10, students are required to participate in an online thread for each week's class meeting. This requires at least two questions/comments about journal articles being discussed during class. Students must have this completed by noon the day before each class meeting. Students must also bring a hardcopy of their posting(s) with them to class.

Leading Discussions/Debates:

During the first two class meetings, students will sign up to lead 1-2 class meetings (depending on class size). For each week, the student leaders are expected to prepare a presentation of the assigned readings that leads into an open class discussion/debate. The presentation should incorporate questions and comments from the online discussion thread. Students may choose to divide the articles among themselves and present separately or to work together and create one presentation.

Paper Proposal and Draft:

At the beginning of class during Week 6, students are required to turn in a hardcopy proposal for their final paper and will schedule individual meetings with the instructor for feedback. The proposal will include a title, 1 page overview, and a reference section of at least 5 APA style citations. The paper topic is of students choosing. Topics may be an extension of ongoing research or an original idea, but all topics must be related to research in cognitive psychology, social psychology, linguistics, computer science and/or communication. Proposals must be approved prior to use for the final paper presentation and final paper.

During Week 11, undergraduate students are required to turn in a draft of their final paper for comments and feedback. This is optional for graduate students.

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Final Paper Presentation:

During Weeks 12-13, students will be presenting their final paper to the class. Each presentation will be 15-20 minutes long, consisting of a 10 minute overview plus a 5-10 minute question and answer period. The presentations need to be in the format of a conference presentation. Guidelines and examples will be provided.

Final Paper:

For the final paper, students are required to write a 12-15 page APA style paper (12pt; Times New Roman; double-spaced; 1-inch margins) on the topic approved during their individual meeting with the instructor. The Final Paper will include an extensive literature review and a proposed experiment.

V. Class policy

Attendance:

Students are expected to attend class on time and to actively contribute during all class meetings. Repeated tardiness or more than one absence will be reflected in your participation grade. If you cannot attend a class, it is your responsibility to contact the instructor before the missed class to work out a plan for making up the material. Missing the class session during which you are scheduled to lead the discussion or present your paper will result in a zero for that assignment.

Class Conduct:

For the benefit of all students in the seminar, the use of internet, cell/smart phones, and tablets, with the exception of note-taking, is strictly prohibited as it can easily distract students around you.

Late Assignments:

All assignments are due as marked on the syllabus. Unless excused from the instructor, late postings to the online discussion will be marked down 10%. Written assignments will be marked down 20% per day. In case of an emergency or other circumstance, it is your responsibility to contact the instructor as much prior to the deadline as possible to discuss an extension.

Academic Integrity:

Plagiarism or any academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. All written work must be fully your own and you must use proper citations every time you use an external resource (such as an essay, theses, research paper, research data, creative project, internet website, etc). Please review Columbia University's policy at www.college.columbia.edu/academics/integrity. It is your responsibility to understand and follow these policies.

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Students with Disabilities:

Students who require classroom and/or any other accommodation should make an appointment and register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS). Students should also discuss the needed accommodations with the instructor by the end of the first week of class to ensure that all necessary accommodations are met.