

# Ling 3701H / Psych 3371H: Lecture Notes 1

## Course Outline

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### 1.1 What is this course about?

This course will cover fundamental questions about what language is.

This course differs from other psychology courses because:

- it covers language.

This course differs from other linguistics courses because:

- it covers linguistic *performance*; whereas other courses cover *competence* [Chomsky, 1965].
  - *competence*: mental representations of linguistic knowledge (e.g. rules to combine signs)
  - *performance*: how language is actually used (e.g. regularities in how speech errors happen)
- it models phenomena at an *algorithmic* level; others use a *computational* level [Marr, 1982].
  - *computational*: model the problems a behavior solves, e.g. identify phrases in speech.
  - *algorithmic/representational*: model processes/structures behaviors use, e.g. stack memory.
  - *implementational*: model physical implementation of behaviors, e.g. neural firing.

The course therefore covers some of the same material as other linguistic courses, but differently.

The course is organized into three parts:

1. background (what we will assume about how the brain works):
  - neural firing
  - mental states
  - cued associations
  - complex ideas
2. acquisition (how babies learn language):

- learning speech sounds
- learning words and meanings
- learning to encode and decode complex ideas

3. the processes of language:

- **decoding** complex signs into complex ideas
  - lexical access
  - parsing
  - interpretation
- **encoding** complex ideas into complex signs

## 1.2 Why study psycholinguistics?

It's interesting: Conscious thought is still poorly understood. Language is a tool to observe it.

It's useful: You use language every day to communicate. It may help to know what can go wrong.

It's a living: You may end up wanting to do research in this field. It happened to me. . .

## 1.3 Course Prerequisites

From the course guide. . .

1. You should be:
  - in the honors program, or
  - permission of instructor (if you have similar standing somewhere else).
2. You should have taken one of the following courses:
  - Ling 2000 (Intro to Language in the Humanities), or
  - Ling 4000 (Intro to Linguistics for graduate students), or
  - Psych 1100 (General Psychology), or
  - permission of instructor (if you took something similar somewhere else).
3. You should not have taken the other of Ling 3701 or Psych 3371 (same course, cross-listed).

This is a GEC '[Social Sciences: Individuals and Groups](#)' course.

Status of wait list?

## 1.4 What will you need to do?

There are four course requirements:

1. Pre-lecture readings, each about 20 pages.
2. Pre-lecture postings about readings on electronic forum: **20% of grade**
  - about 100 to 200 words (not a whole essay but likewise not just ‘it was good’)
  - things from the reading that you would like to discuss
  - questions about the reading
  - answers to questions about the reading
  - speculation about causes of phenomena described the readings
  - submit in Carmen
  - due by midnight before class

Why? I will use these to guide discussion in lecture.

3. Five problem sets: **total 25% of grade**
  - focus on technical points of models
  - submit via Carmen dropbox
  - due by midnight before class
4. Two midterm exams: **total 50% of grade**
  - exams will be held in class
  - exams will be short answer
  - the second midterm is not cumulative
  - there will be a study guide
5. Linguistics Outside the Classroom program requirement: **5% of grade**
  - volunteer twice to attend either colloquium talk or linguistics experiment

## 1.5 Course materials / infrastructure

**Textbook:** “[Language in Mind: An introduction to Psycholinguistics,](#)” by Julie Sedivy.  
Publisher: Sinauer Associates, 2014. ISBN 978-0-87-893598-7.

Status of textbook?

**Web site:** <https://www.asc.ohio-state.edu/schuler.77/courses/3701H/3701LN01.pdf>

There's a calendar, with links to all supplementary readings.

It's not on Carmen, so there's no login (but library e-holdings may need it).

**Electronic forum:** on Carmen — <http://carmen.osu.edu>

Can everyone view it?

**Instructor:** William Schuler — email: [schuler at ling.osu.edu](mailto:schuler@ling.osu.edu)

Office hours as posted on syllabus, or by appointment (email me).

**Questions about administrative stuff?**

**Students:** who are you and why are you here?

## References

[Chomsky, 1965] Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*. MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass.

[Marr, 1982] Marr, D. (1982). *Vision: A Computational Investigation into the Human Representation and Processing of Visual Information*. W.H. Freeman and Company.