CSD 4439 Language Acquisition
Winter 2015
Elizabeth Skarakis-Doyle, Ph.D.
Instructor

Lecture: Wednesday/Friday 9:00-10:30
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Teaching Assistant: Eric Davis
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course examines the acquisition of language (i.e., syntax, semantics, pragmatics and phonology) from a cognitive-social-linguistic framework. Foundations of language acquisition theories and methodologies are covered. The course is organized according to four developmental periods that characterize the most active time language growth: infancy, one word period, two word period, and preschool. Language and literacy in the early school years may also be covered.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
1. Understand the stages of typical language acquisition
   a. Describe the aspects of language that are acquired at each stage
   b. Connect developments across stages i.e., Link the foundational developments to the achievements of subsequent stages
2. Understand the role that variables that are both internal and external (environmental) to the child play in the language acquisition process
3. Develop your observation skills for young children’s language and what supports it.

Specific Topic and Daily objectives will be posted as part of each lecture

REQUIRED ACTIVITIES:
1. Assignments, online and in class – 15%
2. Midterm – 25%
3. Lab School Observation Project – 25%
4. Final Exam - 35%. Date to be announced.

As can be seen above, this course incorporates not only traditional lectures but also hands-on activities during the class time, as well as outside. This is to provide you with a comprehensive learning experience and thus, attendance in class is expected. However, should legitimate business or illness keep you from class, notifying the instructor in advance facilitates the possibility of making up missed material.

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

UNIVERSITY STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC OFFENCES INCLUDING PLAGIARISM:
Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate
University policy. Specifically the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence can be found at the following website: http://uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf. Regarding plagiarism in particular, students must write their essays and assignments on their own and in their own words. Group assignments will be identified as such. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN CLASS: All personal communication devices (e.g., cell phones, PDA etc) are to be turned off and put away prior to the beginning of any class session. None will be allowed during examination periods. While use of laptops, tablets, and notebook computers are permitted during class time (but not during exams), messaging, texting and surfing of the internet unrelated to the class topic are not permitted.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS AND ACCOMODATION FOR MEDICAL ILLNESS

Assignments are due on the day and time indicated on the syllabus and course OWL site calendar. 10% will be deducted from the mark on a non-medically related late assignments (of any type) each day after the due date up to 5 days, after which it will not be accepted. In the event of illness the student is directed to the Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness (http://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm) for procedures on missed or late course work.

Your Own Well-Being and that of Your Peers
If you or someone you know is experiencing distress, there are several excellent resources here at Western to assist you. Please visit: http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/ for more information on these resources and on mental health.

Schedule of Course Lectures
And
Topic Readings
(Actual Dates subject to minor revision)
THE COURSE CALENDAR HAS SPECIFIC DATES FOR EACH READING AND ASSIGNMENT. IT IS CRITICAL THAT YOU CHECK THE CALENDAR REGULARLY!

(1/7) Course Introduction “Why Language Matters”

(1/9,14,16,21) Topic I:BASICS OF LANGUAGE THEORY AND METHODOLOGIES IN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION
Reading:
- Basics of Language: Chap 4 - Phonology pp 109-113; Chap 6 - Morphology & Syntax pp 169-174; Chap 7 - Pragmatics pp 206-209
- Theories of Language Acquisition: Chap 1 pp 3-26
- Biological Basics: Chap 2 pp 56-70

1/23 Lab School Orientation w/ Ms. Karen Krug, Director University Lab School-Westminster Campus
Details on OWL
(1/28,30, 2/4) Topic II: COMMUNICATION IN INFANCY
Readings:
- Chapter 3 pp 73-106 Foundations of Language Development in Domain General Skills
- Chapter 4 pp 116-121 Pre linguistic Speech Development
- Chapter 7 pp 209-210, 233-235 Communicative Intent

(2/6,11,13,25) Topic III: FIRST WORDS
Readings:
- Chapter 4 pp 119-127 Speech Sound Development
- Chapter 5 pp 137-153 First Words
- Chapter 7 pp 211-213 Communicative Intent

HAPPY READING BREAK!

February 27 – MIDTERM EXAM

(3/4, 6,11,13) Topic IV: PUTTING WORDS TOGETHER
Readings:
- Chapter 6 pp 175-188 Putting Words Together, emergence of morphosyntax
- Chapter 7 pp 216-223 Conversational skill

(3/13,18,20,25,27) TOPIC V: ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PRESCHOOL YEARS
Readings:
- Chapter 6 pp 188-193 Preschoolers developing sentence forms, and grammatical development in comprehension
- Chapter 7 pp 223-235 Narrative Development, sociolinguistic development

(3/27,4/1,8) TOPIC VI: LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT IN THE SCHOOL YEARS
- Chapter 10 pp 294-308 Oral language development – production and comprehension
  pp 314-321 Foundations of Literacy

LAB SCHOOL OBSERVATION PROJECT DUE APRIL 1, 2015 BEGINNING OF CLASS

Final Exam Date to Be Announced