



**Department of Psychology**  
**Psychology 507.90 (L1) Selected Topics in Psychology: Language and Intention**  
**Psychology 623.6 (L1) Advanced Topics in Cognition: Language and Intention**  
**(Winter Session 2009)**

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<b>Instructor:</b>	<b>J. Sedivy</b>	<b>Lecture Location:</b>	<b>SB 105</b>
<b>Phone:</b>	220-8482	<b>Lecture Days/Time:</b>	<b>TR 09:30-10:45</b>
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<b>Office:</b>	Admin 218		
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Tues 1-3		

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### **Course Description and Goals**

This course will focus on the juncture of two important human cognitive systems: knowledge of language, and a socially-based understanding of intention in communication. It will provide an overview of current cognitive issues in pragmatics from an interdisciplinary perspective and with exposure to a range of experimental paradigms. Topics include pragmatic processes in language production, language comprehension, dialogue, the development of pragmatic inferencing capabilities, children's word-learning and language disorders. The material will be situated in a broad intellectual context, and we will discuss implications of the findings for cognitive psychology, linguistics and philosophy.

### **Required Text**

The course materials will be comprised of a set of pre-selected articles that will be available on the course website (<https://blackboard.ucalgary.ca>)

### **Evaluation**

Students are expected to be active contributors to the intellectual community of the class, and this is reflected in the evaluation.

**Short commentary (20%)** Every Thursday, beginning in the second week of classes, I will post a prompt for commentary and discussion of the upcoming readings. These prompts will be designed with the intent of synthesizing ideas across papers we read, or identifying and addressing some unresolved issues in the literature. They may provide useful fodder for identifying a research proposal topic, and you are encouraged to use them as a basis for this. These written pieces will be evaluated on the depth of understanding of the issues, originality of ideas and clarity of expression. Every Sunday, by midnight, you will post a response to the prompt of approximately 400-500 words. Because these commentaries will ideally feed into the week's discussion, late papers will not be accepted. Each piece will be worth 2% of your final grade. Commentaries should be posted on Blackboard as Word or PDF files; in the event of technical issues, you may email them to me and the discussion leader(s) for that week, and post as soon as you are able.

**Discussion leading (30%)** Discussion leaders will be assigned for each week, beginning in the third week of classes. As discussion leader, your job will be to present an *interpretation* of the

papers we read, and not simply a summary, You should use the posted prompts to focus your discussion, but are encouraged to bring in other points as well. You may want to present details of some of the papers as part of your discussion where relevant, but you should avoid a point-by-point summary of the papers. You should also bring into the discussion the posted commentaries by other students. The discussions are intended to be just that – discussions, and not presentations. They should therefore be informal, and the use of Powerpoint or formal handouts is discouraged. Emphasis in the grading will be on your demonstrated level of understanding of the material, evidence of critical thinking about the material, and your ability to generate insights and make connections between ideas.

**Research proposal (30%)** You will write a 15 page (double-spaced) research proposal based on some of the ideas we cover in the class. You should identify an unresolved issue in the literature, and design an experiment or two to address it. You should consult additional sources (to the tune of 5 additional readings beyond the class reading list), but the focus is less on a comprehensive literature survey and more on the development and articulation of original ideas. Your paper should be modeled after journal articles in the field, and should include an abstract, an introduction summarizing the literature and motivating your study, a methods section, a “results” section in which you make predictions and propose the data analyses you would do, a discussion section in which you address the broader implications of the predicted results, and a reference section. You may collaborate with one or two other students in the class, but you *must* receive prior permission to do this, and the length and scope of the paper will be adjusted accordingly. You will be graded on your ability to extract and articulate the key issues pertaining to the topic you are addressing, your ability to think analytically and creatively, the precision of your hypothesis and predictions, and overall written expression. **The research proposal is due April 20. The paper should be printed and submitted in the green box outside of A275 (early papers will be happily accepted in class). Late papers will not be accepted.**

**Class participation (20%)** You will be evaluated on the extent and quality of your contributions to the class discussion. You will be assigned a participation grade at the end of each week beginning the second week of classes, and these will be averaged for your final participation grade.

### Grading Scale

A+	96-100%	B+	80-84%	C+	67-71%	D+	54-58%
A	90-95%	B	76-79%	C	63-66%	D	50-53%
A-	85-89%	B-	72-75%	C-	59-62%	F	0-49%

As stated in the University Calendar, it is at the instructor’s discretion to round off either upward or downward to determine a final grade when the average of term work and final examinations is between two letter grades. To determine final letter grades, final percentage grades will be rounded up or down to the nearest whole percentage (e.g., 89.5% will be rounded up to 90% = A but 89.4% will be rounded down to 89% = A-).

### Lecture Schedule

Date	Topics	Readings and Assignments
Jan. 13, 15	Theoretical foundations	Grice (1974) - <i>Logic and conversation</i> Levinson (2000) - <i>Presumptive Meanings</i> , excerpts Sedivy (2007) - <i>Implicature during real time conversation</i>

		Bloom (2002) - <i>Mindreading, communication and the learning of names for things</i>
Jan. 20, 22	Comprehension of ambiguity and conversational expectations	Ferreira & Clifton (1989) - <i>The independence of syntactic processing</i> Tanenhaus et al. (1995) - <i>Eye movements and spoken language comprehension</i> Sedivy (2003) - <i>Pragmatic versus form-based accounts of referential contrast</i>
Jan. 27, 29	Comprehension of ambiguity and conversational expectations	<b>- commentary due: Jan. 25</b> Grodner & Sedivy (2003) - <i>The effects of speaker-specific information on pragmatic inferences.</i> Arnold et al. (2007) - <i>The on-line attribution of disfluency during reference comprehension.</i> Heller et al. (in press) - <i>The role of perspective in identifying domains of reference.</i>
Feb. 3, 5	Audience design in language production	<b>- commentary due: Feb. 1</b> Brown & Dell (1987) - <i>Adapting production to comprehension</i> Lockridge & Brennan (2002) - <i>Addressee's needs influence speakers' early syntactic choices</i> Ferreira & Dell (2000) - <i>Effects of ambiguity and lexical availability on syntactic and lexical production</i> Arnold et al. (2004) - <i>Avoiding attachment ambiguities</i> Keysar & Henly (2002) - <i>Speakers' overestimation of their effectiveness</i>
Feb. 10,12	Audience design in language production	<b>- commentary due: Feb. 8</b> Ferreira et al. (2005). - <i>How do speakers avoid ambiguous linguistic expressions?</i> Brown-Schmidt & Tanenhaus (2006) - <i>An investigation of message formulation and utterance planning</i> Engelhardt et al. (2006) - <i>Do speakers and listeners observe the Gricean maxim of Quantity?</i> Parabonie et al. (2007) - <i>Generating referring expressions</i> Horton & Keysar (1996) - <i>When do speakers take into account common ground?</i>
<b>Feb 17</b>	<b>Reading Week</b>	<b>No Classes</b>
Feb. 24,26	Intonation and intentions	<b>- commentary due: Feb. 22</b> Kraljic & Brennan (2005) - <i>Prosodic disambiguation of syntactic structure</i> Snedeker & Trueswell (2003) - <i>Using prosody to avoid ambiguity</i> Haywood et al. (2005) - <i>Do speakers avoid ambiguity during dialogue?</i> Wilson & Wharton (2006) - <i>Relevance and prosody</i>
Mar. 3, 5	Common ground & partner specificity	<b>- commentary due: Mar. 1</b> Clark & Brennan (1996) - <i>Conceptual pacts and lexical choice</i> Horton & Gerrig (2005) - <i>Conversational common ground and memory processes</i>

		Metzing & Brennan (2003) - <i>When conceptual pacts are broken</i> Barr (2004) - <i>Establishing conventional communication systems: is common ground necessary?</i>
Mar.10,12	Cognitive burdens in dialogue	- <b>commentary due: Mar. 8</b> Pickering & Garrod (2004) – <i>Towards a mechanistic psychology of dialogue</i> Ferreira (2008) – <i>Ambiguity, accessibility and a division of labor</i> Bard et al. (2007) – <i>Sharing the cognitive burdens of dialogue</i>
Mar 17, 19	Processing costs of comprehending implied meanings	- <b>commentary due: Mar. 16</b> Bott & Noveck (2004) - <i>Some utterances are underinformative</i> Noveck & Posada (2003) - <i>Characterizing the time course of an implicature</i> Breheny et al. (2006) - <i>Are generalised scalar implicatures generated by default?</i> De Neys & Schaeken (2007) - <i>When people are more logical under cognitive load</i>
Mar 24, 26	Implied meaning and language development	- <b>commentary due: Mar. 22</b> Noveck (2001) – <i>When children are more logical than adults</i> Guasti et al. (2005) – <i>Why children and adults sometimes (but not always) compute implicatures</i> Papafragou (2006) - <i>From scalar semantics to implicature</i> Miller (2005) - <i>Young children understand some implicatures</i>
Mar 31, Apr. 2	Word-learning and pragmatic inferencing	- <b>commentary due: Mar. 29</b> Diesendruck & Markson (2001) – <i>Children’s avoidance of lexical overlap: a pragmatic account</i> Jaswal & Hansen (2006) – <i>Children disregard some pragmatic information</i> Halberda (2006) – <i>Use of the logical argument disjunctive syllogism supports word-learning</i> Diesendruck (2005) – <i>The principle of conventionality and contrast in word learning</i> Diesendruck et al. (2006) – <i>Children’s use of syntactic and pragmatic knowledge</i>
April 7, 9	Pragmatic language disorders	- <b>commentary due: April 5</b> Preissler & Carey (2005) – <i>The role of inference about referential intent in word learning</i> Noveck (2007) - <i>What autism can reveal about Every...Not sentences</i> Surian et al. (1996) – <i>Are children with autism deaf to Gricean maxims?</i> Martin & McDonald – <i>Solving the puzzle of pragmatic language disorders</i> Cummings (2007) - <i>Clinical pragmatics</i>

April 14	Wrap-up and Synthesis	No Readings
<b>April 20</b>		<b>Research Proposal Due</b>

### **Reappraisal of Grades**

A student who feels that a piece of graded term work (e.g., term paper, essay, test) has been unfairly graded, may have the work re-graded as follows. The student shall discuss the work with the instructor within 15 days of being notified about the mark or of the item's return to the class. If not satisfied, the student shall immediately take the matter to the Head of the department offering the course, who will arrange for a reassessment of the work within the next 15 days. The reappraisal of term work may cause the grade to be raised, lowered, or to remain the same. If the student is not satisfied with the decision and wishes to appeal, the student shall address a letter of appeal to the Dean of the faculty offering the course within 15 days of the unfavourable decision. In the letter, the student must clearly and fully state the decision being appealed, the grounds for appeal, and the remedies being sought, along with any special circumstances that warrant an appeal of the reappraisal. The student should include as much written documentation as possible.

### **Plagiarism and Other Academic Misconduct**

Intellectual honesty is the cornerstone of the development and acquisition of knowledge and requires that the contribution of others be acknowledged. Consequently, plagiarism or cheating on any assignment is regarded as an extremely serious academic offense. Plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Students should examine sections of the University Calendar that present a Statement of Intellectual honesty and definitions and penalties associated with Plagiarism/Cheating/Other Academic Misconduct.

### **Academic Accommodation**

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than 14 days after the start of this course.

### **Important Dates**

The last day to drop this course and still receive a fee refund is **January 23, 2009**. The last day to withdraw from this course is **April 17, 2009**.