

**Division of Humanities
School of Humanities and Social Science**

Course syllabus

Course code & title: HUMA 3050 Psychology of Language [actually, “Psycholinguistics”]
Course offered: Fall 2026
Course instructor: Prof. Quentin Zhen QIN (hmzqin@ust.hk)
Course TA: NA
Course information: 9:00-11:50, Friday; LG3009
Office hours: 13:45-14:45, Thursday (instructor’s office at Rm 3368);
TA’s office hours (by appointment)

Course Description

This course will focus on the psychological processes of language use. It includes an introduction to basic linguistic and psychological models and examines the biological foundations of language. Psycholinguistic issues in language comprehension and language production will be discussed. Over the course of the semester, it covers research areas such as speech perception and production, word recognition, and language in the brain

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

- Understand the major theories and models of language processing
- Assess weakness and strength of a scientific study of linguistics
- Effectively communicate findings of a psycholinguistics study through speaking and writing
- Objectively evaluate research designs and tools used by a psycholinguistics study
- Study language phenomenon from an empirical perspective

Textbooks

David W. Carroll. (2008). *Psychology of Language* (5th ed.) Cengage Learning. Australia; Belmont, CA : Wadsworth. (Required, library reserve for 3 days)
Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams. (2014). *An Introduction to Language*. 10th ed. Australia: Cengage Learning. (Optional, a supplementary textbook for students who did not take HUMA 1010)

Assessment (this course adopts criterion-referenced assessment, and grades are not assigned using a curve)

1. Class Attendance AND In-Class Activities (individually assessed – 20%; 10% for each)
2. In-Class Quiz (individually assessed – 29%)
3. Written Summary (individually assessed – 25%)
4. Poster Presentation and Submission (group assessed – 26%)

Attendance policy

- You should attend class regularly and participate in class. You should read required and suggested articles/textbook **before** class and check slides that are uploaded **after** class. Poor attendance will have a negative impact on your performance, slow down the class pace, and consequently negatively impact other students’ learning.
- Food and cell phone (e.g., for personal use) are not allowed in class.

Quiz and assignment policy

As a general rule, **NO make-up quiz or late submission will be accepted** for credit unless:

- (a) You got **advance** permission (before due) from me about a make-up quiz or a late submission of an assignment
- (b) You could not attend the class for the quiz or submit the assignment on the day the assignment is due because of a serious illness or unexpected emergency. You need to contact me with a written explanation of the situation and provide **proof** (e.g., a medical note issued by doctors).
- (c) We go with “*Restrict ways of using generative AI tools for assessment*”. You can use generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, DeepSeek) to assist your understanding of materials. However, you are **prohibited** from using the GenAI tools to produce any content related to essay assessments (i.e., written summary).
- (d) In general, *non-essay* assignments will normally receive feedback within two weeks of submission.

Plagiarism and misconduct policy

Plagiarism (e.g., academic theft) in quizzes, assignments, and exams, depending on the severity, will result in penalties in the range from a zero for that portion of your work, an F for the course, transcript citation, to suspension/expulsion from HKUST. For library guidelines on plagiarism and other resources on referencing/citation, see <https://libguides.ust.hk/referencing/plagiarism>. For HKUST policies on academic misconduct, see <http://ugadmin.ust.hk/integrity/student-1.html>.

Tentative Schedule (subject to change)

Week	Date	Topic	Reading
1	Sep 04	Introduction to Psycholinguistics	Carroll Ch.1
2	Sep 11	Linguistics Principles	Carroll Ch.2
3	Sep 18	Psychological Mechanisms Brain and Language 1	Carroll Ch.3 Fromkin Ch.10
4	Sep 25	Brain and Language 2	Carroll Ch.13 *Bird et al. (2003) Discussion #1
5	Oct 02	Poster Workshop	
6	Oct 09	Speech Perception	Fromkin Ch.5 Carroll Ch.4 Saffran et al., (1996) *Cutler et al. (1986) Discussion #2
7	Oct 16	The Internal Lexicon	Carroll Ch.5 *Scarborough et al. (1977; Exp.2 only) Discussion #3
8	Oct 23	Second Language Acquisition and Bilingualism	Fromkin Ch. 9 Carroll Ch.11 *Wang et al. (2001) Discussion #4
9	Oct 30	In-Class Quiz	
10	Nov 06	Language Processing (eye movement)	McMurray et al., (2002) Marian & Spivey (2003) Discussion #5
11	Nov 13	Language Processing (brain imaging)	Wang et al. (1999, 2003) *Kim et al. (1997) Discussion #6
12	Nov 20	Poster Presentations 1	
13	Nov 27	Poster Presentations 2	
	Dec 07 (noon)	Poster Submission Due	

Required Readings

Articles (a written summary is required for one of 5 articles that are posted on Canvas)

- *Bird, H., Ralph, M., Seidenberg, M., McClelland, J., & Patterson, K. (2003). Deficits in phonology and past-tense morphology: What's the connection? *Journal of Memory and Language*, 48, 502-526.
- *Cutler, A., Mehler, J., Norris, D., & Segui, J. (1986). The syllable's differing role in the segmentation of French and English. *Journal of Memory and Language*, 25, 385-400.
- *Kim, K., Relkin, N., Lee, K-M, & Hirsch, J. (1997). Distinct cortical areas associated with native and second languages. *Nature*, 388, 171-174.
- *Scarborough, D., Cortese, C., & Scarborough, H. (1977). Frequency and repetition effects in lexical memory. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance*, 3(1), 1-17.
- *Wang, Y., Jongman, A., & Sereno, J.A. (2001). Dichotic perception of linguistic tones by Mandarin and American listeners. *Brain and Language*, 78, 332-348.

Suggested Readings

Articles (articles for poster presentations will be posted on Canvas in October)

- Marian, V., & Spivey, M. (2003). Bilingual and monolingual processing of competing lexical items. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 24, 173-193.
- McMurray, B., Tanenhaus, M., & Aslin, R. N. (2002). Gradient effects of within-category phonetic variation on lexical access. *Cognition*, 86, B33-B42.
- Saffran, J. R., Aslin, R. N., & Newport, E. L. (1996). Statistical learning by 8-month-old infants. *Science*, 274, 1926-1928.
- Wang, Y., Sereno, J., Jongman, A., & Hirsch, J. (2003). fMRI evidence for cortical modification during learning of Mandarin lexical tone. *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*, 15, 7, 1019-1027.
- Wang, Y., Spence, M., Jongman, A., & Sereno, J. (1999). Training American listeners to perceive Mandarin tones. *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 106, 3649-3658.

Textbooks

Matthew J. Traxler (2011). *Introduction to Psycholinguistics*. Wiley-Blackwell. (Library reserve for days)