



Adult Language Processing / Psycholinguistics

PS 828 Time: Tues 11-2pm* **Fall 2007**

Instructor: Dr. Catherine Caldwell-Harris, charris@bu.edu

Course Description. What cognitive and brain mechanisms are recruited for speaking and understanding? Course examines how processing varies for different languages, for writing vs. reading, and for bilingual/multilingual speakers. Reviews questionnaire/surveys, reaction time, eye tracking, and neuroimaging methods.

Prerequisites. Graduate standing *or* two prior course on language and cognition, such as Foundations of Language (LX 250 or any other linguistics class), Developmental Psychology (PS 241), or Cognitive Psychology (PS 336) or Language Development (PS 545). Auditors and visitors welcome.

Overview of class structure. The course will be conducted as a seminar with a focus on discussion of students' own research projects. Students will lead discussion for two 45 minutes periods (hopefully, once during the first half of the semester, and once during the second half of the semester). When choosing a topic for your discussion session, consider the classic questions about the psychology of language (below), and also contemporary interdisciplinary issues. Students will also give a 10 minute powerpoint presentation on their own research (can be at the end of the semester).

Classic questions.

- What is unique about human language?
- Is language an innate mental module or does it share design features with other aspects of cognition?
- What aspects of the brain mediate language?
- How did language evolve in our species?
- What can we learn about human language from its acquisition in children and adults?
- How does language -- and styles of language processing -- vary across communities?

Emphasis on mechanism and processing. The psycholinguistic perspective emphasizes empirical methods for quantifying phenomenon and testing models and theories.

Course Requirements

- Reading, class participation and written comments on reading (30%)
- Leading class discussion (30%)
- Final project (15 minute presentation of your own research) (40%)

Readings. Journal articles to be downloaded from the courseinfo site.