

LINGUISTICS 4327 / 5305: SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

The University of Texas at Arlington - Spring 2009

Mid-Semester Syllabus Update

Class on Tuesday, March 24 – Location: UT Arlington Central Library, second floor

- 5:30 PM Students should meet in their two teams (Blue and Orange – see page 3) at a location near the Reference Desk.
- 5:35 – 6:00 PM Members of each team should then use appropriate databases to locate at least two references (which will lead to eight references per team) that might be useful in addressing their team's side of the debate.
- 6:00 – 6:30 PM Each team should find a location to sit together and discuss what they have found and how they might approach their side of the debate. (There are study rooms located throughout the library on floors 3, 4, and 5.)
- 6:30 – 6:50 PM Members of the class may either:
(a) depart the library early; or
(b) use the last 20 minutes to search for one or two articles that might prove beneficial to their final paper.

Between Tuesday and Thursday:

Read one of the articles that you located and create a single page outline and/or summary of the work. Make 10 copies and bring them to class.

Class on Thursday, March 26 – Location: Trimble Hall 215 (our regular meeting place)

- 5:30 – 6:45 PM Begin by arranging yourselves in a large circle so that each member of the class can easily see and hear each other.

One by one, present the main ideas from one of the articles that you located on Tuesday (or, perhaps, at some other time prior to Thursday's class). You should present your papers in this order:

Sharon, Norah, Kym, J.B., Heejung, Bobbi, Beatrice, Adam

Be sure to give each member of the class a copy of your outline / summary, so that by the end of the period, everybody has eight pages. Please create a packet of summaries for me, too. I'll pick it up on Tuesday the 31st. (Thank you.)

Homework Assignment #4 (Due at the beginning of class on Thursday, April 9)

Revise and resubmit either assignment #1, #2, or #3. You may choose. Your revised assignment will be graded on its own merits using the same grading scheme established for the original work.

See the next page for a revised version of the course schedule.

Revised Course Schedule

Readings should be completed prior to the dates on which they are assigned below
Other brief readings may be added to this schedule as circumstances warrant.

Wk	Date	Topic	Reading	Events / Assignment Due
9	T, Mar 17	Spring Break		
	R, Mar 19			
10	T, Mar 24	Debate Research and Planning	<i>Teams at the Library</i>	references (at least 2/person)
	R, Mar 26	Article Presentation to Class	5-7 min/person	article outline (10 copies)
11	T, Mar 31	SLA and Information Processing	ch. 8	
	R, Apr 02*	SLA and Social Contexts	ch. 9: 9.1-9.3	
12	T, Apr 07	Social Interaction and Language Use	ch. 9: 9.4-9.7	paper proposal (ungraded)
	R, Apr 09	The Role of Input	ch. 10: 10.1-10.3	HW #4
13	T, Apr 14	The Role of Interaction	ch. 10: 10.4-10.5	
	R, Apr 16	The Intersection of Input & Interaction	ch. 10: 10.6-10.8	
14	T, Apr 21	SLL in the Classroom	ch. 11	Interaction Analysis
	R, Apr 23	Three "A"s: Affect, Age and Aptitude	ch. 12: 12.1-12.6	
15	T, Apr 28	Motivation and Personality	ch. 12: 12.7-12.10	Debate Prep (last 45 min)
	R, Apr 30	In-Class Debate	Topic: Nativism vs. Social Interactionism	
16	T, May 05	Individual Conferences about final paper		
	R, May 07	Course Wrap-Up / Evaluations	chapter 14	
-	R, May 14	Final Paper due by 7:00 PM		

*The last date for to drop or withdraw from this course is Friday, April 3.

Requirement #3: Interaction Analysis Essay

(5-8 typed pages)

15%

Students will collect their own data by audio-recording, for approximately 20 minutes, one interaction between either a) two non-native speakers of English or b) one native and one non-native speaker of English. These interlocutors must be speaking in English and the interlocutors must be engaged in meaningful and authentic conversational interaction. For the essay, students will be required to discuss such interactional data, in a 5-8 page typed essay, in terms of (a) the extent to which the interlocutors manage communicative breakdown through the negotiation of meaning and the negotiation of form, (b) how such negotiation plays out during the turn-by-turn analysis of the interaction, and (c) the extent to which such negotiation might provide opportunities for language learning or language acquisition for the non-native speaker of English. Students should base their discussion explicitly on specific selected excerpts from the interaction, and they should use scholarly literature to support their claims and interpretations.

NOTE: As an intermediate step in the analysis, the conversation must be transcribed. Moreover, language forms other than English must be included in the transcript, with a translation into English (for the benefit of the reader). Students should be selective about what excerpts from the transcript

they include in their essays, and should provide as much as is necessary to support their claims and give context to such claims.

Assessment: (Questions used in grading)

1. To what extent does the student fully understand the issues and concepts addressed in the readings?
2. How well-supported are the student's interpretations or conclusions, based on specific data collected?
3. To what extent does the student ground such interpretations or conclusions on a strong, well-reasoned theoretical foundation of previous scholarly work?

Requirement #4: Debate Participation (Thursday, April 30)

15%

Students will participate in a debate, working in their teams, and assigning responsibilities among the participants: researching articles, sharing and synthesizing information, organizing arguments, and delivering arguments (and rebuttal) orally during class. Each team will also provide the class with a one-page handout listing their main arguments and a second page bibliography of references used to support their claims.

The debate topic

There is little doubt that acquiring a second language requires that the learner undergo both cognitive (internal) transformations and social (external) transformations. There has long been a lively debate between two camps, however, as to which factor is more important to the SLA process. The social interactionists believe that the process of SLA is driven primarily by socio-cultural factors; in contrast, the nativists believe that the SLA process is driven primarily by a family of innate factors.

Blue Team

Adam, Beatrice, Bobbi, Norah

Social Interactionist Position



Orange Team

Heejung, J.B., Kym, Sharon

Nativist Position

Assessment Criteria: (Questions used in grading)

Each team will be assigned one grade based on these criteria:

1. How clearly do the members of the group present well-reasoned arguments in support of the position assigned to them?
2. To what extent are the group's arguments supported by scholarly literature?
3. How well do group members provide well-informed answers in fielding questions from a scholarly audience?
4. To what extent do all members of the group participate in and contribute to the debate?

NOTE: Masters' and Ph.D. students may choose Option A or B only; undergraduates may choose Options A, B, or C.

Option A: Synthesis Essay

(10-15 double-spaced word-processed pages)

Students should identify a focused and clearly articulated problematic topic or issue related to the course material. Students must then conduct library research on that topic or issue, reading and synthesizing relevant scholarly literature. In a 10-15 page essay, students then must articulate a clear and original "thesis statement" or argument of their own and must support that statement with organized and well-synthesized support from scholarly literature. Note: A synthesis paper is **not** solely a summary. The synthesis paper may address the same topic as covered in the debate but it must **expand significantly** on this topic. An ungraded proposal will be required.

Assessment: (Questions used in grading)

1. How clear and logical is the student's main argument or point?
2. How well does the student use examples, details, quotations, etc. from previous scholarly literature from the course material and from outside library sources to support his/her argument or point?
3. To what extent does the student understand key concepts, ideas, terms, and theories?
4. To what extent does the student comprehensively discuss relevant scholarly literature to support this argument or point?
5. How effectively does the student synthesize information not merely by citing facts, quoting, and paraphrasing but ALSO by offering new insight or interpretation of information?

Option B: Research Proposal

(10-15 double-spaced word-processed pages)

Students can write a research proposal detailing a small study in second language acquisition. Students must pose ONE research question that reflects any of the course topics and employs a methodology based on scholarly literature that will help to answer the research question. Sections for the research proposal should include the following:

1. Introduction: What is the general problem? How will your research attempt to address this problem?
2. Literature Review: How has previous scholarly literature attempted to address this problem? What theoretical or methodological gaps exist in previous scholarly literature?
3. Research Question: In what ways does your research question fill those theoretical or methodological gaps?
4. Methodology: On what previous methodological foundation is your proposed research based? What key concepts or constructs will you be examining, and what are their exact operationalized definitions?
 - a. Research Site & Sample: Where exactly do you propose to conduct your site? Who exactly will be your subjects?
 - b. Data Collection: What type of data will you collect? How exactly will you collect your data?
 - c. Data Analysis: How will you analyze your data in a step-by-step fashion, based on your methodological foundation and helping to answer your research question? Are there any delimitations to your study (i.e., any things that you will *not* be examining)?
5. Conclusion: What general conclusions might you be able to offer?
 - a. What limitations can you see to your study?

- b. What implications can you draw for real-world application and/or future scholarly research?

An ungraded proposal will be required.

Assessment: (Questions used in grading)

1. How clearly articulated are the introductory problem, research question, methods, etc. of the proposal?
2. To what extent does the student synthesize and evaluate scholarly literature, identifying a theoretical or methodological gap out of which emerges the research question?
3. How well does the student draw upon relevant scholarly literature for a methodology?
4. To what extent does the student's data analysis methods match with data collection and, in turn, the research question?
5. How critically does the student consider the scope of the research (i.e., limitations, implications, delimitations, and/or future research)?

Option C: Take-Home Essay

(8-10 double-spaced word-processed pages)

Only for Undergraduates

Students will be given a choice of three essay questions that they will take home during review week. These students will choose ONE of these questions and will formulate a well-articulated and well-developed response.

Assessment: (Questions used in grading)

1. How clear and logical is the student's main argument or point, and how well does it address the question prompt?
2. To what extent does the student understand relevant concepts, ideas, terms, and theories in-depth?
3. How well does the student support the argument or point with relevant literature read for class?