

DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES AND CULTURAL STUDIES

<https://uofa.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies>

**MLCS 581 B1: APPLIED LINGUISTICS – SECOND
LANGUAGE RESEARCH
WINTER TERM 2016**

Instructor: Dr. Yvonne Lam
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Time: F 1:00pm-3:50pm
Place: Arts 430
Office Hours: TR 11:00-12:00, or by appointment

Course Prerequisite:

Consent of department

Course Description and Objectives:

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to theoretical and empirical issues in the study of second language acquisition. Four broad questions guide our discussions:

- What does learning a second language entail?
- What is needed to learn a second language?
- What factors affect success in second language learning?
- How do we research second language learning?

The course will be conducted as a seminar. Each session will be based on the critical reading and discussion of the assigned readings. The course project will involve the design of an empirical study on any topic in second language learning.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- describe different theoretical approaches to second language acquisition, as well as evaluate their strengths and weaknesses
- identify linguistic, cognitive, psychological, social and contextual factors that influence the learning of a second language
- compare different methods used in collecting and analyzing second language data
- design an original study on second language acquisition and write a detailed research proposal

Texts:

See reading list posted on eClass. Readings are accessible online or in print at the library.

Additional Mandatory Instructional Fees (approved by Board of Governors):

Yes No

Grade Distribution:

Component	Value	Due date
Presentation 1	20%	Feb 12
Presentation 2	20%	Apr 8
Term paper	50%	Apr 18 4:00pm
Discussion leader	10%	see sign-up sheet

Explanatory Notes on Assignments:

PRESENTATIONS AND TERM PAPER

The project for this course involves the design of an original study on a topic in second language acquisition of your choice. You will not collect the actual data for the study; you will simply go through the process of designing an original project from scratch and writing a detailed research proposal.

Presentation 1 (15-20 minutes): Tell us about the topic you wish to study. What is your proposed research question(s)? Why is this an interesting question(s)? How does it fit in with previous research on this topic? Describe briefly what your intended methodology will be. Do not present your instruments at this point; just give us an idea of what you're thinking so that we can give you feedback.

Presentation 2 (20 minutes): Describe the proposed methodology of your study. Who are your intended participants? Why did you choose them? What instruments will you use, and why did you choose these particular instruments? Show us a copy of each instrument (or a sample of the questions). If the instruments are to be applied in a particular order, describe. How do you plan to analyze the data you collect?

Term paper (approx. 15-20 pages, double-spaced): Write a research proposal detailing your intended study. Use any citation format you wish (e.g. *MLA*, *APA*), as long as citations are complete and consistently formatted. Include the following components:

- Research question(s)
- Rationale for the study (i.e. why is this topic interesting?)
- Literature review (only cite previous research that is relevant to your study)
- Methodology (participants, instruments, procedure for data analysis)
- Ethical considerations (answer the questions distributed in class)

DISCUSSION LEADER

You will be asked to lead the discussion in one class. Your task will be to provide an introduction to the topic (consult the introductory books on second language acquisition on the reading list), then facilitate a discussion among your classmates on the assigned reading(s) (excluding readings on research methods). As you are all teachers, I challenge you to think of creative ways to present the material and engage your classmates in discussion, rather than using the traditional lecture and question-answer format.

Grading:

Marks for assignments, tests, and exams are given in percentages. Letter grades will be assigned only to the final distribution of mark totals for the course. "Grades reflect judgements of student achievement made by instructors and must correspond to the associated descriptor. These judgements are based on a

combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in a class.” (University Calendar 23.4(4)) There is no pre-determined quota of letter grades (i.e. a “curve”) in a course (University of Alberta Assessment and Grading Policy, <http://www.policiesonline.ualberta.ca/>). The following guidelines have been adopted by the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:

Grade	Percentages	Descriptor
A+	97-100	Excellent
A	93-96	Excellent
A-	90-92	Excellent
B+	87-89	Good
B	79-86	Good
B-	74-78	Satisfactory
C+	68-73	Satisfactory
C	63-67	Failure
C-	58-62	Failure
D+	54-57	Failure
D	50-53	Failure
F	00-49	Failure

Course-based Ethics Approval in place regarding all research projects that involve human testing, questionnaires, etc.?

Yes No, not needed, no such projects approved

Community Service Learning Component:

Required Optional None

Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material Available:

- Exam registry – Students’ Union
<http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services/infolink/exams>
- See explanations below
- Document distributed in class or posted on eClass
- Other
- N/A

Required Notes:

Policy about course outlines can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University Calendar.

Academic Integrity

The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at <http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/en/CodesofConductandResidenceCommunityStandards/CodeofStudentBehaviour.aspx>) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

Learning and Working Environment

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring all students, faculty and staff are able to study and work in an environment safe and free of discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The Department urges anyone who feels this policy has been or is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the Student Ombudservice (<http://www.ombudservice.ualberta.ca>). Information about the University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures is described in UAPPOL at <https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/PoliciesProcedures/Pages/DispPol.aspx?PID=110>.

Academic Honesty:

All students should consult the information provided by the Office of Judicial Affairs (<http://www.osja.ualberta.ca/Students.aspx>) regarding avoiding cheating and plagiarism in particular and academic dishonesty in general (see the Academic Integrity Graduate Handbook <http://www.osja.ualberta.ca/en/Students/GraduateHandbook.aspx> and Information for Students <http://www.osja.ualberta.ca/Students.aspx>). If in doubt about what is permitted in this class, ask the instructor.

Students should be aware that, while seeking the advice of native or expert speakers is often helpful, **excessive editorial and creative help** in assignments is considered a form of “cheating” that violates the code of student conduct with dire consequences.

An instructor or coordinator who has reason to believe that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the Academic Discipline Process (<http://www.osja.ualberta.ca/TheDisciplineProcess.aspx>).

Recording of Lectures:

Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

Attendance and Absences:

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify the instructor by email within two days. Approval for an excused absence from term work is at the discretion of the instructor. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections 23.3(1) and 23.5.6 of the University Calendar. Unexcused absences may result in partial or total loss of the grade for the attendance and participation component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed in or completed as a result.

Policy for Late Assignments:

All assignments must be submitted on the scheduled due date unless arrangements have been made **in advance** with the instructor. In cases of medical or other emergency, the student is responsible for notifying the instructor by email within two days, and written documentation may be requested. The instructor reserves the right not to accept a late assignment or to deduct up to 5% per day of lateness.

Student Accessibility Services:

If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let the instructor know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you are not already registered with Student Accessibility Services, contact their office immediately (1-80 Student Union Building; email sasrec@ualberta.ca; phone 780-492-3381; online <http://www.ssds.ualberta.ca>).