

Linguistics 790: Second Language Acquisition
TTh 5-6:15
Humanities Classroom Building 302

Instructor information: Mila Tasseva
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Course Overview:

This course is designed to introduce students to the research tools of the linguistics, language acquisition, and ESL professions, and give them the much needed hands-on experience with research tools and techniques. We will search for and posit research questions, decide on the appropriate type of research (quantitative vs. qualitative) and examine the full range of testing tools (from linguistic surveys to (in)formal interviews to quasi-experimental studies). The students will develop their own testing tools and conduct their own experiments on a topic that is of interest to them.

Prerequisites:

LING 600 and LING 790

Required texts:

Mackey, Alison and Susan Gass. 2005. *Second Language Research: Methodology and Design*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum and Associates. **M&G**

Additional readings will be posted on the BlackBoard site for the course. They mainly come from those two sources:

Brown, James D. 1988. *Understanding research in second language learning: a teacher's guide to statistics and research design*. CUP. **B**

Seliger, Herbert W. and Elana Goldberg Shohamy. 1989. *Second Language Research Methods*. OUP. **S&S**

Ellis, Rod. 2005. *Analyzing Learner Language*. OUP. **E**

Course requirements:

1) Participation:	15%
2) Critical review papers (3, 3-5 pp. each):	30%
3) Project	
(constitutes of abstract, presentation and manuscript)	55%
10% 20% 25%	

Course requirements:

Course attendance. I expect everyone to attend class without fail. I will keep an informal record of your attendance. Please advise me in advance if you are unable to come to

class for a legitimate reason (illness, family emergency, etc), either by e-mail or by phone.

Critical review papers. There are two goals we want to achieve with those short review papers: (i) learn how to critique constructively and find possibilities for future research, and (ii) do some of the bibliography review for the final project. I strongly encourage you to choose carefully the papers you read and review. It will save you lots of time and efforts if you know at least the general direction for the research questions you want to ask with your final project before you start choosing the papers for review, e.g. decide beforehand if you maybe want to investigate the acquisition of relative clauses, or the turn-taking strategies in NS-NNS conversations, or the effect of negative feedback in classroom SLA.

Midpoint student presentations (weeks 8 and 9). Those presentations are INFORMAL and are NOT graded. The goal of those presentations is to share with the class and receive feedback on what you intend to do for the final project. You will have 10 minutes to present the topic, research question(s), and methodology.

Project. An exciting component of this course is that you get actual experience in language acquisition research. Thus your final project will require you to design, implement and describe a complete experiment, with the emphasis on the research design. Do not worry about the number of subjects for your experiment. In many cases, depending on your research question, one second language speaker will do. Make sure you find the language learner(s) early in the semester and obtain their informal permission. If you liked the topic you researched for the final paper in LING 790, stay with it! If you don't have a topic or you didn't like the one from last year start searching immediately. I will meet with each of you individually in week 4 to talk about your projects, meeting schedule to come. Projects (to include last version of abstracts and manuscripts) are due on December 8th at 5 PM or earlier, typed according to LI style. You can submit you papers in my office (HUC 315), in my mailbox (please ask the staff in the main office to time stamp your submission), or via email (make sure that your file was last saved before 5 PM).

Late work. The grade for late assignments will be reduced by one-half of a letter grade for each day that they are late.

Communication. I encourage everyone to drop by during my office hours (or any other time) for an informal chat. Preferably, that should happen in the first few weeks of the semester. I am interested in finding out more about your interests in applied linguistics and your expectations about the course. The best and quickest method to get in touch with me is e-mail.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Dates/week	Topics	Readings	Student work due
Aug 18 (week 1)	Introduction to the course		
Aug 23-25 (week 2)	Research paradigms	M&G ch.1 B ch.1 S&S ch.2	
Aug 30-Sept 1 (week 3)	Preparation stages I— library research, literature review, obtaining IRB approval	M&G ch. 2 S&S ch.3 and 4	
Sept 6-8 (week 4)	Preparation stages II— focusing the research question, critiquing previous research	B ch.5 M&G ch.10	meet with instructor to discuss paper topic
Sept 13-15 (week 5)	Data collection	M&G ch.3	Review paper #1 due on Sept 13
Sept 20-22 (week 6)	Variables and validation	M&G ch.4 B ch.4	
Sept 27-29 (week 7)	Qualitative research I— design	S&S ch.6 M&G ch.6	
Oct 4 (no class on Oct 6) (week 8)	research project	student presentations	Review paper #2 due on Oct 4
Oct 11 (no class on Oct 13—Fall break) (week 9)	research project	student presentations	
Oct 18-20 (week 10)	Qualitative research II— focus on output	E ch. 5 and 7	
Oct 25-27 (week 11)	Qualitative research III— focus on interaction	E ch. 8 and 9	Review paper #3 due Oct 25
Nov 1-3 (week 12)	Classroom research Quantitative research I— design	M&G ch.7 M&G ch.5	
Nov 8-10 (week 13)	Quantitative research II— design and coding	S&S ch.7 M&G ch.8	first version of abstract due Nov 8

Nov 15-17 (week 14)	Quantitative research II—analyzing data I (frequencies and probabilities)	M&G ch.9.1-9.4, B ch.6 M& G ch.9.5-9.10, B ch.6 and 7	
Nov 22 (no class on Nov 24— Thanksgiving recess) (week 15)	Quantitative research II—analyzing data I (correlations)	M & G ch.9.11-9.14, B ch.10	second version of abstract due Nov 22
Nov 29-Dec 1 (week 16)	Putting it all together		Workshop w/ paper presentations on Dec 1
Dec 8, 5 PM	final paper		