

The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages
Second Term, 2025-26

1-3. Course info

Course code	LING5607
Title in English	Topics in Psycholinguistics
Title in Chinese	心理语言学专题

4. Course description

This course presents a survey of psycholinguistic research on language as a cognitive system which interfaces with other subsystems of mind. It introduces psycholinguistics as an empirical science that investigates the mental representation and cognitive processes underlying language comprehension, language production and language learning. It will survey psycholinguistic theories and also their empirical bases. The course will progress across different linguistic levels (words, sentences and discourse) and across different aspects of language use (language comprehension, production and learning). As a complement to courses in theoretical linguistics, this course will also aim to cultivate students' basic understanding of and introductory skills in empirical research design and quantitative analyses. Although no prerequisite is mandatory for this course, students are expected to be familiar with the basic concepts in phonetics, phonology, morphology and syntax.

5. Learning outcomes

- Students will have a good understanding of the mental processes underlying language production, language comprehension and language learning.
- Students will learn how to integrate psycholinguistic understanding with insights from other linguistic branches and also how to empirically critique concepts and theories from theoretical linguistics.
- Students will be introduced to the relations between language and other domains of cognition (e.g., the real world, the society);
- Students will learn to conduct small-scale empirical research and to analyze simple psycholinguistic data and will develop critical thinking skills.

6. Course syllabus

Topic	Contents/fundamental concepts
Psycholinguistics as an empirical science	Aims of psycholinguistics; empirical research design, psychological methods, hypothesis testing
The mental lexicon	Visual word recognition, spoken word recognition, computational modelling of word recognition, masked priming
Concepts and meanings	Models of concepts, conceptual representations, representation of word meanings
Sentence comprehension	Syntactic parsing, modularity of language understanding, pronoun resolution, prediction, eyetracking
Language production	Conceptualisation, grammatical encoding, lexical access, speech production, speech error, speech disorder
Language in the brain	Event-related brain potentials, BOLD signals, language localization, language neural network
Bilingualism	Bilingual language comprehension and production, bilingual mind and cognition

Language, body and culture	Whorf hypothesis, language and cognition, embodied cognition, cross-language differences
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7. Course components

Teaching Modes and Learning Activities	Time
Lectures	135 min / week
Interactive tutorial	30 min / week
Group discussion in/out of class	20 min / week
Readings and revision of the class	120 min / week
Assignment	60 min / week

8a. Assessment scheme

Task nature	Description	Weight
Participation	Participation in class activities and quizzes	20%
Report 1	An experimental design with supporting literature review	20%
Report 2	A report of data analysis	20%
Exam	In-class exam with essay questions (open book)	40%
		Total: 100%

8b. Grade Descriptor

Grade	LING5607 Topics in Psycholinguistics
A	Outstanding understanding of psycholinguistic research and its relations with other cognitive domains, and with other linguistic branches; outstanding ability to approach research empirically and critically, to conduct small-scale empirical research and to analyze simple psycholinguistic data.
A-	Generally Outstanding understanding of psycholinguistic research and its relations with other cognitive domains, and with other linguistic branches; generally outstanding ability to approach research empirically and critically, to conduct small-scale empirical research and to analyze simple psycholinguistic data.
B	Substantial understanding of psycholinguistic research and its relations with other cognitive domains, and with other linguistic branches; substantial ability to approach research empirically and critically, to conduct small-scale empirical research and to analyze simple psycholinguistic data.
C	Satisfactory understanding of psycholinguistic research and its relations with other cognitive domains, and with other linguistic branches; satisfactory ability to approach research empirically and critically, to conduct small-scale empirical research and to analyze simple psycholinguistic data.
D	Barely satisfactory understanding of psycholinguistic research and its relations with other cognitive domains, and with other linguistic branches; barely satisfactory ability to approach research empirically and critically, to conduct small-scale empirical research and to analyze simple psycholinguistic data.
F	Unsatisfactory understanding of psycholinguistic research and its relations with other cognitive domains, and with other linguistic branches; unsatisfactory ability to approach research empirically and critically, to conduct small-scale empirical research and to analyze simple psycholinguistic data.

9. Required and recommended readings

<p>Reference book: Warren, P. (2013). <i>Introducing psycholinguistics</i>. Cambridge University Press.</p> <p>Advanced reading: Traxler, M., & Gernsbacher, M. A. (Eds.). (2011). <i>Handbook of psycholinguistics</i>. Elsevier.</p>
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Li, P., Tan, L. H., Bates, E., & Tzeng, O. J. (Eds.). (2006). *The Handbook of East Asian Psycholinguistics: Volume 1, Chinese*. Cambridge University Press.

10. Feedback for evaluation

Students are encouraged to give feedback or comments on course contents and teaching materials throughout the course. Students can contact either the lecturer or tutor directly. See contact details below. Mandatory term-end evaluation for teacher's reflection will also be conducted.

11. Course schedule

Week	Date	Lecture
1	8-Jan	Visual word recognition
2	15-Jan	Speech perception
3	22-Jan	Word meaning (<i>review and report assignment</i>)
4	29-Jan	Sentence comprehension 1
5	5-Feb	Sentence comprehension 2
6	12-Feb	Language production 1
7	19-Feb	Holiday
8	26-Feb	Language production 2
9	5-Mar	Dialogue (<i>review due</i>)
10	12-Mar	Bilingualism
11	19-Mar	Bilingual mind
12	26-Mar	Lab tour (no lecture)
13	2-Apr	Language, experience and mind
14	9-Apr	Language in the brain (<i>report due</i>)
15	16-Apr	Final exam

12. Teachers' or TA's contact details

	Teacher	TA
Name:	Prof. Zhenguang Cai	LIU Zhan James
Office Location:	Leung Kau Kui Building G5	Leung Kau Kui Building
Telephone:	3943 7909	3943-7053
Email:	zhenguangcai@cuhk.edu.hk	jamesliu@cuhk.edu.hk
Office Hour:	By appointment	By appointment
Website:	http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/lin/people/	

13. Course website

All teaching materials will be uploaded (either before or after lecture) onto Blackboard (<https://blackboard.cuhk.edu.hk>), which is maintained by the TA. Announcements will be made via Blackboard.

14. Academic honesty and plagiarism

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academic honesty/>.

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed [declaration](#) that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign on the declaration.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.

The use of generative AI tools should follow regulations by the University, the Faculty, and the Department and adhere to the specific instructions of the assignment in question; students are encouraged to consult the course teacher regarding the use of these tools for assignments.

15. Use of Generative AI tools

The course adopts “Approach 2 - Use only with prior permission” in the CUHK guide for AI use by students (https://www.aqs.cuhk.edu.hk/documents/A-guide-for-students_use-of-AI-tools.pdf). Where applicable and permitted, students will be clearly and explicitly informed of when and how they can use these tools which shall be cited or acknowledged in their work. Details will be spelt out clearly in the course outline and/or the instruction of the assignments. Students shall follow the instruction and permission strictly and are expected to understand the limits and appropriate uses of these tools.