

Language, Mind and Brain

LELA10201 // 2016-2017 // Semester 2

Dr. Wendell Kimper
Course Outline

1 Contact

Lecturer

Dr. Wendell Kimper

Email: wendell.kimper@manchester.ac.uk

Office: Samuel Alexander N1.15

Office Hours: Mondays 15:00–16:00, Tuesdays 14:00–15:00

NB: I do my best to answer emails as promptly as possible, but I can't promise an immediate reply on evenings or weekends. Your best chance for a quick response is before 17:00 on week days.

Teaching Assistants

Khawla Ghagoud

Email: khawla.ghadgoud@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk

Office: Samuel Alexander S3.8

Office Hours: Wednesdays 10:00–11:00

Nathan Duckett

Email: nathan.duckett@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk

Office: TBA

Office Hours: TBA

2 Objectives

The goal of this course is to provide you with an introduction to the intersection between language and cognition. We'll explore what makes human language unique, and how it relates both to cognitive functions in the mind and to physical structures in the brain.

In this course, we also hope to introduce you to fundamental aspects of scientific thinking about language — by engaging with the course material, you will gain familiarity with the ways in which hypotheses are posed and tested, the kinds of evidence that are brought to bear on questions of language and cognition, and the good, bad, and ugly of reasoning and argumentation in support of competing theories.

3 Blackboard

Blackboard is the University's eLearning system. Please familiarise yourself with the Blackboard site for this course. Things you will find there include:

- ★ Handouts and lecture slides
- ★ Reading assignments
- ★ Quizzes on the readings
- ★ Essay instructions and submission
- ★ Forum for posting questions
- ★ Announcements
- ★ Bonus materials

Important: Please direct questions you have about the course material to the forum on Blackboard; this way, other students who might have the same question can benefit from the answer as well.

4 Assessment

Reading Assignments — 5%

You must complete weekly reading assignments, and demonstrate that you have completed them by taking a brief quiz on Blackboard. The quiz will be quite simple; if you have done the reading, you should not find it difficult. The questions are fairly arbitrary, and do not reflect which aspects of the reading are actually important.

Unless otherwise announced, deadlines for reading quizzes are 23:59 on Sundays.

Feedback: Answers to the quiz questions will be made available as soon as the deadline for taking the quiz has passed. If you submit questions about the reading, we will make an attempt to discuss these during tutorial.

Participation in a Linguistic Study — 5%

To get first-hand experience of how data collection in linguistics works, you'll need to participate in a linguistic study. Information about how to sign up for a study will be available on Blackboard.

One of the important ethical principles in linguistic data collection is informed consent. If you object to taking part in a study, an alternative assessment can be provided for you.

Tutorials — 10%

In addition to attending tutorials, **you must actively participate in discussions**. Your TA will keep track of your participation.

In order to help you prepare for these discussions and get the most out of your reading, a series of questions will accompany each reading assignment. You are not obligated to hand in written responses to these questions, but should give them some thought — you may be called on to respond to them in tutorial, and it's expected that you'll be prepared.

Feedback: If you have concerns about your participation, please speak with your TA.

Essays — 80%

The primary assessment for this course unit is a series of brief essays. The essays are designed to demonstrate both your understanding of the material and your ability to reason critically about the evidence and argumentation you've seen.

- ★ **Essay #1** (due 23:59 Friday, 14 October): 5%
- ★ **Essay #2** (due 23:59 Friday, 28 October): 10%
- ★ **Essay #3** (due 23:59 Friday, 18 November): 15%
- ★ **Essay #4** (due 23:59 Friday, 16 December): 50%

Feedback: Essays will be marked using a rubric, which will be available to you ahead of time, and suggestions for improvement will be provided. If you would like more detailed feedback, you are encouraged to make an appointment with me to discuss your work. Feedback will be returned no later than 15 working days past the deadline for the assignment, as per School policy.

A Note About Deadlines

“The key to successful procrastination is knowing when the last minute is.” – my dad.

I've set the deadlines to the very end of the day (23:59) for your benefit — but if you have last-minute problems, please don't count on me (or your TAs) being awake that late to answer your questions!

4.1 Mitigating Circumstances

If illness or personal circumstances prevent you from completing assessed work on time or in a manner that best reflects your ability, apply for Mitigating Circumstances via the 'Student Support and Guidance' tab of the SALC Student Intranet. If at all possible, apply for Mitigating Circumstances **before** the deadline has passed.

5 Schedule

Lectures: Mondays 13:00–15:00, Mansfield Cooper G.21

- ★ **Week 1:** Introduction & Language as an Instinct
- ★ **Week 2:** Child Language Development
- ★ **Week 3:** Human Language vs. Animal Communication
- ★ **Week 4:** Language and Cognition
- ★ **Week 5:** Language in Use: Production and Perception
- ★ **Week 6:** READING WEEK
- ★ **Week 7:** Signed Languages
- ★ **Week 8:** Modality: Reading and Writing
- ★ **Week 9:** Functional Localisation
- ★ **Week 10:** Modularity of Mind
- ★ **Week 11:** Brain Imaging
- ★ **Week 12:** Data in Linguistics