Description & objectives

This course will introduce you to the complexity and creativity of the human use of language. Like breathing, walking, and sleeping, producing and understanding language is a natural activity that you engage in, multiple times a day, with little or no conscious awareness or effort. Psycholinguists study the unconscious processes that underlie this ability. The more you understand about language, how it is acquired, and how it is processed, the more you understand about yourself and the people around you.

LCD 105 is a course that all students should enjoy and find valuable, regardless of their major. For Linguistics majors, this course will complement the courses you take that deal with the formal and social aspects of language. For Communication Sciences and Disorders majors, this course provides useful introductory material that will prepare you for other courses in the major.

Learning goals

- **Language Production and Language Perception:** You will develop a basic understanding of how human language is organized, how knowledge of language is acquired, and how knowledge of language is put to use, in the production and comprehension of words, sentences, and pieces of discourse, by monolinguals and bilinguals. (ASHA/CFCC Standard III-B)

- **Principles and Practices of Research:** You will become familiar with a variety of empirical tools used by psycholinguists to study language acquisition and language performance. (ASHA/CFCC Standard III-A and III-F)

The assessments for this class are designed to give you the opportunity to demonstrate how well you are approaching these learning goals over the course of the semester.

Assessment

The basic understanding of language (acquisition, production, perception) that you will develop this semester, along with your growing familiarity with empirical tools used in psycholinguistics, will be measured the following ways, which count toward your final grade as indicated in parentheses.

- **In- and out-of-class participation (15%).** In-class participation work is unannounced and can’t be made up if you’re absent that day. Out-of-class participation is completed electronically through Blackboard (see **Required Materials**, below), and you may complete it as long as the assignment is available in Blackboard (even if it’s well after the due date). We will have about 8 to 10 such assignments. Completion of each assignment will be sufficient for full credit (even if you don’t perform well), because these are intended to be **formative assignments**, for you to see how you’re doing with mastering the material. Be sure and do all of these assignments, to get a perfect score for participation.

- **Online chapter exams (9 × ~5.6% = 50%).** There will be 9 exams, which you will complete online during pre-determined times, each based on the content of the chapters and on the discussions we will have in class. Each exam will consist of 15-20 multiple-choice questions. Taking the practice “self quizzes” on Blackboard may be a good way to prepare for these exams; the “self quizzes” don’t count toward the participation portion of the grade. You will receive partial credit if you take longer than the allotted time. When you submit your online exam, you will receive a grade instantly, but you will not be able to see the questions and your answers. Summaries of the difficult questions will be posted online once everyone submits the exam.

- **Face-to-face final exam (35%).** Since the course content will be covered in a cumulative way (you will need concepts learned early in the semester to learn material later in the semester), our exam will be designed so that it maps onto the cumulative way the class was taught, so it will include questions from all 8 chapters in the book, plus the appendix. **The exam is scheduled for December 19, 11am to 1pm.** If you must miss the final exam (extraordinary circumstances only!), you must notify Professor Fernández in advance, and you must schedule a make-up exam with the departmental office (718-997-2870). **A word of caution:** make-up exams are always essay exams, and students tend not to do as well on them as on the multiple-choice exams.

Some more thoughts about assessments: **Please do not ask for extra-credit work to improve a poor grade. There will be no extra-credit in this class. Check your gradebook regularly, to make sure you’re on schedule with participation assignments and to see how you’re doing with online exams. If you need help estimating your ongoing grade, please contact Olga Ward.**

Required materials


- **Online:** This class is **web-enhanced**, which means that we rely extensively on online technology for our work together. Over 50% of the work you will be required to produce for this class will be submitted electronically, and many of the supplementary study and reading materials are electronic. We will use Blackboard (Queens College’s course management system) to manage all of this online work, including: required multiple-choice chapter exams, out-of-class participation materials, supplementary study and reading
materials, recordings of lectures, discussion about exams, grades, and important announcements. You can access Blackboard through the CUNY Portal (http://www.cuny.edu/) or directly (https://bbhosted.cuny.edu/webapps/login/NoPortal). You may need to install some software for some of the applications you will access through our Blackboard class.

**A recipe for successful performance**

**Attend class** regularly. **Take good notes**, and revise and review them after class. **Read each assignment** twice: the first time, to prepare you for the lectures; the second, to reinforce what you learned in class. Before we begin a unit (units correspond to the chapters in our textbook), browse through the supplementary materials provided online and go over the study questions at the end of the assigned chapter so you will know what to focus on as you’re reading. At the end of the unit, make sure you can answer all the study questions. There will be some overlap between the readings and the lectures; however, you will be responsible for everything in each—so, again, attend class regularly, use your notes, and read all assignments. Complete your participation assignments as they are assigned (don’t wait till the last minute!), and complete the online exams by their due date. Avoid falling behind by pacing yourself with the readings and other assignments, and planning ahead. The workload for this course is not tremendous, but you may find some of the material difficult, because much of it will be new to you. Make it more interesting for yourself by trying to understand the concepts, rather than simply memorizing facts. Finally, if you need help, ask: we can help you form a study group or go over difficult concepts outside of class.

**Behavior in and out of class**

It’s your responsibility to be respectful of others in the class: no talking, no note passing, no loud gum chewing, no paper rattling, no snoring... While you should refrain from talking to your peers during class, you’re encouraged to ask questions and to contribute to class discussions. Try to be on time for class, and don’t leave before it’s over. If you have to leave early, let Professor Fernández know in advance. If you must come in late, enter quietly and find a seat. As a courtesy to your classmates, silence your cell phones and any other technogadgetry during class. Thanks!

If all goes well, we will record all in-class sessions, and recordings will be available through Blackboard. These recordings will only be available to students in the class, for review purposes. If you have questions or concerns about this, please let us know.

You’re welcome to use a laptop or some other electronic device to take notes during class, but remember that distractions from your computer (or cell phone or other electronic device) could affect your retention of the material.

**The work you produce for this class should be your own.** If you aren’t familiar with QC’s (CUNY’s) policy on academic integrity, review it here: http://www.qc.cuny.edu/about/administration/Provost/Policies/Documents/Academic%20Integrity%20Policy.pdf

**Communication**

We both prefer email (eva.fernandez@qc.cuny.edu and vward@qc.cuny.edu) to voicemail. **You must use your Queens College email to communicate with us.** We will email you (individually or as a class) using one of two methods: CUNYfirst and Blackboard. Check to see what email address appears for you in each of those systems, so you know where to look for communications about this class.

It will help us answer you more quickly if all emails you send about this class include “LCD105” in the subject header. Please allow at least 48 hours for a response (more time if it’s a weekend!), though we might occasionally respond sooner than that.

To access your Queens College email, go to http://qcmail.qc.cuny.edu. If you don’t have an account, get one at http://cams.qc.cuny.edu.

**Schedule**

Please refer to our class calendar for up-to-date information on where and when we will meet face-to-face, and what the assignments are and when they are due.

- Watch out for days that we will or will not meet because of peculiarities in the CUNY schedule. (Oct 10 is a Monday schedule; Nov 21 is Thanksgiving Friday)
- Our class calendar will also remind you of the days you do not need to come to class because they are “e-class” days: Sep 21, Oct 5, Oct 19, and Nov 30.

(Online mix for this class: 4 face-to-face days are replaced with online activities, ~15%)

Our class calendar is a public Google calendar, which may change slightly as the semester evolves. Scan the QR code to the right or go to:

- https://www.google.com/calendar/embed?src=54o2tja0r8cghspjvu6o45sh00%40group.calendar.google.com&ctz=America/New_York