Abrahams-Curiel Department of Foreign Literatures & Linguistics

Academic year 2023-24 (תשפ"ד)

Course title (English): Introduction to Cognitive Science: Language Acquisition

Course title (Hebrew): מבוא למדע קוגניטיבי: רכישת שפה

Course number: 133-1-0091

Course slot (semester/s, weekday/s, hours): fall semester, online, weekly meetings Wed. 14-16

Lecturer: Dr. Aviya Hacohen

Lecturer's conference hour and contact details:
Aviya@bgu.ac.il
By appointment

Course description & objectives:
This course is about one of the greatest miracles of the human experience: the acquisition of language. The goal of this course is to introduce students to the field of first language acquisition research; to present them with the fundamental questions of the field; and to familiarize them with some basic methodological tools required for pursuing independent research. We will discuss different language acquisition theories, the development of the various subparts of language and a number of methodologies to study child language. This course is not designed to provide definitive answers; its central aim is to intellectually stimulate the students and motivate them to further explore this incredible capacity which defines us as humans.

Course requirements:
Students are expected to follow the schedule of the course and actively participate in the discussion of each reading assignment using Perusall's annotation platform.
After completing each reading, students should watch all the relevant class presentations. These serve to highlight the most important topics addressed in the reading and are intended to help focus the student on the "take-home message".
It is also highly recommended that students watch and read the relevant supplementary material, such as the videos and extra reading. These will be made available on Perusall.

The **final grade** for the course will be based on:
- Reading and annotations via Perusall (10%) - pass/fail
- Lecture watching (5%) - pass/fail
- Tutorial assignments (25%) - numerical
- Final exam (60%)

Important!
Students must submit at least 80% of reading and tutorial assignments. Failing to do this will result in automatic failure. Note, that 80% is merely the threshold for passing; each assignment still counts towards the final grade.

According to faculty policy, students must earn a passing grade (56) on the final exam in order to pass the course (יש חובת מעבר במבחן גמר)

Extra credit can be earned through:
- Consistently high annotation score (2%)
- Participation (3%)

Topics & bibliography
Topics:
What Is Language Acquisition?
- Problems of language acquisition

Theoretical Approaches to Studying Language Acquisition
- Poverty of the Stimulus
- Competence/performance
- Principles & Parameters

Speech perception in infants
Acquisition under Nontypical Circumstances
- Critical period hypothesis
- modularity

Methods for assessing language development

Selected excerpts from:
Becker, M., & Deen, K. U. (2020). *Language Acquisition and Development: A Generative Introduction*. MIT Press.

Academic honesty
You are highly encouraged to read, discuss and study together with your fellow students, both for the assignments and for the exams. However, all work that you submit in your name, must be **your own original work**. Plagiarism and cheating are forms of academic dishonesty and will be (potentially) rewarded with a failing grade for the entire course.

The university guidelines on academic honesty, is stated in section 4 of the following document: https://in.bgu.ac.il/acadsec/doclib2/plagiarism_eng.pd