

# COGS 101C: Language

Spring 2019

SOLIS 104, Tues / Thurs, 5:00 – 6:20 pm

Instructor: **Kensy Cooperrider** (kcooperrider@ucsd.edu)  
Office hours: Thurs 2 – 3 pm, SSRB 200 suite, or by appointment

TA: **Andrew Shibata** (ashibata@ucsd.edu)  
Discussion section: Monday, 4 – 4:50 pm  
Office hours: Wed 10 – 11 am, CSB 229

IAs: **Brian Nguyen** (bdn003@ucsd.edu)  
Discussion section: Wednesday, 4 – 4:50 pm  
Office hours: Mon 5 – 6 pm, Price Theater Lounge

**Tong Shen** (tos008@ucsd.edu)  
Discussion section: Friday, 12 – 12:50 pm  
Office hours: Fri 1 – 2 pm, Price Theater Lounge

**Course description:** This course is an introduction to the cognitive science of language. We will cover topics such as: how human language differs from animal communication systems; how languages are structured and how they vary; how people use language to communicate about concrete and abstract ideas; how language is processed in the brain; how it develops in children; and how it may have evolved in our species.

**Course objectives:** Students will become familiar with major issues in the study of human language and cognition, as well as develop their abilities to critically evaluate research in the cognitive sciences.

## Schedule:

### Week 1: Language in broad perspective

**(\*\*no sections or office hours this week\*\*)**

Tues, Apr 2 – Course intro: Language in broad perspective

Thurs, Apr 4 – Animal communication systems

Reading: Pagel, '[Q&A: What is human language...?](#)'

**Practice quiz**

## **Week 2: Building blocks of language**

Tues, Apr 9 – Sounds

Listening: Lingthusiasm #12: '[Sounds you can't hear](#)' [transcript [here](#)]

Thurs, Apr 11 – Morphemes and words

Listening: Lingthusiasm #16: '[Learning parts of words](#)' [transcript [here](#)]

**Quiz 1**

## **Week 3: Domains of meaning—Space, senses**

Tues, Apr 16 – Space

Reading: Majid et al., 'The case for space' (on Canvas)

Thurs, Apr 18 – The senses

Reading: Yong, '[Why do most languages have so few words for smells?](#)'

**Quiz 2**

## **Week 4: Domains of meaning—Numbers**

Tues, Apr 23 – Numbers

Reading: Everett, '[How do you count with numbers?](#)'

Thurs, Apr 25: **MIDTERM 1**

## **Week 5: Domains of meaning—Time and metaphors**

Tues, Apr 30 – Time

Reading: Cooperrider & Núñez, '[How we make sense of time](#)'

Thurs, May 2 – Metaphor and analogy

Reading: Casasanto & Bottini, 'Spatial language and abstract concepts' (on Canvas)

**Quiz 3**

## **Week 6: Language in interaction**

Tues, May 7 – Conversation

Reading: Dingemans & Enfield, 'Let's talk' (on Canvas)

Thurs, May 9– Deixis

Reading: **TBA**

**Quiz 4**

### **Week 7: Language in the brain**

Tues, May 14 – Simulating language

Reading: Bergen, 'Meaning and the mind's eye' (on Canvas)

Thurs, May 16 – Reading in the brain

Reading: Dehaene & Cohen, 'The unique role of the visual word form area in reading' (on Canvas)

**Quiz 5**

### **Week 8: Gesture**

Tues, May 21 – Gesture

Reading: Cooperrider & Goldin-Meadow, 'Gesture, language, and cognition' (on Canvas)

Thurs, May 23 – **MIDTERM #2**

### **Week 9: Sign languages**

Tues, May 28 – Sign languages

Reading: Pyers, 'Sign languages' (on Canvas)

Thurs, May 30 – Emerging sign languages

Reading: Goldin-Meadow, 'On inventing language' (on Canvas)

**Quiz 6**

### **Week 10: Evolution of language**

Tues, June 4 – When and why

Reading: Robson, '[In the beginning was the word, and the word was embodied](#)'

Thurs, June 6 – Language emergence

Reading: Scott-Phillips & Kirby, 'Language evolution in the laboratory' (on Canvas)

**FINAL EXAM:** Thursday, June 13, 7:00 – 10:00 pm

### **Grade components**

Midterms (2 x 20%) <i>Mix of multiple-choice and short answer. Non-cumulative.</i>	Total= <b>40%</b>
Final exam <i>Mix of multiple-choice and short answer. Cumulative.</i>	Total= <b>25%</b>
Quizzes (6) <i>About material on week of quiz. Lowest score dropped.</i>	Total= <b>30%</b>
Experiment participation/ summaries	Total = <b>5%</b>

### **Readings and other materials:**

All readings will be available as PDFs through the course Canvas site; in cases where podcasts are assigned, these are linked directly from the syllabus. All assigned reading (or listening) must be completed *\*before\** the class on which the material is assigned.

Clickers will be used for in-class quizzes. Please make sure you have a registered clicker by Tuesday, April 9.

### **Experiment participation:**

In this class you will be required to participate in 3 hours of experiments through the SONA system (<http://ucsd.sona-systems.com/>), worth 5% of your grade.

As an alternative, you may write summaries of articles on topics related to the course (from a pre-approved list to be posted on the course website). Each 1-page write-up must include: (a) a brief summary of the main content; and (b) a critical reflection on the findings or research described. Your first two summaries are worth 1% each, and your third summary is worth 3%.