

Second Language Acquisition

Instructor: David Counselman

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Introduction to the course:

This course serves as an introduction to Second Language Acquisition. Concepts of *human language* and what it means to speak a language will be reviewed and emphasized. Factors leading to the learning and acquisition of a nonnative language will be discussed and studied. Moreover, issues in second language teaching methods will be addressed.

Required materials:

Book: *Second Language Acquisition: An Introductory Course*, 3rd ed. (Susan M. Gass and Larry Selinker)

Other materials to be used will be provided online.

Responsibility of the student:

It is the student's responsibility to prepare for class before each class meeting. Class preparation includes completing assigned readings and reviewing discussion questions for each reading. Students should be prepared to discuss the assigned readings in class and apply new knowledge in group activities. For some classes, written homework will be turned in to verify that students understand the material. If students are unprepared and thus unable to participate in class discussion, their participation grade will be affected.

Objectives:

By the end of this course, students should...

1. be able to discuss the characteristics of human language and what the study of language acquisition entails.
2. be able to explain how first and second language acquisition are similar and how they are different.
3. be familiar with the interaction of second language teaching methodologies and theories of second language learning over the past half century.
4. demonstrate knowledge of research carried out in second language acquisition, including areas that currently lack needed attention.

Evaluation of the student:

In order to evaluate the progress of each student towards the goals listed above, there will be frequent, short, in-class quizzes, and material will be discussed and considered in each class. Homework assignments, quizzes and participation in class discussion will provide students many opportunities to earn credit towards their grade. Additionally, three exams will be given to verify that students are learning and synthesizing material covered. Lastly, so that students can demonstrate their

success at synthesizing material over the semester, they will submit a final paper under guidance by the instructor.

25% exams
25% homework
20% quizzes
20% participation
10% final paper

Exams: There will be three (3) exams throughout the semester:

1. Characteristics and components of human language (objective 1).
2. Differences and similarities in L1 and L2 acquisition (objective 2).
3. Theories and methodologies of L2 teaching (objective 3).

Homework: Written homework assignments will often be completed from the discussion questions found in the textbook. These assignments will allow the instructor to verify that students understand the material being covered and that they are progressing adequately towards the goals outlined above.

Quizzes: There will be frequent, short quizzes given at the beginning of class. These quizzes will provide students the opportunity to demonstrate what they learned or did not understand from the assigned readings. This is an important component of the course, because students' understanding of the readings is essential for making satisfactory progress towards the goals of the course.

Participation: The participation grade will be determined by class attendance and participation in class. Students will be allowed to miss three classes without penalty, but additional unexcused absences will result in a 5-point reduction from the participation grade. For example, if a student misses seven 7 classes, he/she will lose 20 points $((7-3) \times 5)$ from the final participation grade.

Arriving late to class is also not allowed. If a student arrives late 3 times, this will count as an absence towards the participation grade. Moreover, it is not allowed to eat in class, and it is absolutely prohibited to read the newspaper, do crossword puzzles, play games, play with a cell phone or any other similar activity. It is also recommended that cell phones be turned off or to silent during class.

Final paper: To demonstrate their understanding and synthesis of the material covered over the semester, students will submit a final paper in which they propose a study that could be carried out in SLA research. Study proposals should demonstrate evidence of careful planning and consideration of the issues relevant to the topic of investigation (objective 4).

Grade scale:

A	95-100	B	84-86.9	C	70-75.9
A-	90-94.9	B-	80-83.9	D	60-69.9
B+	87-89.9	C+	76-79.9	F	0-59.9

Rules:

1. Courtesy and mutual respect are fundamental. In this class, disrespectful or rude behavior will not be tolerated.
2. Late work will not be accepted, and missed quizzes and exams cannot be made up without a properly documented excuse.
3. All students are expected to follow the rules of participation, and failure to do so will result in a reduction of the participation grade.

Disability Access Statement

The Pennsylvania State University encourages qualified people with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities and is committed to the policy that all people shall have equal access to programs, facilities and admissions without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities.

If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please tell the instructor as soon as possible.

Academic Integrity

The Pennsylvania State University defines academic integrity as the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. All students should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts (Faculty Senate Policy 49-20).

Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of their students. Students who are found to be dishonest will receive academic sanctions and will be reported to the University's Judicial Affairs office for possible further disciplinary sanction. See <http://www.psu.edu/dept/oue/aappm/G-9.html>.