



Language Development in Cross-Cultural Perspective

Course Details

Course Designator & Number: MONT 3121

Number of Credits: 3

Language of Instruction: English

Contact Hours: 45

Instructor: xxx

Course Description

This is an introductory and exploratory course to second language learning for teachers within two different contexts: the US and France/EU. Firstly, it explores the nature of language through the study of its linguistic components. Next, second language acquisition theories are examined – those which relate to both children and adults. These theories of how one learns have influenced teachers and experts about how language should be taught in the classroom. Different key developments in psychology such as behaviorism, founded by B. F. Skinner, which had an overreaching influence on many domains including SLA will be explored. Subsequent research contributions to the field of second language learning by Canale and Swain (1980), Krashen (1980's) and Chomsky (1950's-present) will also be addressed.

The effects of globalization since the end of the cold war has spurred new language learning initiatives within the Western World. The development of the European Union, the Schengen area, the Erasmus programs and the Bologna process have most certainly created needs/motivation for additional language learning. In the US, the proliferation of the Spanish language as well as Chinese and other foreign languages from immigration and a more interconnected world have also motivated policy-makers and educators to think about communication on a more multi-lingual level. Thus, this course aims to explore the political, social, economic and cultural reasons behind language learning initiatives by governmental institutions in the US, France and the greater European Union.

Course Objectives

- To familiarize students with language learning processes and theories
- To introduce students to the basic linguistic concepts of syntax, morphology, phonology and semantics as the foundational elements of language
- To give a greater context to second language learning (SLL) within Europe and the US
- To allow students to reflect on their language learning process and use this as a tool to integrate new information about SLA and SLL

Methodology

This course will be taught through a student-centered methodology. Students are expected to have done readings ahead of time and be prepared for in-class synthesis and analysis of materials. Student contribution is paramount to the meaning making process of this course in terms of personal reflections on language learning and critical analysis of materials brought by the instructor.

Required Reading / Materials

- Canale & Swain (1980)
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Merrill_Swain/publication/31260438_Theoretical_Bases_of_Communicative_Approaches_to_Second_Language_Teaching_and_Testing/links/0c960516b1dadad753000000/TheoreticalBases-of-Communicative-Approaches-to-Second-Language-Teaching-and-Testing.pdf
- Krashen (1983) <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED230069>
- Podcast: NPR – Hidden Brain (Skinner) “When Everything Clicks”
<https://www.npr.org/2018/06/04/616127481/when-everything-clicks-the-power-of-judgment-free-learning>
- Noam Chomsky: mentalist theory video : TBA
- Teaching Pronunciation: Janet Goodwin
- Language Teaching Approaches: An Overview: Marianne Celce-Murcia
- Teaching Grammar: Dain Larsen-Freeman
- Supporting Second Language Children’s Content Learning and Language Development in K-5: Barbara Hawkins

- Excerpts from “The Council of Europe and Language Education”
<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168069e7bd>
- Claire Kramsch on US foreign language education today and the challenges of globalization: video (2017) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ye7oj4ETuF4>
- Reading on syntax and semantics: TBA
- Excerpts from CEFRL
- Current news articles on language learning – The Economist, Aljazeera, The New York Times

Grading

Grading Rubric

Letter Grade	Score or Percentage	Description
A	93–100	Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
A-	90–92	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B+	87–89	
B	83–86	
B-	80–82	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C+	77–79	
C	73–76	
C-	70–72	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet the course requirements.
D+	67–69	

Letter Grade	Score or Percentage	Description
D	60–66	
F	0–59	Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.

Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

Assignments	Percentage of Grade
Discussion and participation in class	25%
Language Learning Journal	25%
Case Study and Presentation	25%
Final exam	25%
Overall grade	100%

Assessment Details

Language Learning Journal: Students will be responsible for one entry in their journal per week. This journal is meant to follow the course in terms of different topics explored, from linguistic features to social and political issues around language learning. Students will reflect on their personal journey in learning French, while paying attention to others' journeys and observations through group discussion. There will be time devoted to each class in which to share observations or reflections from the past week.

Case Study and Presentation: The case study will encompass all of the linguistic elements explored during the first five weeks of the course. Students will have access to non-native speaker speech and will use their knowledge to analyze speech in terms of its grammar structure and phonology. Students will also look into the nature of words and their meanings to identify grammatical problems of individuals

Course Content

Unit 1

What is language learning all about? What is innate? What is learned? SLA Theories

- **Activity:** Lecture/Discussion and first journal entry about the students' language learning process.
- **Assigned Reading:** Canale & Swain, Krashen articles

Unit 2

How are current language teaching methods related to our beliefs about how we learn?

- **Activity:** Lecture/Discussion and listening on Hidden Brain
- **Assigned Viewing/reading:** Noam Chomsky video, Teaching Pronunciation - Goodwin

Unit 3

The sounds of a language: Phonetics and Phonology

- **Activity:** Lecture/discussion and transcription with the IPA
- **Assigned Reading:** Reading on syntax and semantics

Unit 4

The nuts and bolts of a language: syntax and semantics

- **Activity:** Lecture/discussion, speech recording transcription and analysis
- **Assigned Reading:** Teaching Grammar – Larsen-Freeman

Unit 5

Grammar and error correction in SLA

- **Activity:** Lecture/discussion
- **Assigned Reading:** prepare for presentation

Unit 6

- **Activity:** Students Presentations of Case Studies and Discussion
- **Assigned Reading:** Excerpts from “The Council of Europe and Language Education”

Unit 7

Language learning initiatives in France and in the European Union (past and present)

- **Activity:** Lecture/discussion

Unit 8

- **Activity:** Lecture/discussion. Prepare for field trip.
- **Assigned Reading:** Supporting Second Language Children’s Content Learning and Language Development in K-5: Barbara Hawkins

Unit 9

- **Field Trip:** Trip to Jean Jacques Rousseau pre-school and kindergarten
- The purpose of this trip is to meet with various the principle of the school discuss how the initiatives that France and the European Union has set forth for foreign language learning have been implemented within the context of preschool. Students bring questions concerning issues such as, but not limited to: 1. Students’ mother tongues, 2. Language teaching methodology employed, 3. Attitudes toward learning a second language, 4. The students’ future in primary school learning...etc.
- **Assigned reading:** Excerpts from CEFRL

Unit 10

What is the CEFRL? Language initiatives in France

- **Activity:** Lecture/Discussion and Debrief on trip to JJ Rousseau
- **Assigned Reading: Assignment:** Prepare questions for the upcoming visit to Nevers High School

Unit 11

- **Field Trip:** Trip to Nevers High school

- The purpose of this trip is to meet with various English teachers and discuss how the initiatives that France and the European Union has set forth for foreign language learning have been implemented within the context of high school.
- **Assigned Viewing:** Kramsch Video

Unit 12

Topic: Language learning goals, initiatives and implementation in the US context.

Influencing factors: social, economic, political

- **Activity:** Lecture/Discussion and Debrief on trip to JJ Rousseau.
- **Assigned Reading:** Assignment: Current news articles – Economist, Aljazeera, New York Times

Unit 13

Politics shaping the future of SLL in the US: new trends and opinions

- **Activity:** Lecture/Discussion and turn in Language Journal
- **Assigned Reading:** prepare for the final exam

Unit 14

- **Activity:** Final Exam and Final discussion

Policies

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an "F" or "N" for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found [on the Learning Abroad Center website](#).