

Ling 499: Laboratory in Child Language Learning

Professor Jeffrey Lidz
Tara Mease, Lab Manager

Ling 499 is an individualized and collaborative research course aimed at developing skills for laboratory research in language acquisition. The particular objectives of the semester will vary by individual, though all participants should have the goals of learning how developmental linguistic research is conducted and participating in the creation of new research findings in this field.

Lab Work:

- Respect the children and parents who you interact with.
 - Communicate clearly and helpfully with parents in your interactions over the phone or in email.
 - Treat parents and children as important collaborators in your research activities.
 - If parents and children are not made to feel at home in the laboratory, we will not be able to conduct our research.
- Respect your lab mates. This means being friendly, cooperative and open to providing and receiving constructive criticism, advice and assistance.
- Be a good communicator.
- Focus on quality work, not quantity. It is more important to do your work carefully and double check it than to do lots of work. Mistakes in the lab can be expensive, both in terms of resource utilization and data quality.
- Respect your time commitments. Once your hours are fixed for the semester, any deviations require prior communication with Tara. Those hours should be made up in a timely fashion.
- Take responsibility for your progress. If you are having trouble understanding your task or knowing what to do next, ask. Try to identify both what you do well and what you need help with.
- If there is assigned reading for the lab meeting, please be sure to read it carefully and to come to the meeting with questions and ideas.
- Training will continue throughout the semester.

Lab Meetings:

- We will meet twice weekly to focus on one study at a time, discussing the research goals, background, linguistic theory, results, data interpretations and follow-up study options.
- *Presentations:* Everyone will have the opportunity to co-lead a lab meeting presentation, with the principle investigator of the study you are focusing on. We'll guide you through the preparation.
 - Communicating about research will help enrich and deepen your understanding of the goals of the lab and the goals of developmental linguistics more generally. It is important to be able to explain the research to parents, family and friends, as well as other researchers.
- We will assign related readings and preparatory questions, and expect your participation in discussions.

Evaluation:

- Grades: 25% lab meeting participation and presentation, 75% lab work.
- We select students who we think will be motivated by the experience of working in the lab so we don't expect your focus to be on your grade. Factors we consider in giving grades are effort, attitude, quality of work, and participation over the course of the semester.
- If you have any concerns about your grade, please talk to us, but our concern is almost exclusively having a well functioning lab in which you are able to contribute to high quality research program. If we have concerns about how you are contributing to the lab, we'll address it a timely fashion and give guidance for improvement.
- At the end of the semester, we ask that you evaluate your experience here and we'll provide you with written feedback as well.