

## Ling 499a Spring 2009

“Seminar in Psycholinguistics: The grammar, processing and learning of (long-distance) dependencies”

### Time & Place

**Time:** Tu-Th 9:30 – 10:45am

**Place:** 3416 MMH (the conference room in the upstairs CNL lab)

### Instructor Information

Instructor: Akira Omaki

Office: Marie Mount Hall 1413E (Knock the 1413 door to enter)

Email: [omaki@umd.edu](mailto:omaki@umd.edu) \*email is the best way to get in touch\*

Phone: 301-405-8306

Office hours: Tuesday & Thursday 10:45am-11:45am, or **by appointment**

### Course Web Page

The course webpage is at

[http://www.ling.umd.edu/~omaki/teaching/Ling499A\\_spring09/Ling499A\\_spring09.htm](http://www.ling.umd.edu/~omaki/teaching/Ling499A_spring09/Ling499A_spring09.htm)

Schedule updates, assignments, announcements and slides from lecture will be posted on this site, although I may occasionally send email about important announcements.

### Course description:

Long-distance dependency (e.g., wh-movement like "Who<sub>1</sub> did John say Mary kissed t<sub>1</sub>?") is one of the hallmarks of human language, and at the same time presents non-trivial challenges for a) the language comprehension mechanism due to the memory burden, as well as b) language learners as long-distance dependencies show large variations across languages. In this class, we investigate processing and learning of long-distance dependencies while also discussing some syntax papers as they relate to issues in processing and learning. The relevant background knowledge for psycholinguistics and language acquisition will be provided in lectures. The class requires students to actively engage in small research projects with the instructor's guidance, and thus helps students to learn to design, conduct, and analyze data from an experimental study.

Evidence will include data from various behavioral experiments, some of which will be gathered by students.

**Knowledge of Syntax I (LING311) assumed; No knowledge of psychology required.** The course requirements will involve reading from the primary literature, leading class discussions and giving presentations, conducting experiments and analyzing data.

### Readings:

Readings will be distributed electronically.

### Student Responsibilities:

You are expected to take responsibility for your own learning! (The instructor's job is to facilitate that learning process and provide you with resources.)

Attend class. You will be responsible for all the material covered in class as well as in the readings.

Complete lab reports thoroughly and on time. This is a hands-on course where you will learn to work with a variety of psycholinguistic techniques and learn to think critically about issues in the field. It is crucial that you do the lab reports on time in order to learn the skills required to be successful in the course. Later material will build on earlier material.

Communicate. If you have any trouble with the course, if you have an emergency where you need to miss class (especially more than one class), or if you are experiencing an illness or any other situation which is interfering with your ability to participate fully in the course, make sure that you contact us as soon as possible to let us know what is happening. Letting us know of a problem in a timely manner helps to make sure that we can accommodate your needs. There can be no adjustments to grades or accommodations made that will affect your grade once the semester is completed. Therefore, you **MUST** keep us informed of how you are doing and *talk to us about any kind of special situation well in advance of the end of the course.*

Come see me. If you would like to simply talk about the material covered in class more in depth or if you are having any difficulty in the course, feel free to make an appointment with one of us.

Participate in class discussion with thoughtful and constructive comments and questions. Participating in class is valuable because it helps you to be an active listener and increases the likelihood that you will understand and retain the material. Please ask questions in class if there is something you do not understand.

Avoid disruptive or distracting behavior. Be respectful to your instructors and peers and sensitive to the needs of those around you. **Cell phones should be turned off during class** (people with potential emergencies can leave their phones on vibrate.) Inappropriate behaviors during class include: reading newspapers, reading your email, engaging in private conversations with your neighbors, sleeping.

#### **Attendance Policy:**

Religious holidays: The University of Maryland's policy provides that students should not be penalized because of observances of their religious beliefs. Students shall be given an opportunity, whenever feasible, to make up within a reasonable time any academic assignment that is missed due to individual participation in religious observances. It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor of any intended absences for religious observances *before* the day to be missed.

#### **Students with Disabilities**

If you have a physical disability or a learning disability, it is your responsibility to bring it to our attention at the beginning of the course – before any exams or assignments are due. We will make every effort to accommodate your needs.

#### **Evaluation**

Presentations	10%	[present two research articles in class]
Summaries	30%	[write summaries/critiques of designated readings]
Lab Reports	40%	[completing 4 lab project reports]
Final Project	20%	[your own research proposal]

Please email any questions about assignments to us in sufficient time! Not understanding the assignment (when you have not asked for help) is not an acceptable excuse.

Lab reports are to be turned in at the beginning of class the day they are due. If you are unsure if you will be able to make it to class on time, email us the completed assignment in advance. **As a rule, late lab reports will not be accepted for full credit.** If you run into problems, you may contact us and if we agree, you can turn in a late lab report. Late lab reports will receive a 25% penalty and will not be accepted any later than the class following the day on which they were due. **Incompletes will not be given for this seminar.**

**There is NO final exam in this class!**

## Academic Honesty:

We follow the University's policies on academic honesty and will report any form of cheating according to these policies. Please review the terms and penalties of the Student Honor Council's Code of Academic Integrity at: <http://www.shc.umd.edu/code.html>. According to this code plagiarism is defined as "intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise." This is regarded as a form of academic dishonesty and suspected cases of plagiarism will be referred to the Honor Code for subsequent action. The grade of XF is listed on the transcripts of individuals found to have plagiarized work; this grade means an F was received because of academic dishonesty."

In accord with the Code, students will be required to write and sign the following statement on each exam, quiz and assignment:

*"I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination (or assignment)."*

You can learn a lot from working through problems with others, and for this reason collaboration on homework assignments is encouraged in this course. However, collaboration can only work effectively if you do so responsibly, and follow acceptable practices of academic honesty. If you work in a group, you should do the following:

- Write up your assignment *yourself*, even if you have worked on it as part of a group. If you have edited or simply copied your friend's assignment, then you have not written up your assignment yourself.
- Don't hand in something that your group worked on that you don't fully understand - this is plagiarism, and it is dishonest.
- If you work as part of a group, you **must write this at the top of your assignment**, and give the names of the people you worked with. If you fail to do this, it will be treated as plagiarism.
- If you are in any doubt, consult the [University Policy on Academic Integrity](#). We treat cases of academic dishonesty seriously.

Grading scale. The grades are not on a curve, so you are not competing against your classmates.

98-100	A+	73-79	C+
93-97	A	73-76	C
90-92	A-	70-72	C-
87-89	B+	67-69	D+
83-86	B	63-66	D
80-82	B-	60-62	D-
		59 and below	F

## Schedule

The schedule is a **tentative** outline of the course. The schedule of topics is subject to change over the course of the semester. **Readings should be read for the day of class listed (updated list will be available on the course webpage).** Unless otherwise noted, you are required to e-mail us a short paragraph summary of the main points of the paper being discussed that day, as well as any questions you may have about the experiments/discussion. This is due before class. Details about reading assignments and homework will be made as the semester progresses.

Week	Date	Topic	Readings	Assignment
1	Tue., Jan. 27	Introduction/Course Overview		
	Thu., Jan. 29	Levels of analysis	Marr 1982	
2	Tue., Feb. 03	Syntax of LDD: Intro	Intro wh-syntax	
	Thu., Feb. 05	Syntax of LDD 2: Constraints	Boeckx 2008	Lab 1 assigned
3	Tue., Feb. 10	Syntax of LDD 3: Diversity	Watanabe; Lutz et al	
	Thu., Feb. 12	Sentence processing intro	Crocker; van Gompel & Pickering	
4	Tue., Feb. 17	Incrementality & Prediction	<b>Kamide &amp; Mitchell</b>	<b>Lab 1 due;</b> Lab 2 assigned
	Thu., Feb. 19	Processing of LDD	<b>Stowe; Gibson</b>	
5	Tue., Feb. 24	Processing of LDD 2	Sussman & Sedivy; <b>Aoshima et al.</b>	
	Thu., Feb. 26	Processing of LDD 3	Kluender; <b>Phillips</b>	
6	Tue., Mar. 03	Lab intro		<b>Lab 2 due;</b> Lab 3 assigned
	Thu., Mar. 05	Intro acquisition	Gleitman & Newport	
7	Tue., Mar. 10	Intro acquisition 2	Lidz	
	Thu., Mar. 12	Child parser	Trueswell et al	
8	Tue., Mar. 17	<b>SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS</b>		
	Thu., Mar. 19	<b>SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS</b>		
9	Tue., Mar. 24	Child parser 2	<b>Thothathiri &amp; Snedeker</b>	
	Thu., Mar. 26	<b>Data collection day! (Akira away)</b>		
10	Tue., Mar. 31	Child parsing & Learning	<b>Savage et al</b>	
	Tue., Apr. 02	Developing simple wh	<b>Seidl et al.; O'Grady chapter</b>	<b>Lab 3 due</b>
11	Tue., Apr. 07	Developing LD wh; Lab intro2	de Villiers et al.; Crain & Thornton	Lab 4 assigned
	Thu., Apr. 09	Developing constraints 1	<b>Roeper &amp; de Villiers</b>	
12	Tue., Apr. 14	Developing constraints 2	TBA	
	Thu., Apr. 16	<b>Data collection day! (Akira away)</b>		
13	Tue., Apr. 21	Subj-Aux inversion	<b>Valian &amp; Casey</b>	
	Thu., Apr. 23	Subj-Aux inversion 2	<b>Ambridge et al</b>	
14	Tue., Apr. 28	Learning dependencies	<b>Santelmann &amp; Juczyk</b>	
	Thu., Apr. 30	Learning dependencies 2	<b>Gomez &amp; Maye</b>	
15	Tue., May 05	Spill over		<b>Lab 4 due</b>
	Thu., May 07	Spill over		
16	Tue., May 12	Wrap-up		<b>Final paper Due on May 16<sup>th</sup>!</b>