

English 562  
**PSYCHOLINGUISTICS**  
Fall 2015--T 4:30-7:10

**Instructor:** Dr. Edward Matthei  
Office: HL 3rd Floor Lounge area  
Office hours: T 3:15 – 4:15 and by email and appointment

**Telephone:** 903-886-5260 (Department Office—for messages)

**E-Mail:** Ed.Matthei@tamuc.edu

***Required Textbook***

Steven Pinker. *The Language Instinct* (2007). Harper Perennial.

I will also distribute some other readings in class. These will usually be scanned and sent to you as email attachments. I may also send you a link to sources available in various data bases in the Library, also via email.

***Course objectives and description***

This course will acquaint you with the study of our abilities to use and learn language. Topics will include such things as the basics of linguistic description and theory, the basic mechanisms that underlie speaking and understanding language, the neurological/biological bases for language processing and language development, an outline of the course of first language acquisition, and a discussion of the issues surrounding theories of first (and, mixed in among all topics, second) language acquisition.

At the end of the course you should have acquired the skills and knowledge that will enable you to understand and evaluate new research in the field(s) you have studied.

In order to complete the course successfully, you will be expected to read all assignments and participate actively in class discussions. I will feel free to ask you general questions about the readings in class for the day they are assigned, and I will expect informed responses. I will be presenting lots of material in class that will not be covered in the textbook readings, so class attendance is essential. You will be expected to write three (3) short term papers, which will take the form of reviews of articles in the current scholarly literature. (See Appendix I, below)

***Class Activities and Assignments***

***Examinations***

There will be no examinations. However, if it becomes clear that too many of you are coming to class without having read the assigned readings, I reserve the right to add quizzes or exams in order to provide

a bit of motivation.

### *Term Papers*

You will be required to write three short (3-7 pp.) papers which will take the form of a critical summary of an article you have chosen from the current (within the last five years or so) scholarly literature in the area. The requirement that the articles be drawn from the literature of the last five years can be relaxed with permission depending on your interests. Information about this assignment is contained in a separate Appendix attached to this document.

### *Class Discussions*

You will be expected to do the assigned reading for each class and be ready to participate actively in discussions and evaluations of assigned materials. Classes will be structured so that the first part will primarily be me presenting the scheduled topic; the second part of class will be our discussion of the assigned chapter in the Pinker book.

### *Attendance*

You must attend class regularly. Much of the material for this course will be presented by me in class, so it is to your benefit to attend regularly and punctually. Do not be chronically late; it makes a bad impression.

If you need to leave class early, please inform me before the class begins. Please do not just leave class. You do not need to ask permission to leave class for a short period of time.

***N.B. If you are having difficulties in this class, if you have questions about the materials, or if you just want to talk, please contact me. If you cannot meet me during scheduled office hours, we can arrange a time convenient to you and me. You can always e-mail, too.***

### *Courtesy*

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Student's Guidebook*, Policies and Procedures, Code of Student Conduct)

I expect that students will exhibit courtesy toward others in class. Courtesy means NOT engaging in such behaviors as continually entering late, reading outside material during class, talking when others are speaking, or refusing to focus on group or class discussion. Courtesy means engaging in such behaviors as being on time, listening carefully to others, accepting that various points of views can be valid, and treating others as you wish to be treated. **A student who consistently disrupts the learning of others can expect penalties ranging from being asked to leave class to being dropped from the class.**

**Finally, please turn off cellular phones during this class, unless, of course, you are a doctor, EMT, volunteer firefighter, or nurse.**

## ***Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty***

Plagiarism is the presentation of the words or ideas of another person as your own. Plagiarism or cheating on exams will result in a failing grade for the work and may result in a failing grade for the course and other sanctions, including being reported to the Department Head and the Dean of Students for further sanctions. Be sure to give credit in your papers for all borrowed language and ideas. I will assume that you are able to distinguish scholastic use of sources and cooperative work with your classmates from plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. If you have any questions, however, please speak to me. No level of dishonesty is acceptable. (Please see the appended *Academic Honesty* statement of the Department of Literature and Languages)

## ***Evaluation***

Your grade in this course will depend on your scores on the following:

Grading Scale		
First Paper	= 100pts	270 - 300 (90%-100%) = A
Second Paper	= 100 pts.	240 - 269 (80%- 89%) = B
Third Paper	= 100 pts.	210 - 239 (70%-79%) = C
		180 - 209 (60%- 69%) = D
		179 and below = F
<b>Total</b>	<b>= 300 pts.</b>	

## **University Specific Procedures**

### **Student Conduct**

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See current Student Guidebook).

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: [Netiquette http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html](http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html)

### **ADA Statement**

#### ***Students with Disabilities***

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

#### ***Office of Student Disability Resources and Services***

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 132

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: [Rebecca.Tuerk@tamuc.edu](mailto:Rebecca.Tuerk@tamuc.edu)

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

### **Nondiscrimination Notice**

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

### **Department Policy Statement:**

Students who have concerns regarding their courses should first address those concerns with the assigned instructor in order to reach a resolution. Students who are unsatisfied with the outcome of that conversation or have not been able to meet individually with their instructor, whether in-person, by email, by telephone, or by another communication medium, should then schedule an appointment with the Department Head or Assistant Department Head by completing a Student Grievance Form (available in the main office, HL 141). In the event that the instructor is the Department Head, the student should schedule a meeting with the Dean of the College of Arts, Sciences, and Humanities after following the steps outlined above; if the instructor is the Assistant Department Head, students should schedule a meeting with the Department Head. Where applicable, students should also consult [University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.05](#) (“Student Appeal of Instructor Evaluation”).

### ***Inclement Weather***

The A&M-Commerce website @ [www.tamu-commerce.edu](http://www.tamu-commerce.edu) and the emergency weather line at 903-886-5005 are sources for closing information. You can also sign up for text messaged or emailed alerts.

### ***Tentative Course Schedule***

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Pinker Reading</u>
Aug. 31	Introduction	
Sept. 7	Speech Perception	Chap. 1
Sept. 14	Sentence Perception	Chap. 2
Sept. 21	Sentence Perception (cont.) and the Lexicon	Chap. 3
Sept. 28	Brain and Language	Chap. 4
Oct. 5	Brain and Language (cont.)	Chap. 5
<b>Paper #1 Due Oct. 8</b>		
Oct. 12	Speech Production	Chap. 6
Oct. 19	Sentence Production	

Oct. 26	Sentence Production	Chap. 7
Nov. 2	Language Development ( Intro. And Phonological Development)	Chap. 8
<b>Paper # 2 Due Nov. 5</b>		
Nov. 9	Language Development (Syntax)	Chap. 9
Nov. 16	The Innateness Controversy	Chap. 10
Nov. 23	More Language Development	Chap. 11
Nov. 30	“Talking” Animals	Chap. 12
Dec. 7	Class Discussion of Individual Researches	Chap. 13
Dec. 14	Finals Week	
<b>Paper #3 Due Dec.16</b>		

## Appendix I

### English 562 Psycholinguistics

#### Information about Research Reviews

Your assignment is to find an article in the recent scholarly literature on a topic that both interests you and is related to the course. You will then read it and write a brief (about 3-7 pages) critical review of the article. By “recent” I mean sometime in the last five years (i.e., between 2009 and now.) The subject of the article is up to you, and I will interpret “related to the course” very broadly. I will be much more concerned with the source of the article than the topic. If you have any questions about sources or topics, see me. **You must get approval from me of the source.**

**Topics:** Anything related to the course material is fair game. First or Second Language Acquisition. Brain and Language (Neurolinguistics). Psycholinguistics (sentence processing, speech perception/production, etc.) Language Teaching Methods. Animal Language. Artificial Intelligence/Computerized Speech/Language Processing. You name it!

**Sources:** Your source should be an article from one of the scholarly/professional journals in the subject area or field of your choice. Here’s a list (not exhaustive by any means, just as many as I can come up with off the top of my head):

*Language; Psychological Science; Psychological Bulletin; Psychological Review; Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance; Cognition; Developmental Psychology; Child Development; Journal of Child Language; First Language; Brain and Language; Cognitive Neuroscience; Cognitive Science; Science; Journal of the Acoustical Society of America; Pediatrics; Journal of the American Medical Association; The Lancet; Science; Nature.*

You can go over to the Library and go to the stacks or the Current Periodical section and leaf through the actual journals. Or you can search through the data bases that are available through the Library Website.

**Data Bases:** The Library gives you access to a wide range of searchable data bases in a variety of topic areas. Some of them (JSTOR is one) will give you direct access to the journal articles themselves online. Go to the Library home page from the TAMU-Commerce homepage. There is a relatively new “Search Databases” function there that will allow you to search multiple data bases and sources; it will also tell you which articles are available online in “full text” –those are great because you can access the whole article directly. There is also “Databases” that you can click on from one of the Library pages from there you can see a list of databases arranged by subject area.

If you are not familiar with the ins and outs of the Library and all the online resources there, I suggest that you visit the Library Reference section and ask one of the Reference Librarians for help. These folks get lonely over there and all of them will be delighted to show you all the great stuff they have available to you. Once you know how to navigate the system, you’ll be able to access it from your computer at home or wherever—all you need to do is log onto the Library system the same way you log onto MyLeo.

**The Critical Review:** A **critical** review is one that shows your reader that you’ve thought about what you’ve read. Being critical does not mean you have to say something bad or find something wrong with

the article. Those guys who review movies on TV sometimes like the movies they see--but, like it or not, they always tell **why** they felt the way they did about the movie. That's a critical review!

Here are some guidelines for your review of the article you chose:

- Briefly summarize the article in a way that demonstrates that you have read and understood the article—whatever opinions you express about the article will be meaningless unless you demonstrate that you have truly comprehended its contents.
- Let what you want to say about the article determine, to some extent, which things you include in your summary. You needn't include every little detail in your summary.
- Evaluate the article. Did you learn something of use from it? Did it give you something that you might be able to use in your work or eventual career? Did it answer a question that you had about something you learned about in class? Did it just give you some information about something that you were curious about? Did the data presented in the article support the conclusions? Was there something you think the authors should have done differently?
- Back up your opinions/evaluations with clearly reasoned arguments and information drawn from this course or other courses you've taken and other aspects of your experience.

**Length:** About 7 double-spaced pages (3-10 or thereabouts).

**Attach** a copy of the article to your review when you turn it in.

**Due:** As indicated in the Course Schedule. I encourage you to turn your review in as early as you can— if you turn it in before it's due you may revise and resubmit it for a better grade.

**Advice:** You will be reading things that are written for people working in the field. You may encounter jargon, statistical methods, and styles of writing that are unfamiliar to you. More often than not they're just using fancy words or professional shorthand, I can usually give you a pretty good non-technical translation/explanation. That's part of my job, and it's something I enjoy doing. So.....**If you have a question about anything in the article you chose, ASK ME ABOUT IT!!!**

## Appendix II

Department of Literature and Languages  
Texas A&M University-Commerce

Policy #12  
April 28, 2003

### ACADEMIC HONESTY

Preamble. Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all their scholastic work. Faculty members are expected to employ teaching practices that encourage academic honesty.

1. Academic Dishonesty Defined. Texas A&M University-Commerce defines “academic dishonesty” in the following way (Procedure A13.12 “Academic Honesty”):

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism (the appropriation or stealing of the ideas or words of another and passing them off as one’s own), cheating on exams or other course assignments, collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with others in preparing course assignments), and abuse (destruction, defacing, or removal) of resource material.

2. “Plagiarism” Further Specified. The Department of Literature and Languages builds on the university definition of “plagiarism,” given in 1, in the following manner (taken from “Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism: The WPA [Council of Writing Program Administrators] Statement on Best Practices,” undated, pages 1-2, 12 March 2003.

<<http://www.ilstu.edu/~ddhesse/wpa/positions/WPAplagiarism.pdf>>):

Plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else’s language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source. [. . .] Ethical writers make every effort to acknowledge sources fully and appropriately in accordance with the contexts and genres of their writing. A student who attempts (even if clumsily) to identify and credit his or her source, but who misuses a specific citation format or incorrectly uses quotation marks or other forms of identifying material taken from other sources, has not plagiarized. Instead, such a student should be considered to have failed to cite and document sources appropriately.

3. “Collusion” Further Specified. Collusion specifically includes selling academic products. According to the Texas Penal Code (Title 7 Offenses Against Property, Chapter 32 Fraud, § 32.50 Deceptive Preparation and Marketing of Academic Product), an “academic product” means a term paper, thesis, dissertation, essay, report, recording, work of art, or other written, recorded, pictorial, or artistic product or material submitted or intended to be submitted by a person to satisfy an academic requirement of the person.”

The Texas Penal Code also specifies that person commits a Class C misdemeanor offense “if, with intent to make a profit, the person prepares, sells, offers or advertises for sale, or delivers to another person an academic product when the person knows, or should reasonably have known, that a person intends to submit or use the academic product to satisfy an academic requirement of a person other than the person who prepared the product.”

4. Responsibility. Matters of academic dishonesty are handled initially by the instructor. If the instructor feels the problem warrants more attention, it should then be pursued through the department head. If the department head and instructor wish, it should be brought to the attention of the dean of the college for study and review before being referred to the University Discipline Committee (adapted from Texas A&M University-Commerce Procedure A13.04, “Plagiarism”).

Instructors may also choose to refer cases directly to the University Discipline Committee (Texas A&M University-Commerce Code of Student Conduct 6.a[2]).

5. Statement for Course Outlines. Instructors of record in the Department of Literature and Languages are required to include an Academic Honesty statement in all course outlines. The following language is suggested for that statement:

*Instructors in the Department of Literature and Languages do not tolerate plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. Instructors uphold and support the highest academic standards, and students are expected to do likewise.*

*Penalties for students guilty of academic dishonesty include disciplinary probation, suspension, and expulsion. (Texas A&M University-Commerce Code of Student Conduct 5.b[1,2,3])*

6. This Policy supersedes Department of Literature and Languages Policy #12, “Plagiarism,” dated October 10, 1990, and will be effective until further notice.

7. The Head of the Department of Literature and Languages is responsible for maintaining this policy current.

Gerald Duchovnay, Head  
Department of Literature and Languages  
April 28, 2003

xc: Dean of Arts & Sciences  
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Services