

IGERT Foundations II (LING 6120 / PSYC 5570-002)
'Language Acquisition, Structure & Psycholinguistics'

Fall 2013: Fridays, 9:05am - 12:05 PM in Oak 338

Instructors: Whitney Tabor and William Snyder

Course Description:

This course examines the relationship between linguistic theory, which tends to emphasize ideal structures, and psycholinguistic theory, which tends to focus on the interface between language and the world. Through readings, discussions, and exercises, the course provides a foundation in key concepts and mechanisms for students without previous graduate-level training in one or both of these areas. Students from a wide variety of backgrounds (not limited to psychology and linguistics) are welcome.

Course Requirements:

(i) Participation in classroom discussion. (ii) In-class exercises. (iii) Assigned readings, to be announced in class. (Please be prepared to discuss them at the next class meeting.) (iv) Homework exercises. (An exercise, due the following week, will sometimes be distributed with the reading assignment.)

Communication:

If you have questions about anything in the course (or related matters) you can raise them during class, or you can feel free to meet with the instructors outside of class, by appointment.

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Very Tentative Schedule:

Aug. 30 (Discussion led by Tabor & Snyder)

Course overview: For generative linguistics and for contemporary psycholinguistics, what are the principal questions? What would count as an answer?

Sep. 6 (Discussion led by Snyder)

Syntax overview (1): Phrase structure; movement; theory of grammar.

Sep. 13 (Discussion led by Snyder)

Syntax overview (2): Constraints on movement; relativized minimality.

Sep. 20 (Discussion led by Tabor)

Garden paths (1): Standard approaches; the modularity question.

Sep. 27 (Discussion led by Tabor)

Garden paths (2): Trace-related effects; statistical approaches; neuropsychological evidence.

Oct. 4 (Discussion led by Snyder)

Syntactic derivations: Bottom-up or top-down?

Oct. 11 (Discussion led by Snyder)

Syntax and psycholinguistics: Islands – competence or performance? (RT, EEG, fMRI)

Oct. 18 (Discussion led by Tabor)

Emergence (1): Neural-net models; relation to neuroscience.

- Oct. 25** (Discussion led by Tabor)
Emergence (2): Neural nets and classical representations.
- Nov. 1** (Discussion led by Snyder)
Acquisition (1): Syntactic variation and child language acquisition.
- Nov. 8** (Discussion led by Snyder)
Acquisition (2): Formal learnability theory; PLD; parameter setting; Bayesian learning.
- Nov. 15** (Discussion led by Tabor)
Emergence (3): Statistical modeling; processing and development; local coherence.
- Nov. 22** (Discussion led by Tabor)
Brain: Imaging; EEG; training effects.
- Dec. 6** (Discussion led by Snyder & Tabor)
Synthesis.