How Languages are Learned (LING 251)/
Second Language Acquisition (LING 553)*

*NOTE: undergrads, please enroll in LING 251, graduate-level enroll in LING 553. The course is the same but there will be a different evaluation process for the final project based on level.

Dates/Times:

June 7 -July 9 2021 // Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursdays 1:00-3:00 pm ET

Location:

This course will be held virtually on Canvas and Zoom. Mondays and Wednesdays will be asynchronous meetings while Tuesdays and Thursdays we will meet synchronously on zoom.

Professor:

Dr. Lara Bryfonski, Assistant Professor, Department of Linguistics

(Applied Linguistics Concentration)

Email: Lara.bryfonski@georgetown.edu

Website: https://sites.google.com/view/larabryfonski

Virtual Office hours: https://calendly.com/larabryfonski/office-hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will introduce you to central questions, theories, debates, and research findings in the areas of second language acquisition (SLA) and teaching, a field that is concerned with the central question: How are second languages learned and how might they best be taught? We will address this and many other questions central to this quickly growing field such as:

- What stages do children go through in acquiring a first language? Is this the same for second languages?

- Is it possible to attain 'native-like' proficiency if you start learning a language after childhood?

- What does it mean to be 'bilingual'? Do you have to speak both languages equally well?

- How might language learning occur most effectively after childhood?

- What roles do conversational interaction and receiving feedback play in second-language development?

- How do individual differences such as intelligence, aptitude, and motivation affect L2 development? Are some people just *better* than others at second language learning?

- Are there differences in how languages may best be learned across different contexts (e.g., naturalistic exposure vs. classroom instruction vs. study abroad)? What about through different teaching methods?

- What is the role of technology in second language learning? Can we learn languages just as well online as we do face-to-face?

- What are the cognitive benefits of knowing more than one language? Can knowing another language affect the way you think?

We will accomplish this by critically evaluating foundational and current work in these areas, as well as considering how theories and research findings can inform current educational policies and practice.

The class will be interactive, with a combination of asynchronous video lectures, podcasts, discussion boards, and synchronous small-group and whole-class discussions. The course is designed for any students (for example, linguistics, education, world languages, psychology, anthropology etc.) interested in deepening their understanding of second language learning scholarship and developing the ability to be a critical consumer of research.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Understand and critically evaluate seminal and current research in the field of SLA and connect research findings to practical issues.
2. Debunk commonly held misconceptions and myths related to second language acquisition and development based on research findings.
3. Craft clear and coherent analytic arguments as they apply to issues in SLA research.
4. Design, carry out, and report on an original research project on a current issue related to SLA topics covered in this class.

Note: As with any course, this syllabus provides a general description of the purpose, methods, content, and requirements; specifics may be modified during the semester in response to class needs.

COURSE READINGS

Textbook:
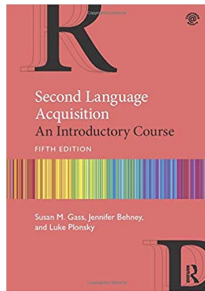
Gass, S. M., Behney, J. & Plonsky, L. (Eds.) (2020). *Second Language Acquisition: An Introductory Course.* 5th Edition. Routledge. *The 4th edition is available as a free e-book from the [GU library.](#)

There are some small differences between versions, but if you have an older version just double check the chapters match up.

All other readings will be posted as PDFs on Canvas. See the final page of this syllabus for more recommended resources.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING CRITERIA

Graded Assignments

Your grade will be determined according to the following weighting:

- o   Participation   30%
    (active attendance and participation in zoom meetings,
    completing readings, watching lecture or other videos,
    discussion board posts, other online interactions)

- o   Homework assignments   10%

    -3 short HW assignments (5% each)
- o   Research Article Facilitation   20%
    (short group presentation on a seminal/recent
    empirical article related to the topic of that week)

- o   Final research project/paper:

    -Virtual presentation   15%

    -Final paper   25%

Grading Scheme

- Letter grade: 93 - 100 % = A, 90 - 92 % = A-, 87 - 89 % = B+, 83 - 86 % = B, 80 - 82 % = B-, 77 - 79 % = C+, 73 - 76 % = C, 70 - 72 % = C, 67 - 69 % = D+, 60 - 66 % = D, Below 60 % = F
- Other options: you may have the option to take the class S/CR/NC. Check MyAccess for details and discuss with your advisor.

COURSE SCHEDULE

This course begins with an Orientation and then is divided into **13** modules, each of which will be published one week before class. You will complete the modules on Mondays and Wednesdays. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, we will meet synchronously on zoom for whole and small group discussions from 1 to 3:00 pm ET. By class on Tuesdays and Thursdays you should have completed the relevant module, completed all readings and have submitted any assignments to Canvas. Below is an outline describing the module structure.

ORIENTATION (before the first course meeting):

The orientation provides an overview of the course and introduces you to your instructor and peers. You will also learn about the technology requirements and where to get support.

MODULE 1: Introduction to SLA

- Myths and misconceptions

Readings due: Chapters 1 and 2 in Gass et al. (2020)

*Corresponds with chapters 1-3 in the 4th edition.

MODULE 2: Historical Underpinnings

- The role of native language in second language learning
    - Behaviorism
    - Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH)
    - Error analysis

Readings due: Chapter 3 in Gass et al. (2020) *chapter 4 in the 4th edition

MODULE 3: First language acquisition and bilingualism

- The Transition Period
    - L1 acquisition
    - Child L2 acquisition
    - Bi/multilingualism

Readings due: Chapter 4 in Gass et al. (2020) *Chapter 5 in the 4th edition

Assignments due: 1st short HW assignment

MODULE 4: Learner Language

- Avoidance

- Predictability
- L1 Influences in L2 Processing
- Morpheme order

Readings due: Chapter 5 in Gass et al. (2020) *Chapter 6 in the 4th edition

MODULE 5: Comparing approaches to investigating SLA

- Formal
  - UG, language universals
- Meaning-based
  - Form and function, lexical knowledge and formulaic language
- Sociolinguistic
  - Interlanguage, Conversation analysis, L2 pragmatics

Readings due: Lightbown & Spada (2006)

Optional: see chapters 6, 8, 10, 11 and 12 in Gass et al. (2020) *Chapters 7, 9, 10 and 11 in the 4th edition for more detail on the approach you are most interseted in.

Assignments due: 2nd short HW assignment

MODULE 6: The linguistic environment

- Input
- Output
- Interaction & negotiation for meaning

Readings due: Chapter 13 in Gass et al. (2020) *Chapter 12 in the 4th edition

Article facilitation: Mackey et al. (2000)

MODULE 7: The linguistic environment cont.

- Feedback
- Attention/noticing

Readings due: Chapter 13 in Gass et al. (2020) *Chapter 12 in the 4th edition

Article facilitation: Schmidt (1983)

MODULE 8: Contexts of language learning

- Classrooms
- Teaching methods

Readings due: Chapter 14, Sections 14.1 to 14.7 in Gass et al. (2020) *Chapter 13 in the 4th edition

MODULE 9: Contexts of language learning

- CALF measures
- Teachers and teacher training

Readings due: Chapter 14, Sections 14.1 to 14.7 in Gass et al. (2020) *Chapter 13 in the 4th edition

Article facilitation: Nero (2018)

MODULE 10: Contexts of language learning cont.

- Study abroad
- Technology

Readings due: Finish chapter 14 in Gass et al. (2020) AND Bryfonski & Mackey (2018) *If you are using the 4th edition see PDF on Canvas for the remainder of chapter 14.

Article facilitation: Loewen et al (2019)

Assignments due: 3rd short hw assignment

MODULE 11: Individual learner differences

- Age, critical period hypothesis
- Aptitude
- Motivation
- Personality
- Learning strategies

Readings due: Chapter 15 in Gass et al. (2020) *Chapter 14 in the 4th edition

Article facilitation: Ioup et al. (1994)

MODULE 12: Individual learner differences cont.

- Race, ethnicity
- Identity
- Heritage learners
- Anxiety

Readings due: Chapter 16 sections 1 to 4 in Gass et al. (2020) *Chapter 15 sections 1-4 in the 4th edition

Article facilitation: Anya (2011)

MODULE 13: Conclusions

- Language learners with specific learning needs
- Future directions

Readings due: Finish Chapter 16 and Chapter 17 *Finish Chapter 15 and Chapter 16 in the 4th edition.

(Final course meetings are reserved for final project presentations)

The final paper will be due **one week following the end of the course.**

*Note this syllabus is subject to change based on individual student/course needs.

COURSE POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Student Expectations

You are expected to complete all readings, assignments, and activities on time. Participation is essential to your success in this class. You are expected to actively participate in discussions with your peers, and contribute to any assignments. In order to get full credit for participation, you will have to complete all of your module assignments on time.

Synchronous participation: You are expected to log onto zoom on time when required. Absences will be excused for illness and professional development reasons (e.g. conference attendance, job interviews) if you let me know in advance, or on a case-by-case basis. You are responsible reviewing the recording of our zoom discussion if you are absent from a zoom course, or catching on up on asynchronous work if you fall behind.

Please come to zoom meetings having watched any video lectures, completed the required readings, as well as any written assignments/discussion board posts/activities etc., *before* we meet so you can contribute to the discussions and activities while we are (virtually) together.

Asynchronous participation: Other forms of online engagement will be taken into consideration for participation grades including, watching video lectures (Panopto records this data automatically), posting on discussion boards, and completing any assigned short activities. It is important to subscribe to the course discussion boards so that you receive notifications when new messages are posted. I will also consider coming to office-hours, e-mail communication, attending review sessions (if applicable), and/or related virtual events. A dedication to incorporating course content into individual work is also positively recognized.

Time Expectations

Our online classes are designed to meet the same academic standards as our place-based (face-to-face) courses. You can think of each module equal to the same level of participation, commitment, and academic rigor as one face-to-face class. Students should plan on spending approximately **2 hours** on the work for each online module (equivalent to time spent in class on zoom) plus an additional **3-5 hours** per week on average completing readings and assignments (but this will vary week by week, sometimes less, sometimes more). Finally, we will meet for approximately **2 hours, 2x** each week, for our zoom discussions.

Assignment Expectations

All assignments (homework, slides, final project abstract and outline) will be due by class on Thursday of that week and submitted to Canvas in Word format (<u>no PDFs please, I'll give you feedback with tracked changes in word</u>). For all presentations (facilitations and final projects) please submit slides to Canvas. Late assignments are generally not accepted and extensions are granted on a case-by-case basis.

Homework assignments: Two research article summaries

You will be asked to: (1) choose one of several relevant articles on a topic related to second language learning or teaching. (2) Read your selected article. (3) Summarize the central findings and significance of the research of the article in 1 page following the provided format.

Article facilitation

Once during the course, you will sign up for a class meeting to briefly present an article that relates to the topic under discussion that week. For the presentation you will: 1) read and critically reflect on the selected reading, 2) design a way to present the reading virtually with your partner or group (feel free to get creative, you don't just have to use powerpoint!) and 3) present and lead a 15-minute in class discussion of the reading. Detailed guidelines will be provided on Canvas.

Final research project/paper

The final assignment for the course is a student research paper. The project is assessed in multiple ways:

- Through a presentation, and
- A written paper *note length and requirements will vary based on if you take this class at level 251 vs. 553.

This project could take one of the following forms: a) write a critical review of the literature on some aspect of SLA research that interests you, b) write a reflection on some aspect of this course as it relates to your own lived experience as a language learner or a context you are knowledge about. c) analyze/reanalyze data from a pre-existing source (e.g. data you already have collected, data from an online corpus, data from another class or project).

Communication Expectations

Communication with Peers

You will be expected to engage with your peers via the discussion board and other required tools on a regular basis.

Communication with Professor

Please feel free to email me with your questions, concerns, and/or to schedule a time to meet over Zoom. When sending emails please remember to follow the guidelines outlined below.

If you have general questions about assignments and course materials please post these questions in the General Question Discussion Board Forum, which you can access by clicking Discussions in the course navigation menu. This is an open forum, and you are encouraged to give answers and help each other.

- *Check the syllabus.* Before sending your email or message, be sure that your question has not already been addressed in the syllabus or Announcements.

- *Be patient.* If you have a concern and send me a message, you can typically expect a response within one or two business days. If you don't hear from me within that timeframe, *please don't hesitate to email me again. I promise I won't be offended!* Sometimes emails just slip through the cracks. CC-ing the TA will help. We will do our best to provide feedback on any assignments in a timely manner.

INFORMATION ABOUT TOOLS AND TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

As a summer student your classroom experience will be different from how the Ling-251/Ling-553 course has been run in the past, but I have worked on my syllabus, expectations and Canvas site, and taken various online trainings offered by Georgetown in order to provide you with just as rigorous and enjoyable a class as a typical in-person semester. On your end, I will expect you to:

- Communicate with your professor and classmates regularly via email, discussion boards, and other technologies available.

- Navigate the internet using a web browser (note that certain tools may require a specific browser and the Canvas site has been piloted in the latest version of Google Chrome, therefore it may look different on other browsers).

- Use applications such as Microsoft Office or Google Docs to create documents and work on projects.

- Submit assignments in Canvas.

- Upload and download saved files (including text, audio, and video).

- Use a microphone to record audio.

- Use a webcam to record video.

In this course we will use the following tools:

- Canvas

- Panopto (for lecture videos)

- Zoom (for synchronous small and whole group discussions on Thursdays)

- Voice thread

- Google docs

- Google Jamboard

- Others, that we will let you know in advance (we want to be sure everyone has access before we finalize these).

Computer Requirements

- You will need access to a computer (Windows or Mac) and adequate Internet service to complete this course. Although you can use other devices such as smartphones and tablets for some online coursework, please note that some tools, do not work on tablets or smartphones.

- You will also need an internal or external microphone and camera to complete this course. While you can use any browser to access Canvas please note that some tools only work with certain browsers. I recommend the latest version of Google Chrome for accessing Canvas as it was designed to be viewed.

The minimum requirements needed to use Canvas can be found in this Canvas guide.

ACCOMMODATIONS *

*Note this section reflects Georgetown policy and was written by CNDLS:

Students with Disabilities

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, individuals with disabilities have the right to specific accommodations that do not fundamentally alter the nature of the course. Some accommodations might include note takers, books on tape, extended time on assignments, and interpreter services among others. Students are responsible for communicating their needs to the Academic Resource Center, the office that oversees disability support services,(202-687-8354; arc@georgetown.edu; https://academicsupport.georgetown.edu/disability/) before the start of classes to allow time to review the documentation and make recommendations for appropriate accommodations. The University is not responsible for making special accommodations for students who have not declared their disabilities and have not requested an accommodation in a timely manner. Also, the University need not modify course or degree requirements considered to be an essential requirement of the program of instruction. For the most current and up-to-date policy information, please refer to the Georgetown University Academic Resource Center website. Students are highly encouraged to discuss the documentation and accommodation process with an Academic Resource Center administrator.

Accessibility and Inclusion

One of the central tenets of Georgetown's educational mission is cura personalis, a Latin phrase meaning "care of the whole person." Georgetown is committed to showing care and concern for each student by creating an inclusive and accessible learning environment that follows universal design principles to meet the needs of its diverse student body.

I am committed to creating a learning environment for my students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honors your identities (including race, gender,

class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.). If your name or pronoun needs to be corrected, please let me know early in the semester so that I can make the appropriate changes to my records.

I understand that not all of us will be physically in DC and I will work to accommodate those in time zones that are not easily compatible with DC time.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY *

*Note this section reflects Georgetown policy and was written by CNDLS:

Students at Georgetown University are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic and personal integrity. Although most Georgetown students conduct themselves in accordance with these standards, occasionally, there are students who violate the code of conduct. Cheating harms the University community in many ways. For example, honest students are frustrated by the unfairness of cheating that goes undetected and students who cheat can skew the grading curve in a class, resulting in lower grades for students who worked hard and did their own work.

Academic dishonesty in any form is a serious offense, and students found in violation are subject to academic penalties that include, but are not limited to failure of the course, termination from the program, and revocation of degrees already conferred. All students are expected to fully adhere to the policies and procedures of [Georgetown's Honor System](#) and to take the Honor Code Pledge.

Honor Code Pledge

In pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life I commit myself to respect and to uphold the Georgetown University honor system; to live out a commitment to integrity in all my words and actions; to be honest in every academic endeavor; and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community as we live and work together; to live out the ideals of Georgetown University I commit myself to be a person for others in my daily life, respectful of difference and disagreement; To care for this venerable campus and all of those with whom I share it; and to fulfill in all ways the trust placed in me to carry on the Georgetown tradition.

Plagiarism

Stealing someone else's work is a terminal offense in the workplace, and it will wreck your career in academia, too. Students are expected to work with integrity and honesty in all their assignments. The Georgetown University Honor System defines plagiarism as "the act of passing off as one's own the ideas or writings of another." More guidance is available through the [Gervase Programs](#). If you have any doubts about plagiarism, paraphrasing, and the need to credit, check out [Plagiarism.org](#).

All submissions must be your original work. Any submission suspected of plagiarism will be immediately referred to the Honor Council for investigation and possible adjudication. All

Pregnancy and Parenting Accommodations

Georgetown University is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive environment for pregnant and parenting students. Students may request adjustments based on general pregnancy needs or accommodations based on a pregnancy-related complication. Specific adjustments will be handled on a case by case basis and will depend on medical needs and academic requirements. Students seeking a pregnancy adjustment or accommodation should follow the process laid out on the Title IX website.

Georgetown Library

If you have a question for a librarian you can go to their "Ask Us" page where you will have the option to chat online, send an email, or schedule a Zoom appointment to discuss a research topic, develop a search strategy, or examine resources for projects and papers. Librarians offer an overview of and in-depth assistance with important resources for senior or master's theses, dissertations, papers and other types of research. This service is available to currently enrolled students who need assistance with Georgetown-assigned projects and papers. Please review the Services & Resources Guide for Online Students for additional information.

eResources

Students enrolled in courses have access to the University Library System's eResources, including 500+ research databases, 1.5+ million ebooks, and thousands of periodicals and other multimedia files (films, webinars, music, and images). You can access these resources through the Library's Homepage by using your NetID and password.

Library resources: You should also consult specialized research journals and bilingualism and SLA references early in the process of developing your final research project, including:

Learning Resources

Georgetown offers a host of learning resources to its students. Two that you might find particularly helpful in this course are the Writing Center and Refworks.

- The Writing Center offers peer tutoring by trained graduate and undergraduate students who can assist you at any point in the writing process. They help at any stage of your writing process, from brainstorming to revision. Tutors can offer advice on thesis development, use of evidence, organization, flow, sentence structure, grammar, and more. The Writing Center will not proofread or edit papers; rather, they will help to improve your proofreading and editing skills to become a better writer. Appointments can be booked online through their website.

- Refworks is an online research management tool that aids in organizing, storing, and presenting citation sources for papers and projects.

Technical Support

All students have 24/7 access to Canvas technical support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including live chat and a support hotline at 855-338-2770. Use the 'Help' icon in the lower left of your Canvas window to view all available support and feedback options. If you're looking for help on a specific feature, check out the [Canvas Student Guide](#).

RESOURCES

Resources Specific to our Course

Main journals that publish SLA research, in alphabetical order:

- *Language Learning*
- *Modern Language Journal (MLJ)*
- *Second Language Research*
- *Studies in Second Language Acquisition (SSLA)*

And also:

- *Applied Linguistics*
- *Canadian Modern Language Review*
- *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*
- *International Review of Applied Linguistics*
- *Language Learning & Technology* (open access online: http://llt.msu.edu/)
- *Language Teaching Research (LTR)*
- *System*
- *TASK Journal (on Task-Based Language Teaching)*
- *TESOL Quarterly (TQ)*

Two applied linguistics journals are devoted to in-depth reviews of research areas:

- *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*
- *Language Teaching*

Two particularly useful research and bibliographical resources are:

- The sections called **Research Timeline** published annually in *Language Teaching*
- *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics*, edited by Carol A. Chapelle and published by Wiley-Blackwell. This 10-volume set is fully researchable electronically and its contents freely accessible through the GU library.

References

Anya, U. (2011). Connecting with communities of learners and speakers: Integrative ideals, experiences, and motivations of successful black second language learners. *Foreign Language Annals*, 44(3), 441-466.

Bryfonski, L. & Mackey, A. (2018). Interaction in study abroad settings. In C. Sanz & A. Morales-Front (Eds.). *The Routledge Handbook of Study Abroad Research and Practice* (pp. 374-384). Routledge.

Gass, S. M., Behney, J. & Plonsky, L. (Eds.) (2020). *Second Language Acquisition: An Introductory Course*. Routledge.

Ioup, G., Boustagoui, E., Tigi, M., & Moselle, M. (1994). Reexamining the critical period hypothesis: A case of successful adult SLA in a naturalistic environment. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 16*, 73-98.

Loewen, S., Crowther, D., Isbell, D. R., Kim, K. M., Maloney, J., Miller, Z. F., & Rawal, H. (2019). Mobile-assisted language learning: A Duolingo case study. *ReCALL*, 1-19.

Mackey, A., Gass, S., & McDonough, K. (2000). How do learners perceive interactional feedback? *Studies in second language acquisition*, *22*(4), 471-497.

Nero, S. J. (2018). Studying Abroad in the Dominican Republic: Preparing Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teachers for 21st-Century Classrooms. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, *38*, 194-200.

Schmidt, R. W. (1983). Interaction, acculturation, and the acquisition of communicative competence. In N. Wolfson & E. Judd (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics and language acquisition* (pp. 137-174). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.