

VIRGINIA WESLEYAN COLLEGE
 Language Development - Psychology 348 (W)
 Fall 2005

<u>PROFESSOR:</u> Dr. Rita Frank	<u>TIME:</u> MWF, 12:30 p.m. -1:20 p.m.
<u>OFFICE:</u> Roop 7	<u>LOCATION:</u> Roop 1 (MW) and SS Lab (F)
<u>GENERAL OFFICE HOURS:</u> M, W, TH 3:00 - 5:30 p.m. And by appointment <u>WRITING ASSISTANCE HOURS:</u> F, 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.	<u>HOME PHONE:</u> 498-5341
<u>OFFICE PHONE:</u> 455-3288	<u>E-MAIL:</u> refrank@vwc.edu

TEXT:

American Psychological Association. (2005). *Concise rules of APA style*. Washington, DC: Author.

Hoff, E. (2005). *Language development* (3rd ed.). Belmont, Ca.:Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

By the time children are five years of age, they are already remarkably proficient in the phonology, semantics, syntax, and pragmatics of the language(s) to which they have been exposed. This statement is true of all children independent of gender, class, or culture. In this course, you will study how this amazing feat is accomplished. By reading existing research and by engaging in your own mini-research project, you will also learn how researchers collect the evidence to support these claims of early linguistic genius. By the time you have completed this semester, you should:

1. Be familiar with the course of language development from birth through the elementary school years.
2. Be familiar with the specific and general theories that seek to explain language development.
3. Know how to analyze conversational data using CHILDES.
4. Be able to report the results of your analysis in APA format.
5. Be able to read language development research as that research appears in peer-reviewed journals.
6. Be able to write about your own psychological research as well as that of others.
7. Understand the differences that exist between oral and written language proficiency.

GENERAL STUDIES DESIGNATION AS A WRITING-INTENSIVE (W) COURSE: Performance in Psychology 348 is highly dependent on your written work. In addition to essays written for exams, you will be asked to submit two summaries of research articles and a final term paper. These submissions, written according to APA stylistic guidelines, will demonstrate that you fully

understand the methods, standards, and conventions of scholarship within the discipline of psychology. I will be available throughout the semester to work with you on this task. Expect to revise and resubmit your work until it meets the highest standard of written English of which you are capable and plan your time accordingly. **In judging your accomplishment of this goal, I will use the standard criteria for all general studies writing intensive courses.**

As a result of taking this writing intensive course, you will continue to develop mastery of the following four goals set out in our general studies curriculum:

1. learn to appreciate the connections between writing and thinking, to use writing as a mode of learning, and to communicate complex information and ideas effectively to a well-defined audience.
2. come to understand the writing process and to refine your thinking through revision.
3. learn to critique and revise your own writing and to solicit critical responses from others.
4. develop effective strategies for proofreading.

BLACKBOARD:

Throughout the semester, class assignments, handouts, and general guidance about various aspects of this course may be made available on Blackboard, Virginia Wesleyan College's on-line course management system. In addition, the Child Language Data Exchange System that we will be using this semester may be accessed from this site as well as directly through its internet address. To log into Blackboard, you will need your VWC e-mail address as well as the last 4 digits of your social security number. Once in the system, you will find a course listing for Language Development.

It is your responsibility to check Blackboard on a regular basis in order to download copies of materials you will need to participate fully in class discussions and activities. Further information about the use of Blackboard in this course will be provided in class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Exams: You will take THREE unit exams in this course this semester. Each of these exams will cover both text and lecture material in some detail. **Exams 1 and 2 will be available on Blackboard as indicated in the course schedule. Exam 3 will be taken in class.** The format for each exam may vary but you can expect some combination of multiple choice, identification, and essay questions. Individual exams will be worth 50 points. Maximum points to be earned = 150. Your take home exams are due at the beginning of class on specified dates. If an exam is turned in after class begins, it will be considered late. Under these circumstances, your exam will be accepted with the understanding that there will be a 5 point penalty assessed for missing the deadline. See below for the make-up policy for Exam 3.

Research Summaries: You will turn in two summaries of language development research articles¹ this semester. The first summary (4 to 6 pages in length) is due on October 26th. When it is returned to you, your paper will have attached to it a critique of your writing based on **the standard criteria for all general studies writing intensive courses**, your adherence to

¹ Bibliographic references for these articles will be available during the first week of class.

APA format, and the accuracy and thoroughness in which you answered the questions listed below. Use the summary paper I provided you on September 26th as a model to guide your efforts. Your second summary (4 to 6 pages in length) is due on November 21st. At this time, I will be evaluating your ability to use the feedback you were provided after your first submission to refine your work. Both summaries must be handed in at the beginning of class on the dates given above. If your research summary is handed in late, it will be accepted with the understanding that there will be a 5 point penalty assessed for missing the deadline. Maximum points to be earned: **25 points for each summary; 50 points total.**

Answer the following questions for each article you have chosen:

1. What was the title of the study you read?
2. Who were listed as authors?
3. What was the research question?
4. Why was asking this question of theoretical or practical significance? (In other words, why was this particular study conducted?)
5. What method was used to gather information in this study? [E.g., **systematic observation** (naturalistic or structured), **self report** (interview, questionnaire, test), or **psychophysiological methods** (measures of brain function, and measures of involuntary activities of the autonomic nervous system such as heart rate, blood pressure, or respiration)].
6. What research design was used to conduct this study? For example, was the study you read a descriptive study, a correlational study, or an experimental study?
7. Who participated in the study?
8. What exact procedure was used to collect data? What did the participants have to do?
9. What method of data analysis was used to analyze the data? For example, did the authors calculate correlations, do a regression analysis, do a “t” test, or use ANOVA?
10. What findings were reported?
11. What conclusions were drawn from these findings?
12. What suggestions were made for future research?
13. What was your personal reaction to the study you read? Would you recommend it to another student? Why or why not?

Empirical Paper: During this semester, we will be using the Child Data Language Exchange System(CHILDES) that is available on the internet at <http://childes.psy.cmu.edu/>. (You may access the site directly or through Blackboard.) Although we will refer to a variety of materials available on CHILDES as we explore the topics addressed in your text, we will focus in detail on the language acquisition of a male child who has been given the pseudonym of Abe by his father, the language researcher, Stan Kuczaj.

As we review Abe’s data during regularly scheduled “workshops”, you will find that his vocabulary changes both in the types of words he uses and in their quantity. Your task will be to study some aspect of these lexical changes and to report on them. In the past, students have become interested in topics such as Abe’s development of emotion words (e.g., love, hate, like), mental state words(e.g., know, think, pretend), question words (who, what where, when, why, how), or particular categories of adjectives (such as adjectives denoting size -big, small). You

may select from one of these categories or any other that interests you. Whichever topic you select, I expect you to pursue it and to write a 10 - 15 page empirical report of what you discovered. In other words, I am asking you to select some aspect of Abe's lexical development to study, to use the files in his corpus to do that studying, and to write an **APA style** empirical report about your exploration. As part of this effort, I will expect you to gain more insight into your chosen topic by searching the child language literature for additional background information than what has been provided for you in class. A draft of your paper is due at the beginning of class on December 2. This draft will be returned to you with suggestions for revision on December 7th. Your final paper is due on the date scheduled for your final exam, December 13, by 2 p.m. at the latest. Maximum points to be earned for your paper = 100 points.

Although the draft of your final paper is not due until December 2, I will expect you to be working on this paper all semester. Please use the Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday general office hours I have designated to receive additional help in writing and editing your work as the semester progresses. In addition, beginning on October 7, Friday mornings as well as parts of our Friday work session class periods will be used to provide each of you with specific assistance in preparing your research summaries as well as in writing your final paper. A schedule for when you need to be prepared for Friday meetings will be made available early in the semester. Alternative times will be arranged for students for whom Fridays are inconvenient. Consistent, steady practice in working through your ideas using your writing to clarify your thoughts is absolutely essential in order for you to produce a paper that you are proud of and that meets all criteria.

Grades will be assigned as follows: 282 - 300 = A; 270 - 281 = A-; 261 - 269 = B+; 252 - 260 = B; 240 - 251 = B-; 231 - 239 = C+; 222 - 230 = C; 210 - 221 = C -; 201 - 209 = D+; 192 - 200 = D; 180 - 191 = D-; 179 and below = F.

If you convert points to percentages (points earned divided by points available), you will see that the cutoffs for A+'s, B+'s, C+'s, or D+'s are at 97%, 87%, 77%, or 67%, respectively; the cutoffs for A's, B's, C's, D's are at 94%, 84%, 74%, and 64%, respectively; and the cutoffs for A-'s, B-'s, C-'s, or D-'s, are at 90%, 80%, 70%, or 60%, respectively. An F would be earned if your percentage of points earned to points available corresponds to 59% or below.

Policies:

Expected Classroom Behavior: While in class, you are a member of a scholarly community. Please respect the work of that community by coming to class on time and prepared to learn. Persistent tardiness, talking to your peers about matters not related to our day's activity, reading the newspaper, doing work for classes other than psychology, and eating meals during class are examples of behaviors that show disrespect for one's peers as well as for one's professor and accordingly will not be tolerated.

Attendance: Attendance is not a course requirement in the sense that attending class will influence your grade directly. I will not give you points for attending nor will I take points away for unexcused absences. However, I strongly suggest that you attend class. Lecture materials

supplement the text as well as review it. Furthermore, the opportunity to participate in class discussions, to ask questions of relevance to you, and to have concepts clarified and reviewed are an important part of your experience in this course. Consequently, your overall understanding of the course material and your ability to perform well on exams and on your final project will in all likelihood be jeopardized by your failure to come to class on a regular basis.

Academic Honesty: Honesty is the most valuable asset that a member of an academic community possesses. In recognition of this fact, Virginia Wesleyan has enacted an honor code which is available to you in your student handbook. I adhere to this code explicitly and follow its recommended procedures.

Extra Credit: Extra credit may be earned in two ways.

1. You may receive extra credit for participation as a subject in a senior research project. Each hour of such participation is worth 2 points. A maximum of 10 points may be earned.
2. On September 23rd, your instructor will be helping to facilitate a workshop on helping child care providers deal more effectively with foster care children who are struggling with attachment disorders. This workshop will be held on campus and will be of value to students who are interested in working with children in therapeutic settings. If you attend, you may turn in a word processed essay discussing your reactions to what you learned. This essay will earn a maximum of 10 extra credit points. Expectations about format and writing style will be the same for this essay as for all other work turned in this semester.

Make-up exams: Since the first two exams to be given this semester will be distributed on Blackboard, no make up arrangements are necessary for them. Just make sure you download these exams when they become available and then hand them in when required. Exams turned in after the beginning of class on the official due date will be penalized by 5 points. The third exam must be taken in class on the date given in this syllabus. *A make up opportunity will be given for this exam only if the reason for missing it is legitimate and documented. The date for this make up must be coordinated with your professor.*

Incompletes: Incompletes will be arranged for severe emergencies only. Arrangement for incompletes **MUST** be made with the instructor prior to the end of the semester. A formal contract must be agreed to and signed.

Accommodations for students with special needs: Virginia Wesleyan College recognizes and is sensitive to students with special needs. In accordance with Title 5, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the college provides reasonable accommodations based upon appropriate and recent medical or other documentation. Students' choice to use accommodations is strictly voluntary. In order to use accommodations, students must register with the Disabilities Coordinator, Fayne Pearson (phone 757-455-3246, or fpearson@vwc.edu). Based upon an evaluation of the student's documentation and discussion with the coordinator, reasonable accommodations will be determined. Faculty will be notified at the designation of the students. Faculty may request a week's notice if a student needs testing accommodations.

Lecture Topics, Reading Assignments, and Exam Schedule

Date	Topic	Today's Reading Assignment
Aug. 29	Introduction to the Course/Why is the study of language development important?	Chapter 1 Pgs. 1-7
31	Language Components and Brief Chronological Overview/ History of Language Development Research	Chapter 1 Pgs. 7-14
Sept. 2	Video: Discovering the Human Language (Meet in Social Sciences Lab Today)	Chapter 1
5	Labor Day Holiday	
7	Theoretical Issues in the Field of Language Development	Chapter 1 Pgs. 14-24
9	Methods for the study of language development/ Introducing "Abe" and the Child data language exchange system (CHILDES) (Meet in Social Sciences Lab Today)	Chapter 1 Pgs. 24-33
12	Properties of Human Language/The Ape Debate	Chapter 2 Pgs. 70-73; Pgs. 73-82
14	Biological Basis of Human Language: Part I	Chapter 2 Pgs. 41-52
16	Video: The Human Language Evolves (Meet in Social Sciences Lab Today)	Chapter 2
19	Biological Basis of Human Language: Part II	Chapter 2 Pgs. 53-68
21	Phonological Development in Adults/ Describing Speech Sounds	Chapter 2 Pgs. 40-41 Chapter 3 Pgs. 90-97
23	Class Cancelled today so that Dr. Frank and interested students may attend a workshop on attachment disorders in foster care children to be held today on campus in the Boyd Dining Center.	See Extra Credit Section of Syllabus

26	Learning to Read Primary Sources in Language Development in preparation for preparing your research summary reports. APA format as well as VWC writing standards will be reviewed during this hour. (A model paper will be distributed at this time so that you have a guide to shape your own efforts.)	See footnote for reference ² Please bring the assigned article and your copy of <i>Concise rules of APA style</i> to class today!
28	Prelinguistic Speech Perception	Chapter 3 Pgs. 103-120
30	Work Session – Instruction in working with Clan to accomplish your end of semester project (Meet in Social Sciences Lab Today)	
Oct. 3	Prelinguistic Speech Sound Development <i>Exam 1 Available on Blackboard Today</i>	Chapter 3 Pgs. 97-103
5	Early Language Phonological Development	Chapter 3 Pgs. 120-130
7	Video: Acquiring the Human Language (Meet in Social Sciences Lab Today) N.B. Friday Writing Assistance Hours Start Today	
10	Lexical Development: First Words <i>Exam 1 Due Today by 12:30 P.m.</i>	Chapter 4 Pgs. 140-153
12	Lexical Development – continued	Chapter 4 Pgs. 140-153
14	Fall Semester Break	
17	How are new words learned?	Chapter 4 Pgs. 161-173

²Lagattuta, A., & Wellman, H.M. (2002). Differences in parent child conversation about negative and positive emotions: Implications for the development of psychological understanding. *Developmental Psychology*, 38, 564-580. (Available online at PsychINFO and in the Hofheimer Library on campus)

19	Syntax and Morphology – Basic Concepts	Chapter 5 Pgs. 184-190 Chapter 9 Pgs. 372-375
21	Work session - Abe's Lexical Development (Opportunity to practice techniques you will need to use for your final project–worksheet will be handed out in class) (Meet in Social Sciences Lab Today)	Chapter 4
24	Early Multiword Utterances/Learning to Calculate MLU	Chapter 5 Pgs.191-201; 205-208; 208-212
26	The Development of Sentence Forms Summary Paper #1 Due Today at the Beginning of Class	Chapter 5 Pgs. 201-205
28	Work Session – Use today to explore several areas of lexical development you are thinking about pursuing for your final project. For homework, write a one page word-processed paper that indicates which of these areas you think may be the focus of your final project. It would be appropriate to provide reasons for your choice in this paper which is due on November 9th at the beginning of class. At the end of this paper, please append a reference list that includes three research articles that you intend to read as you prepare the introduction to your empirical report. Your grade on this assignment will be entered as a portion of your point total on exam two.	
31	Theoretical Positions on the Acquisition of Grammar	Chapter 5 Pgs. 214-236
Nov. 2	Theoretical Positions on the Acquisition of Grammar <i>Exam 2 Available on Blackboard Today</i>	Chapter 5 Pgs. 214-236
4	Work Session - Class time to work on your end of semester project using CHILDES	

7	Communicative Competence: Infancy	Chapter 5 Pgs. 234-235 Chapter 6 Pgs. 261-265; 250-261
9	Learning to Participate in Conversation <i>Exam 2 Due Today by 12:30 P.m.</i>	Chapter 6 Pgs. 265-274
11	Work Session – Class time to work on your end of semester project using CHILDES	
14	Learning Situationally Appropriate Language	Chapter 6 Pgs. 278-286
16	Video: He said, She said	Chapter 6 Pgs. 286-287
18	Work Session - Class time to work on your end of semester project using CHILDES	
21	Foundations of Literacy/Learning to Read <i>Summary Paper #2 Due Today at the Beginning of Class</i>	Chapter 9 Pgs. 393-408
23	Thanksgiving Break	
25	Thanksgiving Break	
28	The Classification of Communication Disorders	Chapter 7 Pgs. 317-320
30	Final Work Session - Class time to work on your end of semester project (Class will be used to resolve any problems you are encountering in writing your final draft.)	
Dec. 2	Catch up Day/Review for Exam 3 <i>Draft of Your Complete Empirical Report is Due Today</i>	
5	Exam 3 - This exam will be taken in class today	
7	Concluding Remarks/ Return of Drafts	

Dec. 13	Final Version of Empirical Report Due Today by 2:00 p.m!	
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The instructor will make every effort to abide by the lecture topics and scheduled activities as set forth in this syllabus. However, it must be understood that changes may become necessary due to extenuating circumstances.