Course Coordinator | Asst Prof Suzy Styles
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Course Code | HP3204
Course Title | An Ape’s Guide to Human Language
Pre-requisites | HP1000, HP1100
No of AUs | 3

Course Aims
This course is an introduction to psycholinguistics, through the frame of comparative psychology: How does the human mind process language? What are the innate skills we share with other animals that contribute to our language skills? What are the differences between humans and other animals that contribute to the human language faculty, and how language systems work. The course will cover fundamentals of language acquisition and language processing, from lexical access, context effects and priming, to embodied theories of language, neurobiology of language, and language disorder. The course uses comparative physiology, animal behaviour, and neuroscience, as way of framing the question ‘What makes us human?’

By the end of this course, you (as a student) would be able to:

1. describe anatomical and behavioural differences between humans and other primates, and discuss how they relate to human language
2. analyse, discuss and write critically about human language processing
3. demonstrate a working knowledge of psycholinguistics, including recall of key methods and understanding of findings that may impact research in other areas of psychology
4. communicate complex scientific concepts for a lay audience, with high scientific accuracy, in an engaging manner

Course Content
The course is organized along the following topics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The curious case of the talking ape</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A Users’ Guide to the human vocal tract: How to flap your meat</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Tuning the Ears</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Learning from experience</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Making faces</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>These hips are made for walking</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Grandma, what big brains you have!</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Inside the wrinkled walnut: Words</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Inside the wrinkled walnut: The Lexicon</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Inside the wrinkled walnut: Syntax</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>90% Right, all of the time</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Field trip: Singapore Zoo</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Sign language, writing, and other linguistic innovations</td>
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Assessment

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Final Examination</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. CA1: Public Science Project</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. CA2: Tutorial Participation incl. regular quizzes</td>
<td>20</td>
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### Reading and References

No textbook currently exists covering the breadth and depth of content in the course. Reading will be allocated from a variety of sources, including selected sections from the following textbooks, along with journal articles including those in the list below. The reading list will be adapted each time the course is taught to update it to the latest developments in the field.

Textbooks (Selected Excerpts):


Workbooks & Guides:


### Course Policies and Student Responsibilities

#### (1) General

Students are expected to complete all assigned pre-class readings and activities, attend all seminar classes punctually and take all scheduled assignments and tests by due dates. Students are expected to take responsibility to follow up with course notes, assignments and course related announcements for seminar sessions they have missed. Students are expected to participate in all seminar discussions and activities. Previous research has shown that students show better retention of information when they take notes by hand, and do not have screen-based devices available during lectures. Therefore, *lectures will be screen free*: which means no laptops or phones. Lecture materials will be made available AFTER the lecture. Students are encouraged to take notes by hand. By contrast, some teaching session will typically involve the use of screen-based devices, so students are encouraged to bring laptops/tablets etc.

#### (2) Absenteeism

This class has Team-based activities contributing to a portion of your course grade. Absence from class without a valid reason will affect your overall course grade. Valid reasons include falling sick supported by a medical certificate and participation in NTU’s approved activities supported by an excuse letter from the relevant bodies. There will be no make-up opportunities for in-class activities.

If you miss a seminar session, you must inform your team members and me via email (include email address) prior to the start of the class. Students who miss T-RATs and team in-class activity with valid reasons will earn the team score. Students who miss I-RAT or T-RAT without a valid reason will earn nothing for that session of absence.

#### (3) Online Compulsory Assignments

You are required to submit online compulsory assignments on due dates.
Academic Integrity

Good academic work depends on honesty and ethical behaviour. The quality of your work as a student relies on adhering to the principles of academic integrity and to the NTU Honour Code, a set of values shared by the whole university community. Truth, Trust and Justice are at the core of NTU’s shared values.

As a student, it is important that you recognize your responsibilities in understanding and applying the principles of academic integrity in all the work you do at NTU. Not knowing what is involved in maintaining academic integrity does not excuse academic dishonesty. You need to actively equip yourself with strategies to avoid all forms of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, academic fraud, collusion and cheating. If you are uncertain of the definitions of any of these terms, you should go to the academic integrity website for more information. Consult your instructor(s) if you need any clarification about the requirements of academic integrity in the course.

Planned Weekly Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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| 1    | The curious case of the talking ape  
L1. What is communication?  
L2. How does human language differ? |
| 2    | A Users’ Guide to the human vocal tract: How to flap your meat  
L1. Deforming the tube  
L2. Articulation Salad (variance) |
| 3    | Tuning the Ears  
L1. Does a Cat Per?  
L2. Does a baboon babble?  
(Rogers, Möttönen, Boyles, & Watkins, 2014) (Takahashi et al., 2015) |
| 4    | Learning from experience  
L1. Innateness  
L2. A chunking monkey  
Content includes: (Wasserman, Brooks, & McMurray, 2015) (Bosseler, Teinonen, & Huotilainen, 2016) (Safran, Aslin, & Newport, 1996) |
| 5    | Making faces (Short-Snout; Bright Eyes)  
L1. Short Snout  
L2. Bright Eyes  
| 6    | These hips are made for walking  
L1. Walking and talking  
L2. The Obstetric Dilemma (or not) |
| 7 | Grandma, what big *brains* you have!  
L1. The longest childhood  
L2. The hungriest brain  
(Dunsworth, 2016; Piantadosi & Kidd, 2016) |
| 8 | Inside the wrinkled walnut: Words  
L1. What do words do?  
L2. Learning & recognizing spoken words |
| 9 | Inside the wrinkled walnut: The Lexicon  
L1. Lexical Access  
L2. Context effects |
| 10 | Inside the wrinkled walnut: Syntax  
L1. Phrase structure  
L2. Acquisition and Innateness (or not) |
| 11 | 90% Right, all of the time  
L1. Handedness and Paw-ed-ness  
L2. Language lateralization (or not)  
(Frayera et al., 2016) |
| 12 | Field trip week  
(3hrs at Zoo = lecture + tutorial time allocation) |
| 13 | Sign language, writing, and other linguistic innovations  
(Perniss & Vigliocco, 2014) |
Appendix 1: Source Materials


