

**LING 6390: Linguistics Seminar: Sentence Processing**  
Spring 2013

**Instructor:** Jeffrey Witzel

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**Office hours:** W 2:30PM-3:30PM, or by appointment

**Section information:** LING 6390 Section 001

**Time and place of class meetings:** W 4:00PM – 6:50PM, UH 321

**Description of course content:** This seminar will focus on understanding the processes that underlie the real-time production and comprehension of sentences. Particular emphasis will be placed on the processing of sentences involving long-distance dependencies.

**Student learning outcomes**

After successfully completing this course, students should be able to:

- 1) Understand major topics in sentence processing
- 2) Discuss and critique the primary literature on these topics
- 3) Develop testable research questions based on this literature
- 4) Understand the experimental techniques used to investigate sentence processing questions
- 5) Design and report on an experiment investigating sentence processing

**Requirements:** There are no prerequisites for this seminar. However, students will ideally have taken *Syntax*, *Psycholinguistics*, and *Research Design and Statistics*.

**Required textbooks and other course materials:** There is no textbook for this class. All readings will be from the primary literature and will be made available on the course Blackboard site (login at <https://elearn.uta.edu/webapps/login/>). You are responsible for checking this Blackboard site regularly to access (among other things) class notes, updates, readings, and assignments.

**Descriptions of major assignments with due dates:**

- Weekly Questions: each week 2-7, 11-14
- Article Presentations: weeks 2-7, 11-14 depending on the topic you choose
- Literature Review Presentation: 3/6
- Research Design Presentation: 5/1
- Final Paper: 5/8

**Grading policy**

Your course grade will be determined as follows:

Course Engagement	10%
Weekly Questions	15%
Article Presentations	40%
Literature Review Presentation	10%
Research Design Presentation	10%
Final Paper	15%

**Course Engagement:** Course engagement refers to regular on-time attendance, preparation for class, participation in discussion, and physical as well as mental presence in the classroom. Because regular attendance is necessary for this course, you can expect that *more than one (unexcused) absence will negatively affect your grade.*

**Weekly Questions:** Each week (2-7, 11-14) we will read three articles from the primary literature related to the topic of interest. You are expected to read each article and come up with 1-3 substantive questions. These questions should be posted on the Blackboard Discussion Board no later than 5pm on the day before class (Tuesday).

**Article Presentations:** Four times during the class you will present on an article and lead class discussion related to it. In these presentations, you should minimally provide (a) the complete bibliographical reference (in APA format) for the article, (b) the general question(s) examined, (c) the specific research questions/hypotheses, (d) a summary of the methodological details (e.g., # of subjects, sample materials, tasks, etc.), (e) a summary of the findings (including a discussion of what these findings mean with respect to the research questions), and (f) your comments/critique. You should also do your best to address the questions raised by your classmates on the Blackboard Discussion Board. A sign-up sheet for these presentations will be posted online.

**Literature Review Presentation:** In this presentation, you should discuss the literature that motivates your research proposal. You should discuss the relevant findings from several key research articles and how they relate to your (possibly provisional) research question(s). These presentations should be ~20 minutes long (after which you should expect ~10 minutes of questions and discussion). You should use PowerPoint slides and/or a handout to support this presentation. You will be graded on (i) how clearly you explain the relevant articles and (ii) how well you are able to relate this literature to your research question(s).

**Research Design Presentation:** In this presentation, you should discuss how you will conduct your proposed study. You should begin this presentation with a clear explanation of your (no longer provisional) research question(s). You should then provide information on the participants, the methodology you will use, and the types of data you will collect. You should also explain how this data will bear on your research question(s). These presentations should be ~20 minutes long (after which you should expect ~10 minutes of questions and discussion). You should use PowerPoint slides and/or a handout to support this talk. You will be graded on (i) how clearly you explain your design and (ii) how well you are able to relate it to your research question(s).

**Final Paper:** In this paper, you will integrate the information in your two presentations (clarifying and expanding where necessary) into a complete research proposal. This paper should be no longer than 20 pages and should follow APA format.

***\*\* Late assignments will only be accepted if you contact me in advance of the deadline and let me know why you need an extension.\*\****

**Attendance policy:** See the *Course engagement* section above.

### Schedule (see the Blackboard site for the readings)

Week 1	16-Jan	syllabus / taking up the “Pesetsky Problem” (Что дѣлать? What is to be done? ) / introduction to relevant research methods
Week 2	23-Jan	the structure of a structure-blind sentence processor?
Week 3	30-Jan	RC processing: the nature of the ORC penalty
Week 4	6-Feb	wh-movement: direct association vs. filler-gap processing
Week 5	13-Feb	online access to constraints on wh-movement
Week 6	20-Feb	processing other movement types: passives, unaccusatives
Week 7	27-Mar	processing ellipsis and sluicing
Week 8	6-Mar	<b>literature review presentations</b>
Week 9	13-Mar	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
Week 10	20-Mar	<b>CUNY BREAK</b>
Week 11	27-Mar	pronouns and <b>reflexives</b> : online access to binding constraints
Week 12	3-Apr	<b>pronouns</b> and reflexives: online access to binding constraints
Week 13	17-Apr	how structurally sensitive is agreement processing? (production)
Week 14	24-Apr	how structurally sensitive is agreement processing? (comprehension)
Week 15	1-May	<b>research design presentations</b>

*As the instructor for this course, I reserve the right to adjust this schedule in any way that serves the educational needs of the students enrolled in this course. --JDW*

### University / Departmental Policies and Other Information

**Drop Policy:** Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance.** Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://www.uta.edu/ses/fao>).

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

**Academic Integrity:** All students enrolled in this course are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

*I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.*

*I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

Instructors may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents' Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university's standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the University.

**Student Support Services:** UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to [resources@uta.edu](mailto:resources@uta.edu), or view the information at [www.uta.edu/resources](http://www.uta.edu/resources).

**Electronic Communication:** UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

**Student Feedback Survey:** At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as lecture, seminar, or laboratory shall be directed to complete a Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student's feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington's effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

**Final Review Week:** A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

**Auditors:** The Department of Linguistics and TESOL has a "no audit" policy. However, with instructor permission, Department of Linguistics and TESOL faculty, staff, and students enrolled in a linguistics/TESOL program may be able to sit in on a course. These courses cannot be used to satisfy any degree or program requirements/electives, nor will any credit (including retroactive credit) be granted.

**Librarian to contact:** Jody Bailey ([jbailey@uta.edu](mailto:jbailey@uta.edu))