

# ENG 558: LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND LANGUAGE DISORDERS

Linguistics Section • Department of English Studies • University of Cyprus

Spring Semester 2010: Tuesdays & Fridays, 15.00 – 16.30 @ Room A 109

[www.punksinscience.org/kleanthes/courses/UCY10S/LALD/index.htm](http://www.punksinscience.org/kleanthes/courses/UCY10S/LALD/index.htm)

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Office Hours: TUE & FRI 13.00–14.00 + by appointment (all semester)

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## DESCRIPTION

This will be a practical introduction to language acquisition (primarily of children's first language), and language disorders (primarily developmental impairment). It is practical in that we will go over two types of data collection, one type of elaborate experimental design for elicitation tasks (*elicited production task*) and one for testing comprehension (*truth value judgment task*), and you will have to develop, and ideally carry out, an acquisition research study yourselves. The theoretical background assumed is firmly couched within Universal Grammar, i.e. generative approaches to the language faculty, specifically within the Modularity Matching Model for early language development.

## ASSESSMENT

Regular attendance is strongly advised! Besides the class lectures, you will be graded as follows:

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|---|--|---------------------------------|
| 1. <b>abstract/design</b>                     | <i>20% of the final grade</i>          | March 26 or May 6 (by email)    |
| 2A. <b>presentation</b>                       | <i>30% of the final grade</i>          | May 9 (at GACL 4 workshop)      |
| 2B. <b>discussion</b>                         | <i>30% of the final grade</i>          | May 9 (instead of presentation) |
| 3. <b>paper/experiment</b>                    | <i>50% of the final grade</i>          | May 24 by 12pm (by email)       |
| 4. <b>presence &amp; active participation</b> | in class throughout (± x grade points) |                                 |

Don't forget: **This is a small class and if you miss one, it will be noticed.** If you miss more than one, notice will be taken more than once too, and if you're not around, you can't participate actively! As in previous semesters, **I take a tough stance on plagiarism**, so familiarize yourselves with the dangers and don't even try it. As for other aspects of evaluation: **The paper and an accompanying abstract are a must for everyone**, but you'll have the **choice of either giving a presentation** (details to be announced) or **critically discuss a series of related experiments** from published work (details to be sorted with me). The paper can be substituted with a detailed experiment, carried out on the basis of a substantial design plan (instead of an abstract); this will be less text but more testing and number crunching (and again, the details will be discussed with me individually or in groups). ***You will all meet with me regularly throughout the semester to discuss your work and progress!***

## READING

There's a textbook that every student should have a copy of because we'll be closely following its structure and contents. Copies have been ordered through Moufflon Bookshop (it should be here...).

Stephen Crain and Rosalind Thornton. 1998. *Investigations in Universal Grammar: A Guide to Experiments on the Acquisition of Syntax and Semantics*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

**You will also have to make an effort to read beyond the book!** It has plenty of references, others will come up in class — and **the more you read, the better you'll be able to cope** with the course.