CG 141 Language Processing
Course syllabus

Instructor: Julie Sedivy
Office hours: Tuesday 1:30-2:30; Wednesday 11-12

Course Goals: The primary goal of this course is to provide students with foundational background in the central topics of language production and comprehension. Emphasis will be placed on the connections between research in language production and language comprehension, which have traditionally been quite separate, but have recently begun to move closer together in theory and methods. The course is intended to equip students with the tools they need to be able to conduct independent inquiry in the field of language processing. As the semester progresses, the course will transition from greater emphasis on textbook and general readings to more technical specialized readings written by and for practitioners in the field of language processing. Similarly, the course evaluation moves from guided take-home exams in the first half, to an independent research paper in the second half of the course.

Course requirements:

Two take-home exams
(essay questions synthesizing major themes in the readings) 50%

Research paper proposal
(The proposal must identify a research question of interest, and a proposed bibliography of 8-12 relevant primary sources) 10%

Research paper 40%

Textbooks and readings:

Required texts (to be purchased from the Brown Bookstore):


In addition, the articles listed below are required, and will be made available in electronic form on WebCT.
Course topics and assigned readings:

Each of the topics below represents a unit of approximately one week:

1. Words and sounds
   1.1 Organization of the mental lexicon
       Aitchison, ch. 1-9 (pp. 3-112)
       Levelt, ch. 6 (pp. 181-234)

   1.2 Ambiguity and context

   1.3 Models of word recognition
       Aitchison ch. 18-20 (pp. 215-248)

   1.4 Speech errors and the production of words
       Levelt, ch. 9 (pp. 318-363)

   1.5 Words and rules: generating complex words
       Pinker, ch. 1-5, ch. 10
2 Sentence structure

2.1 Sentence structure in language generation and comprehension

Levst, ch. 7 (pp. 235-283)

2.2 Ambiguity and sentence structure


2.2 The role of lexical representations in sentence processing


2.4 Processing and memory constraints

3 Meaning and Discourse

3.1 Context and ambiguity


3.2 Reference in connected discourse


3.3 Monitoring, repair and coordinating conversation

Levelt, ch. 12, pp. 458-499.

