

Seminar: Language in the Mind

Scope and goals

We examine language, as a system that's encoded in a particular mind. We don't attempt neuroscience, of course; but we do attempt to investigate how individuals handle language. This can encompass the subfields of grammar, phonology, psycholinguistics, language acquisition, and more.

The immediate goal is of course to increase students' understanding of language. But beyond this, they should get good practice in analytical skills that should be applicable in any of a wide range of careers.

The way it works

Classes will have discussions based on core reading that seminar members will have done beforehand. I'll try to keep the core reading fairly compact and not too demanding, but students are likely to get stuck from time to time when attempting to read and digest it; and when this happens they'll be expected to try hard to get unstuck before the class (by consulting their classmates or me) and not just to give up.

Quite how the discussions will run will depend on the number of people who join and their knowledge of linguistics. There will be presentations, additional readings, and of course a research paper.

Grading criteria

Evaluation will depend on comments on readings, input to discussions, presentations, the research paper, and attendance.

What about just one year? Or even one semester?

Yes, 3rd-year students can join for just one year - although I hope that their interest in language and linguistics will last longer.

Anyone starting in the seminar should normally intend to stay for two semesters. (Department policy does not allow a student to be enrolled in more than one seminar at one time.)

Of course I shall cater for students planning to go overseas for study and those returning from studying overseas.

Seminar visit

Friday 14 October.

Target enrollment

Four to seven 3rd-year students and one or two 4th-year students.

Criteria for selection

Some knowledge of linguistics, an interest in language, an appetite for theory and hard thinking, and enthusiasm for participating fully.

Selection interview

[REDACTED]; Tuesday 8 November, 13:00 to 17:00. (Email me if you need an alternative time.)