

VARIATION in LANGUAGE PROCESSING

Summer 2023

July 31st - Sept. 1st
Tuesdays & Thursdays
9 am - 12:30 pm



image: health.harvard.edu

Instructor: Stephanie Rich (she/her)Contact: skrich@ucsc.eduOffice Hours: Wed. 11-12 [[Zoom link](#)]**TA: Lalitha Balachandran (she/her)**Contact: lalithab@ucsc.eduOffice Hours: Thurs. 2-3 pm [[Zoom link](#)][Canvas Homepage](#)[Canvas Modules](#)[Lecture Zoom Link](#)

General Course Information

Welcome to the course!

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Course Description

Variation is an inseparable and natural part of being human. This course focuses on variation in language, one unique and crucial part of the human experience. In particular, we'll explore **how differences in language background, cognition, and modality contribute to variation in language processing**. We approach these topics under the guiding premise that there are many ways to experience and use language, and that none of them are "more correct" or "better" than others. In line with the course's General Education code (*Perspectives - Human Behavior*), we'll also aim to **critically examine scientific findings relating to individual and cross-population differences in language processing**, with the intention of **reframing deficit-based views of language use**.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- **1:** Describe **basic principles of real-time language comprehension and production**, including for example, phonological encoding, lexical access, syntactic parsing, and the generation of pragmatic inferences.
- **2:** Articulate **connections between a variety of language/cognitive experiences** (neurodiversity in language, variation in reading/communication modalities, and multilingualism and heritage language use) **and one or more core linguistic concepts** (phonetics/phonology, syntax, semantics/pragmatics).
- **3:** Practice **science communication skills** by identifying components of academic vs. non-academic scientific writing, and generating pieces of academic writing targeted towards non-scientific/general audiences.
- **4:** Develop the confidence to **tackle complex, multifaceted tasks/problems, using concrete tools to break those tasks down into structured, manageable steps** (e.g., devising a research question and the steps needed to answer that question).
- **5:** **Challenge assumptions** through an iterative process of generating initial impressions of cognitive processes and revising these according to empirical evidence. Use this process to **combat harmful or deficit-minded perspectives, myths, and stereotypes about communication differences**, including prior personally held beliefs, and critically engage with online (dis)information.
- **6:** **Motivate the importance of language science in fostering linguistic diversity and justice** in at least one of the following real-world contexts: educational, online, clinical, engineering, or another self-selected context.

Course Materials

CANVAS MODULES

We'll use the [Modules page](#) on **Canvas** to structure each week's content. Here, you can find an overview of the assignments for each week, as well as links to all of the reading and other materials you'll need. Please turn on announcement notifications on Canvas - this is how we'll communicate with you.

ZOOM CLASS MEETINGS

As this is an online, synchronous course, lectures and office hours will take place on Zoom.

You can find the Zoom links above, or on the [Canvas Homepage](#).



Grading philosophy

We aim to prioritize learning, growth, curiosity, and understanding. The journey to reach understanding isn't always linear. This class will have grades and deadlines; these are a way to acknowledge your effort and time spent engaging with the topics in this course, and to provide a structured way to support your exploration of course material.

Each assignment will clearly lay out expectations to receive full credit. Depending on the assignment, this may include reading, watching, or listening to outside sources, writing reflections, or doing your own exploration to find sources. If you have engaged with each component and fully completed all tasks laid out by the assignment, you will receive full credit. The final writing assignment will be graded following a rubric which we will discuss in class.

If you are ever unsure of the expectations of the course, or if there are extenuating circumstances that are making it difficult to meet those expectations, **please reach out to a member of the teaching team**, the sooner the better. We will devise a plan to support your success in the course.

There are three types of assessments we'll use to evaluate your progress in the course: participation in in-class activities, weekly reflection assignments on lecture topics, and major writing assignments that will help you build up to the final paper. These will be due at regular intervals each week.

PARTICIPATION

25% of overall grade.

This reflects participation during in-class activities.

Each class offers an opportunity to get 3 points:

- 1 for zoom attendance
- 1 for completing an in-class active learning activity
- 1 for an in-class learning reflection

Due each lecture day (T/Th) during class, or by 5 pm if absent.

REFLECTION

25% of overall grade.

This reflects assignments completed outside of class that relate directly to lecture material. This might include:

- Discussion posts creating connections with lecture material
- Annotating papers or articles
- Responding to videos

Due weekly on Thursdays before class starts (by 9 am).

WRITING

50% of overall grade.

The class will culminate in a short piece of writing tying lecture material to real world contexts.

Evaluation is distributed over:

- Weekly writing assignments in preparation for the final product **(40%)**
- Final piece of writing **(10%)**

Due weekly on Sunday at 11:59 pm.

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
Writing assignment due		Lecture 9 am - 12:30 pm In-class participation		Writing/Reflection assignment due Lecture 9 am - 12:30 pm In-class participation		

Attendance

Attendance during each class period is a required component of the course. A large portion of this class will involve learning from one another and participating during in-class activities. We value the contributions that each of you have to make, and we will create many different opportunities for you to actively participate (discussions, in-class reflections, group activities, class polls). These in-class activities will be graded based on completion. If you attend lectures, you will easily achieve 3/3 points.

In the case of excused absences - illness, personal emergencies, caretaking needs, etc. - we are happy to work with you to make up participation. This will require you to **email us as soon as possible**, and stay in contact for any ongoing situations.

In the event of unexcused absences, where you haven't communicated with the teaching team in advance, you can make up 2/3 of the participation points for the missed class by completing and submitting the in-class activities on Canvas by 5 pm of the day of the missed class.

Late work

Five weeks passes very quickly, so we encourage timely completion of work so that you don't fall behind. However, we acknowledge that everyone has competing responsibilities and external obligations. Therefore, everyone will receive **one free Late Pass** for homework: you may turn in your one free, late assignment by the end of the day of the next class period. To use this pass, please write "LATE PASS" next to your name on that assignment. Beyond this, you may turn in any assignment up until the next class period for a small point deduction (highest credit capped at 90%).

Late policy aside, please feel free to contact the teaching team if situations arise that interfere with your participation in the course; our role is to support your learning, and we are more than happy to work with you to find a solution.

Week-by-Week Schedule*

*Please keep in mind that this is a living document, and this schedule is subject to change.

Week	Lecture Topics	Assignments
Week 1 7/31 - 8/4	Introduction to psycholinguistics and an overview of linguistic variation covered in this course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Pre-course Survey - due Tues. ◦ Reading annotation of Cheng et al. (2021): "The Problematic Concept of a Native Speaker in Psycholinguistics" - due Thurs. • Writing assignment: Exploration of potential topics - due Sun.
	Thursday 8/3: Deadline to add/swap courses.	
Week 2 8/7 - 8/11	Variation in communication modality ♦ <i>In-class peer review of Writing Assignment 2 (Thurs.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing assignment 2: Targeted topic exploration - due Thurs. • Writing assignment 3: Framing your writing - due Sun.
	Monday 8/7: Deadline to drop course (with tuition reversal).	
Week 3 8/14 - 8/18	Neurodiversity in language processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection: Neurodiversity reading annotation - due Thurs. • Writing assignment 4: Paper outline - due Sun.
	Sunday 8/20: Deadline to withdraw from the class by requesting a "W" grade (no tuition reversal).	
Week 4 8/21 - 8/25	Multilingualism and heritage language ♦ <i>In-class peer review of Writing Assignment 4 (Tues.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection: Heritage language experience & heritage language education - due Thurs. • Writing assignment 5: Rough draft of 2 sections - due Sun.
	Sunday 8/27: Deadline to change grading option.	
Week 5 8/28 - 9/1	Connections to real world contexts ♦ <i>In-class peer review of Writing Assignment 5 (Tues.)</i> ♦ <i>In-class group mini-poster based on Writing Assignment 6 (Thurs.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing assignment 6: Complete paper draft - due Thurs. • Writing assignment 7: FINAL PAPER - due Sun. • Reflection: Course Exit Survey - due Sun.

Additional Info & Policies

Communicating with us

As the teaching team, we are here to support your learning! The fastest way to reach us is through our emails (skrich@ucsc.edu, lalithab@ucsc.edu). We will aim to respond within 24 hours for emails sent during the week. Responses may be slower over the weekend.

Office Hours: We each have one Office Hour per week. The first 30 minutes are scheduled, one-on-one appointment slots that you may choose to sign up for, and the rest are drop-in office hours that you can attend any time without an appointment. If none of these times work for you, we can schedule a meeting time outside of those hours.

♦ **Wondering what Office Hours are? Click [here!](#)** ♦ **Sign up for Office Hours appointments [here.](#)** ♦

Principles of Community

In our class discussions and dialogues, we will have the opportunity to connect core linguistics concepts to a wide array of lived experiences, ultimately increasing our understanding of different perspectives. As a result, our discussions may touch on topics that feel personal to some, including us in the teaching team, and we may sometimes make mistakes in our speaking and our listening.

We aim to prioritize respect, understanding, and growth. An important aim of our classroom interactions (per Learning Outcome #5 of the course) will be for us to increase our facility with difficult conversations that arise inside issues of linguistic and cognitive diversity. This effort will ultimately deepen our understanding and allow us to make the most of being in a community with people of many backgrounds and experiences. To achieve this, at the start of the course, we will jointly settle on community guidelines for respectful communication to determine how we as a collective wish to communicate about the topics in this course, resolve misunderstandings, and receive feedback from our peers.

Academic Integrity

Collaboration: Psycholinguistics is a collaborative discipline! As such, you are welcome and encouraged to discuss homework assignments and readings with your fellow students in the class, but **you must write up your ideas independently.**

Plagiarism occurs when writers deliberately or unintentionally use another person's language, ideas, or materials and present them as their own without properly acknowledging and citing the source. If you copy text or ideas from another source (including your own previously, or concurrently, submitted coursework; work purchased from others and submitted as your own; and/or work copied from others with proper attribution) without appropriate reference, we are required to report this to the College Provost per university policy. For additional information on plagiarism, you can refer to the library's excellent resources on [source citation](#), tutorials on how to [avoid plagiarism](#), and checklists for ensuring that you have [properly cited your sources](#). We will be discussing discipline-specific citation practices during class, but if you are ever unsure of how or what to cite, please ask!

Our statement on student wellbeing

We are committed to supporting student success holistically, which includes supporting your wellbeing as a person. We recognize that many of you may be facing external challenges which affect your ability to show up fully and authentically and participate in class. Know that we are available to discuss personal circumstances that may come up for you, as you see fit, and to help point you to campus resources like the ones below that may offer you mental health services, financial resources, accommodations, and more.

Accessibility

UC Santa Cruz is committed to creating an academic environment that supports its diverse student body. If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations to achieve equal access in this course, please affiliate with the DRC. I encourage all students to benefit from learning more about DRC services to contact DRC by phone at 831-459-2089 or by email at drc@ucsc.edu. For students already affiliated, make sure that you have requested Academic Access Letters, where you intend to use accommodations. You can also request to meet privately with me during my office hours or by appointment, as soon as possible. I would like us to discuss how we can implement your accommodations in this course to ensure your access and full engagement in this course.

Title IX & CARE

UC Santa Cruz is committed to providing a safe learning environment that is free of all forms of gender discrimination and sexual harassment, which are explicitly prohibited under Title IX. If you have experienced any form of sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking, know that you are not alone. The Title IX Office, the Campus Advocacy, Resources & Education (CARE) office, and Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) are all resources that you can rely on for support.

Please be aware that if you tell me about a situation involving Title IX misconduct, I am required to share this information with the Title IX Coordinator. This reporting responsibility also applies to course TAs and tutors (as well to all UCSC employees who are not designated as “confidential” employees, which is a special designation granted to counselors and CARE advocates). Although I have to make that notification, you will control how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. The goal is to make sure that you are aware of the range of options available to you and that you have access to the resources you need.

Confidential resources are available through CARE. Confidentiality means CARE advocates will not share any information with Title IX, the police, parents, or anyone else without explicit permission. CARE advocates are trained to support you in understanding your rights and options, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more. You can contact CARE at (831) 502-2273 or care@ucsc.edu.

In addition to CARE, these resources are available to you:

- If you need help figuring out what resources you or someone else might need, visit the [Sexual Violence Prevention & Response \(SAFE\) website](#), which provides information and resources for different situations.
- [Counseling & Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) can provide confidential counseling support. Call them at (831) 459-2628.
- You can report gender discrimination and sexual harassment and violence directly to the University's [Title IX Office](#) by calling (831) 459-2462 or by using their [online reporting tool](#).
- Reports to law enforcement can be made to the UC Police Department, (831) 459-2231 ext. 1.
- For emergencies, call 911.

Student Resources

Counseling & Psychological Services

Many students at UC Santa Cruz face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. The university offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times, including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients' cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation.

Tutoring & Learning Support

At Learning Support Services (LSS), undergraduate students build a strong foundation for success and cultivate a sense of belonging in our Community of Learners. LSS partners with faculty and staff to advance educational equity by designing inclusive learning environments in Modified Supplemental Instruction, Small Group Tutoring, and Writing Support. When students fully engage in our programs, they gain transformative experiences that empower them at the university and beyond.

Slug Support

College can be a challenging time for students and during times of stress it is not always easy to find the help you need. Slug Support can give help with everything from basic needs (housing, food, or financial insecurity) to getting the technology you need during remote instruction. To get started with SLUG Support, please contact the [Dean of Students](#) Office at 831-459-4446 or you may send us an email at deanofstudents@ucsc.edu.

Campus Emergencies

For all other help and support, including the health center and emergency services, [Click here to go to UCSC's Emergency Services page](#). Always dial 9-1-1 in the case of an emergency.

