Ling 810: Psycholinguistics of Chinese languages  
Wednesday 1:30-4:30, RCB 7402

Contact information
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By appointment

Course description
This course gives an introduction to the study of psycholinguistics by exploring language processing in Chinese languages. While still understudied, the psycholinguistics of Mandarin and Cantonese present a number of striking differences with parallel facts in Indo-European languages. The empirical goal of the course is to document these differences in specific domains, including the representation of the syllable, tone processing, processing of phonetic cues, morphological processing, and sentence parsing. These findings will then support the theoretical goals of the course, namely, to evaluate and develop more general theories of production and perception that address these fundamental cross-linguistic differences.

Course goals
• Establish foundations in psycholinguistics, mainly language production and perception
• Understand how the structure of Chinese languages informs psycholinguistics
• Learn to critically analyze contemporary psycholinguistic research

Course format
This course is a seminar, and students are encouraged to participate in discussion. Each week will consist of 3-4 readings, and everyone is expected to attend class having done the readings, and be ready to contribute, even though participation is not explicitly graded.

Each week, the course instructors will begin with an overview of the major themes for that week. Next, the class facilitator(s) will guide us through the material and previously submitted discussion questions (~60-80 minutes). Finally, the class will conclude will a reflection on how the weekly topic can be applied to one’s own research / academic interests. On the first day of class, students will be assigned the readings for which they will act as facilitators.

Course Weighting
• Article reviews (3): 25% (due dates given below)
• Presentations: 20%
• Final long report: 55% (due Dec. 4)
Assignments

• **Article reviews**: to facilitate the final long report, students will write three 3-4 page reviews of research articles. The first review should be one of the articles on the reading list (see below), but the second and third will be chosen by the student so that it aligns with the focus of their research article. See John’s Teaching page for a guideline and some model reviews ([http://www.sfu.ca/~alderete/hands/sfuMemo_writingReviews.pdf](http://www.sfu.ca/~alderete/hands/sfuMemo_writingReviews.pdf))

• **Presentations**: An introduction to the topic for that week will be given by the instructors, but we ask the students to give presentations about the readings, essentially summarizing the main arguments and results in a short presentation and then leading a few discussion questions. Undergraduate students can team up, but graduate students will do this by themselves. All students meet with the instructors ahead of time to check on progress.

• **Final research article**: a standard paper approx. 15-20 pages (double-spaced) that engages with the material of the class, hopefully one that ties together some of the research threads of your reviews.

**More details on class discussion-leading:**

- **For non-facilitators** For each article, submit on Canvas three comments or questions that you feel are important—you may not fully understand the answers to your questions (deadline: Monday PM before Wednesday seminar). Guidelines for comments or questions will be given on the first day of class.

- **For facilitators (70-90 mins)**. You will then lead the class in discussion after the background provided by the instructors. You can generate a list of brief discussion ideas in conjunction with your classmates’ discussion questions (available on Canvas) into some order that you think will generate thoughtful conversation. During class, you will also be in charge of guiding the conversation from one question to the next, and keeping the conversation on track. Prepare by:

  1. **In the week(s) before**: Read all of the week’s articles, and plan how you will teach this material (perhaps also in conjunction with your partner).
  2. **Right after the class preceding your week**: See instructors to arrange a meeting time to workshop your ideas.
  3. **On the Thursday or Friday before your class discussion**: Meet with an instructor for one-hour to hone and refine your facilitation plans.
  4. **Monday or Tuesday before your class discussion**: Read through your classmates’ questions after they are submitted on the course discussion board and figure out how to organize the points that are made within them. There is no “right” way to organize these points, but you should put the points/questions in an order that facilitates a logical and thoughtful conversation. When you’ve done so, create a document that contains 1-2 sentence summaries of your classmates’ points in the order you wish, and make copies for everyone. Note: You do not need to include all points submitted, but you should have at least one discussion point from each classmate.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th><strong>Course Organization</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Introductions &amp; Overview</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th><strong>Chinese Tone I: Acquisition</strong></th>
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<td><em>How adults produce tone when speaking to infants; how infants learn tone</em></td>
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<th>Week 3</th>
<th><strong>Chinese Tone II: Production</strong></th>
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<td><em>How are speech errors different in Chinese languages, and what does this tell us about tone processing?</em></td>
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<th>Week 4</th>
<th><strong>Chinese Tone III: Perception</strong></th>
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<td><em>How tones compare with consonants and vowels in lexical access</em></td>
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### Week 5
**Speech Planning in Chinese I**

*Understand how the syllable in the Chinese lexicon relates to the facts of speech errors in Chinese languages*


**10/14**

### Week 6
**Speech Planning in Chinese II**

*How is the syllable referenced in preparation for word production?*


**10/11**

### Week 7
**Processing of Tone Sandhi**


**10/18**

**Article review 2 due**
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week 8</th>
<th>Morphological encoding in Chinese</th>
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<tr>
<td>10/25</td>
<td>What is the evidence for morphological encoding in Chinese, and how does it differ from Indo-European languages?</td>
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<th>Week 9</th>
<th>Syntax I: Processing in Chinese</th>
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<tr>
<td>11/1</td>
<td>How Chinese sentence processing differs from English (an in-situ versus wh-q language), and from other languages (languages w/ little versus lots of morphology)</td>
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Article review 3 due

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<th>Week 10</th>
<th>Syntax II: Structural Priming</th>
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<td>11/8</td>
<td>How does priming of abstract structure differ in Chinese, and what does it tell us about the processor?</td>
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Semantics I: Acquisition of Nouns and Verbs

Prominence of verbs versus nouns structures in Chinese versus English: Why do children learn verbs better in Chinese?


Semantics II: Language and Thought

Does the bareness of morphological marking in Chinese affect the way speakers interpret nouns?


Non-Linguistic Differences

When doing cross-linguistic comparisons, what NON-linguistic factors must one look out for? Explores the role of cultural factors / population genetics.


Final long report due: Dec. 4, can send by email.