

# LLL350 Psycholinguistics

1st and 2nd quarters, Senior

---

<b>Instructor</b>	Ivan Lombardi
<b>Style of Class</b>	Lecture
<b>Number of Credits</b>	2
<b>Day and Period</b>	To be advised

---

## Course Description

---

The first part of this course will cover the basic principles of psycholinguistics and highlight some of the most recent findings in the field of study. Students will work with theories and data to reflect on the faculty of language and the cognitive processes underlying language use. The second part of the course will focus on two major areas of research in psycholinguistics: bilingualism/plurilingualism and motivation. Students will learn about current theories on the bilingual mind and its development, as well as the workings of motivation and its dynamic nature. Moreover, they will critically evaluate some common general beliefs about language that are not backed up by reliable data.

## Course Objectives

---

Students will:

1. acquire a basic understanding of key notions and findings in psycholinguistics;
2. engage in challenging readings about the present and the future of research in the field;
3. tackle and debunk a number of myths associated to bilingualism and motivation;
4. use the knowledge acquired in class to revisit their language learning habits.

## Prerequisites

---

LLL 210 Introduction to Linguistics.

## Class Materials

---

Study materials will be distributed in class at the beginning of each quarter. Additional materials for classwork will be made available each week.

## Course Methods

---

The course is set up as a seminar-style class. Each week the instructor will introduce a new topic and guide students to relate the content of the required readings to their personal experience as speakers of more than one language. Students should come to class prepared to actively discuss the assigned readings and engage in practical activities stemming from the weekly topic.

## Evaluation/Assessment

---

Attendance and participation are strongly encouraged and taken into account when evaluating. Starting from Week 2, at the beginning of every class students will be asked to write a 10-minute reflection paragraph (*Weekly challenge*) on the week's readings. They can choose to answer a question or describe a personal experience related to the week's content. A written exam will take place at the end of each quarter.

## Grading

---

40%	Quarter exam
30%	Weekly challenges
30%	Attendance and participation

## Course Schedule

---

**Week 1:** Introduction and Course Methods

Orientation, discussion of class methods and a brief history of psycholinguistics as a scientific field of study.

**Week 2: Contemporary Psycholinguistics**

A discussion of the nature and goals of the psycholinguistic study of language nowadays and its connections with neurolinguistics and its research methods.

**Week 3: Linguistic Competence**

A description of Universal Grammar and other key components that concur in forming the grammar and the lexicon of (natural) languages.

**Week 4: The Biological Foundations of Language**

How the structure and nature of the human body makes it possible to learn and use language, and how language systems are acquired, represented and “stored” in the brain.

**Week 5: Producing Language**

A description of the workings of the human mind when planning and producing speech, and the nature of speech signals.

**Week 6: Understanding Language**

An overview of how speech perception and lexical access work, and how the mind deals with (structural) ambiguity.

**Week 7: Research and Experiments in Psycholinguistics**

An overview of experimental psycholinguistics and its most recent breakthroughs.

**Week 8: Quarter Exam**

Oral exam on the content of the first quarter.

**Week 9: The Psycholinguistics of Bilingualism**

An introduction to the psycholinguistic study of how two or more languages are acquired/learned at the same time or one after another.

**Week 10: Simultaneous vs. Successive Language Acquisition**

The nature of simultaneous and successive language acquisition, and how they interact to influence language learning and language use.

**Week 11: Cognition and the Bilingual Brain**

A study of what psycholinguistic research recognizes as the main effects of bilingualism/plurilingualism on cognition and memory.

**Week 12: The Psycholinguistics of Motivation**

An introduction to the scientific study of motivation from a psycholinguistic perspective, and a discussion of its significance for language acquisition and language learning.

**Week 13: Highlights in Motivation Research**

An historical overview of research in second language motivation, from the 1960s to the current socio-dynamic perspective, and beyond.

**Week 14: Socio-Dynamic Perspectives in Language Learning Motivation**

Current developments in motivation theories: the emphasis on the notion of Self, and

Dörnyei's complex dynamic systems perspective.

**Week 15: The Ebbs and Flows of Motivation**

A discussion of the dynamic nature of motivation and its interaction with demotivation, or its absence (amotivation), and how motivational strategies can help direct the flux of motivation in institutional language teaching and learning settings.

**Week 16: Quarter Exam**

Oral exam on the content of the second quarter.

**Preparation and Follow-up**

---

- Preparation: Read the relevant portions of the reference materials (about one hour)
- Follow-up: Review the content of the class and note any points you are not sure of (about one hour)