

# **Introduction to Second Language Acquisition**

## **Fall/Winter 2014-15**

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### **Course Description:**

This course provides students with an introduction to the field of second language acquisition as that field relates to second language teaching. The emphasis in this course is on having students become familiar with key concepts in second language acquisition and consider how these apply to their own experiences as classroom language teachers. Through readings, discussion, and short presentations, students will work on understanding how their own views of second language learning and teaching are informed and intertwined.

### **Course Objectives:**

In completing this course, students will:

- become familiar with recent models of second language learning;
- become aware of the multiple factors affecting second language acquisition in the classroom and consider the impact of these on their teaching;
- gain a vocabulary for discussing second language acquisition phenomena with other teachers;
- learn how to locate academic journal articles about second language acquisition in the library;
- apply their knowledge to responding to academic writing about issues in second language acquisition and teaching.

### **Course Textbooks:**

Cook, V. (2008). *Second language learning and language teaching*. London: Hodder Education.

### **Schedule:**

(Note: I will be using Sunday dates to mark the progress of the schedule. Work scheduled under a given date is due by that date)

#### **Oct 5: Language Learner Histories**

On-line discussion: Tell your own language learning history. What languages have you learned and how have you learned them? What factors do you think have been important in your learning?

### **Oct 12: Our Students as Language Learners**

On-line discussion: Ask your students about their language learning stories and what factors have had the biggest impact on their learning (or not learning). How does their experience differ from yours?

### **Oct 19: Background to looking at SLA and Language Teaching**

Read Cook, ch. 1

On-line discussion: What were your initial choices for the questions in Box 1.1 (p. 3 in Cook)? What do you think of Cook's discussion of the questions? Did you change your mind about any of the questions? Why?

### **Oct 26: Teaching and Learning Grammar (First Class Meeting)**

Read Cook, ch. 2

### **Nov 2: Teaching and Learning Vocabulary**

Read Cook, ch. 3

On-line discussion: What problems do your students have in learning vocabulary? What do you think are effective ways to help them in learning vocabulary?

### **Nov 9: Teaching and Learning Pronunciation**

Read Cook, ch. 4

On-line discussion: What should the learning goals for pronunciation be for Japanese learners of English? How would you help learners achieve them?

### **Nov 16: Teaching and Learning a Writing System (Second Class Meeting)**

Read Cook, ch. 5

### **Nov 23: JALT WEEK -- Take a break!**

### **Nov 30: Teaching and Learning Goals (Third Class Meeting)**

Read Cook, ch. 11

### ***First Reaction Paper Due***

#### **Dec 7: Learning and Communication Strategies**

Read Cook, ch. 6

Online discussion: What strategies do you use for learning particular aspects of a language you are studying (e.g., pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar)? For being able to use the language? What strategies should we teach to learners?

#### **Dec 14: Listening and Reading Processes**

Read Cook, ch. 7

Online discussion: How important do you feel listening and reading are for language learning? How can teaching make listening and reading more effective in promoting learning?

#### **Dec 21: Input and Interaction in the Classroom**

Read Cook, ch. 9

Online discussion: What should the teacher's role be in providing input and promoting interaction in the language classroom?

#### **Dec 28: Holiday -- Take a break!**

#### **Jan 4: More Holiday -- Take a break!**

#### **Jan 11: Nativism and English as a Lingua Franca**

Read Cook, ch. 10

Online discussion: What do you think of the concept of English as a Lingua Franca? Could it be used as a basis for instruction in Japan?

#### **Jan 18: Aptitude**

Read Cook, ch. 8

Online discussion: Are some people simply more talented language learners than others? Are there possibly many aptitudes involved in language learning?

### ***Second Reaction Paper Due***

#### **Jan 25: Age**

Read TBA

Online discussion: How does your students' age affect how they learn English?

#### **Feb 1: Motivation and Attitudes (Fourth Class Meeting)**

Read TBA

#### **Feb 8: Learning Models**

Read Cook, ch. 12

Online discussion: Which of the models of L2 learning presented by Cook seemed most in line with your thinking about L2 learning? Why?

#### **Feb 15: Teaching Models (Fifth Class Meeting)**

Read Cook, ch. 13

#### **Feb 22: Wrap-up**

Online discussion: What have you learned in this course that will have an impact on how you teach? How will these affect your teaching?

#### **Mar 1: *Third Reaction Paper Due***

### **Course Requirements:**

Online discussion (40%): Each week when there is not a class meeting, a prompt will be posted in the online forum for students to respond to. Students are expected to not only post their own response but also to respond to the posts of at least two other students. Guidelines for posting and responding in ways that promote effective discussion will be provided.

Reaction papers (3 x 15% = 45%): Students will write three papers reacting to separate articles relating to second language acquisition and language teaching. The papers will consist of two parts: 1) a summary of the research article that is being responded to and 2) a personal reaction to the research and its outcomes based on the students' experience as a language learner and teacher. A model and a rubric will be provided, as well as guidance on locating and selecting articles for this purpose.

Class participation (15%): Active engagement in class discussions and activities is expected. Students should be prepared to make brief (3 minute) presentations in class on pre-assigned aspects of recent readings in order to provide a starting point for discussions in class.