

Spring, 2015
Sociocultural Approaches to Second Language Learning and Teaching

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Course Dates: Sundays, 4/26, 5/17, 5/31, 6/7, & 6/28
On-line discussion: 4 hours

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an overview of sociocultural approaches to second language (L2) learning and teaching by introducing foundational and emergent theories and concepts that have shaped and guided research and teaching practice in this area. It will build on your knowledge of second language acquisition and encourage you to consider how sociocultural approaches can inform work in this area. Topics covered will include, but are not limited to, the quality of interaction desired for L2 learning and development, the role of the first language (L1) in L2 learning, task vs. activity, and the roles of teachers and peers as socializing agents. The course will also examine the implications that sociocultural theories have for the teaching of English as a second/foreign language (TESL/TEFL). You will be encouraged to use the concepts and insights provided by this course to reflect on and analyze activities that transpire in your own classrooms. Thus, the major goal of this seminar is to help you deepen your understanding of L2 learning and teaching by means of sociocultural theories. More specifically, the course aims to help you develop a solid understanding of sociocultural concepts and principles and make practical applications of this knowledge in your own situations, and thereby to facilitate your learning and development as EFL/ESL teachers.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, you will:

- Understand the central concepts and principles of different sociocultural theories,
- Be able to use your knowledge to better understand and evaluate teaching-learning processes in your own classrooms, and
- Be able to reflect on and articulate your learning as it relates to your learning from other courses as well as to your teaching practices.

III. PREREQUISITE

Second Language Acquisition

IV. TEXTBOOKS

(Required)

Swain, M., Kinnear, P., Steinman, L. (2015). *Sociocultural theory in second language education* (2nd ed.). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters. (henceforth, SKS)

(Optional, but strongly recommended)

Ortega, L. (2009). *Understanding second language acquisition*. London: Hodder Education. (henceforth, Ortega)

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

1. Reflections (10%)
2. Online discussion (10%)
3. Oral Presentation (20%)
4. Transcription and Reflective Essay (30%)
5. Mini Research Project (Outline & Research Paper) (30%)

Reading Assignments for the First Meeting:

Read the following chapters prior to the first meeting:

- (1) Ortega, Ch. 1 & Ch. 4
- (2) SKS, Introduction and Ch. 1.

Course Assignments:

1. Written reflection

You are required to submit a written reflection at each meeting. The purpose of this assignment is three-fold: (1) to critically analyze your feelings and reactions to the theoretical material from class discussions and/or assigned readings; (2) to apply theories and concepts you learned in class; (3) to share your thoughts and experiences with classmates and the instructor.

2. Online discussion

You are required to pose thought-provoking questions about the previous session. Your participation should not be limited to simply answering your classmates' questions; rather you are expected to engage in constructive and exploratory dialogue with your classmates by responding to and building on others' contributions.

3. *Oral Presentation*

Form pairs or groups of three. You will be responsible for giving a brief oral summary of one of the journal articles/book chapters listed in the course syllabus (15 minutes) as well as for leading a brief class discussion pertinent to the reading (15 minutes).

4. *Transcription and Reflective Essay*

The goal of this assignment is to give a chance to do a hands-on exploration of task-based interactions. You will audio-record yourselves as you work together on some tasks. You will transcribe these interactions and write a reflective essay.

5. *Mini Research Project*

For this final assignment, you will conduct a sociocultural analysis of L2 students' learning in a context of your choice. You are expected to present your proposal and modify your plan on the basis of feedback from your instructor and classmates.

VI. EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES

- You are expected to participate actively in all class activities.
- You are expected to complete all the readings and assignments prior to the class for which they are assigned.
- Late assignments will be accepted **ONLY** under special circumstances and with prior arrangements. You should have all the assignments including class reading completed by the beginning of class.
- Cheating and plagiarism (copying others' work as if it were yours) will **NOT** be tolerated in any case.
- Make sure to proofread your paper.
- This class aims to establish and maintain a positive learning environment based on communication and mutual respect.
- Active participation is critical to effective learning. If you have any questions regarding the course, please don't hesitate to ask the instructor either in or out of class.

Tentative Schedule

	Date & Time	Topics	Required Readings	Other Assignments
1	Sun. April 26	Introduction to the Course • semiotic mediation • ZPD • activity vs task • agency • sociocognition	Ortega pp. 216-227 SKS, Ch. 1 & Ch. 2 Ellis (2000)	
		----- Types of Pedagogical Interactions • IRF • contingency • scaffolding	Gibbons (2001) Samuda (2001) van Lier (1996, 2001)	
2	Sun. May 17	Languaging • collaborative dialogue • private speech	Ortega, pp. 62-64 SKS, Ch. 3 Coughlan & Duff (1994) Donato (1994) Ellis & Barkhuizen (2006) Mercer (2001) Swain (2006)	• Transcription • Finishing up • Student Presentations

3	Sun. May 31	Cognition and Emotion	SKS, Ch. 5 Imai (2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflective Paper • Finishing Up • Student Presentations
		Identity Theory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment • Imagined community • Non-participation 	Ortega, pp. 241-248 Norton & McKinney (2011)	
4	Sun. June 7	Language socialization	Ortega, pp. 237-241 Duff & Talmy (2011) Duff & Kobayashi (2010) Mohan & Smith (1992) Morita (2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finishing Up • Research Proposal • Student Presentations
		Everyday concepts and scientific concepts	SKS, Ch. 4	
		Integration of language and content	Ortega, pp. 233-236 Mohan (2001) Mohan & Beckett (2001)	

5	Sun. June 28	Activity Theory	SKS, Ch. 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finishing Up • Student Presentations
		Dynamic Assessment	SKS, Ch. 7	
		Interactional Competence	Ortega, pp. 227-233, Walsh (2013)	
		Course Summary	van Lier (1996)	

- This schedule is subject to change in order to better accommodate the needs of the class.
- Boldface is used for minimum required readings.
- All homework and reading assignments should be completed by the beginning of class on the date shown above.
- Presentations will take place on four separate days scheduled throughout the semester.