

The University of Western Ontario  
Department of Modern Languages and Literatures  
Ling 2244/Span 3319  
“Second Language Acquisition”  
Preliminary Course Description



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Prerequisite(s): Anthropology 1027A/B, or Linguistics 2288A/B, or the former French 288F/G, or French 2800, or Spanish 3303A, or permission of the program (Linguistics or Spanish).

Antirequisites: None

Co-requisites: None

**Textbook**

Slabakova, R. (2016). *Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

**Course Content and Aims:**

This course has a *Community Engaged Learning Component* (see below).

This course has three branches: review of experimental research as carried out by others; experimental research as conceived and carried out by you; and application to real life situations, the community. In the first of these we will review, based on the textbook and recent articles, what we know about second language acquisition. For the second part, in groups you will develop a research project that you will carry out and report on. For the third part you will work with a member of the community that wants to practice English (ling2244) or Spanish (SP3319).

The course begins with a short introduction to first language acquisition to show in what way SLA is similar or different. You will learn about different theories regarding acquisition, about the role of individual differences and about the main characteristics of learner language. You will be able to connect this body of knowledge to your own learning and to the situation of your Community Service Learning partner.

This is not a language pedagogy course. It will be largely based on empirical research and data, particularly in relation to English, Spanish and French SLA, although other languages may be touched on.

### *Community Engaged Learning (CEL)*

The course will have a Community Service Learning component that will allow students to experience a different approach to learning, by putting into practice many of the concepts studied in class while at the same time helping a member of the London community. Students, either alone or in pairs, will act as ‘language mentors’ to a member of the community who is trying to practice/learn English. Each case will be different, depending on the needs of each of the participating partners. The student is expected to adapt to each particular situation, showing flexibility and originality. You will have to meet with your partner for two hours a week and to reflect on your interactions.

### **Learning outcomes for the course:**

Upon successful completion of this course the student should be able to analyze:

- the different factors that are involved in second language acquisition.
- the different theoretical positions and principal debates in the field.
- the developmental course of acquisition.
- methodologies used in the study of SLA.
- tables and figures used in SLA research.

Upon successful completion of this course the student should be able to:

- describe in a clear and concise manner what the properties of learner languages are and what factors are involved.
- analyze data.
- understand how a project is carried out from start to finish.
- write clearly about SLA.

### **Learning outcomes for the CEL**

Upon successful completion of the CEL component the student should:

- understand in a real life context the difficulties that a second language learner may face.
- understand the relationship between the different theoretical approaches and the process of learning a second language on the ground.
- be able to integrate and evaluate different approaches to understanding a process such as second language acquisition: learning from written texts, from

communication with an instructor, from studying, and from being part of a community of learners.

### **Methodology**

- This is a course cross-listed between Spanish and Linguistics. The class will be together for two hours each week on Tuesdays.
- On Thursdays there will be one hour for the Linguistics students and one for the Spanish students.
- The Linguistics session will be taught in English, the other one in Spanish.
- During the breakout seminars we will plan a project of research that will be carried out start to finish.
- Both breakout sessions will accomplish the same things.

### **Mark Breakdown (tentative):**

• Assignments, readings, preparation, participation	10
• Mid term exam	25
• Oral presentation 1 + two page summary of presentation or PowerPoint (2)	10
• Presentation 2 (on CSL experience)	10
• Community service learning evaluation by partners	05
• Group final project	40
○ Participation (ideas, organization, determining outcomes, work on time)	10
○ Preparation of tests	10
○ Preparation of ethical approval application	10
○ Providing participant results	05
○ Analysis and final presentation (group work)	05

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<http://www.uwo.ca/modlang/undergraduate/policies.html>.