

# ARLT 100g: Speaking Minds

---



## **Class info:**

9:30-10:50 a.m. Tue & Thu, Spring 2008

GFS 223

## **Instructor:**

Prof. Roumyana Pancheva

Office: GFS 301S

Office hours: T 12-1, Th 11-12 and by appointment

(213) 821-1221, [pancheva@usc.edu](mailto:pancheva@usc.edu)

---

## **Course Description:**

This course is about the mind, as revealed through language. We will explore the ever-fascinating world within our heads, addressing the question of what makes us human. We will take an interdisciplinary approach to the subject of language as a faculty of the mind, studying the design of language, its relation to the other cognitive faculties, and its embodiment in the brain, through works of linguistics, philosophy, cognitive psychology and neuroscience, journalism, literary biography and film.

The course will be reading and writing intensive. We will study texts from different disciplines, which will allow you to gain experience with a variety of writing styles and modes of argumentation. You will also have the opportunity to present your ideas in a number of different written formats.

The course satisfies General Education requirements in Category V. You can find the guidelines at [http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/general\\_studies/GE/](http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/general_studies/GE/).

## **Course Goals:**

- Become acquainted with the major issues in the cognitive science of language
- Improve skills for critical analysis and argumentation
- Develop a passion for the life of the mind

## **Requirements:**

### **• Homework**

There will be 3 written assignments. They will vary in content and structure: some will be reaction papers to the readings, others will report on interviews with language consultants, etc.). Assignments are to be done independently. You are strongly encouraged to make an appointment with a consultant at the Writing Center (<http://college.usc.edu/writingcenter/>) to go over your papers drafts. You can also consult with me prior to the submission of the paper. The assignments are due by 8 pm on the days indicated on the schedule. Late submissions will not be accepted without prior approval. Unauthorized late submissions will result in a lower grade (10% for every day after the deadline). Please submit assignments electronically, using the Digital Drop Box function on Blackboard (<https://blackboard.usc.edu/>).

- **Exams**

There will be two midterms and a final exam. The exams will include short essay questions and multiple-choice questions based on the content of the readings, the class lectures, and the discussions in class. The final exam will be cumulative. Exams are to be done independently in class. Make-up exams will be given only in cases of documented emergencies.

- **Quizzes**

There will be a number of quizzes throughout the semester. If you have done the readings, and have been paying attention to the class lectures and discussions, you will have no problem doing them.

- **Class attendance and participation**

Attendance will be recorded. If you have to be absent for an emergency reason, please notify me in advance. In cases of more than two unexcused absences, no credit for attendance and participation will be given. If a quiz is given on a day you are absent without an excuse, you will receive a zero on it. You are also expected to participate actively in class discussion. I am interested in what you have to say and so are your classmates!

- **Readings and lecture notes**

You are responsible for reading carefully, and on time, the assigned texts. You also have to read the lecture notes, which will be posted on Blackboard (<https://blackboard.usc.edu/>) after class. The lecture notes are not meant to be used on their own, and will be hard to follow without class attendance.

## **Grading:**

Grading will follow USC's policy on letter grades and numeric equivalents, as described at: [http://www.usc.edu/dept/ARR/grades/gradinghandbook/gradingpolicies.html#Definition\\_of\\_Grades\\_and\\_Marks](http://www.usc.edu/dept/ARR/grades/gradinghandbook/gradingpolicies.html#Definition_of_Grades_and_Marks)

Midterm 1:	15%
Midterm 2:	15%
Final exam:	15%
1st paper:	15%
2 <sup>nd</sup> paper	15%
3 <sup>rd</sup> paper:	15%
Quizzes:	5%
Attendance and Participation:	5%

## **Feedback:**

I always welcome feedback about the course. If you have suggestions, concerns, or questions, please feel free to talk to me during my office hours or through email.

## **Academic Integrity:**

All students are expected to uphold the USC Student Conduct Code. Any student who cheats, or allows others to cheat, on an exam or homework, will be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards. For more information on what constitutes a violation of academic integrity, please consult <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/nonacademicreview.html>.

## Students with Disabilities:

Students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of accommodation should be obtained from DSP and given to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday-Friday. Tel. (213) 740-0776. <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/asn/DSP/>

## Readings:

The following books are required:

- ❖ Baker, M. 2001. *The Atoms of Language: The Mind's Hidden Rules of Grammar*. Basic Books.
- ❖ Bayley, J. 1999. *Elegy for Iris: A Memoir*. St. Martin's Press.

Additional readings will be distributed electronically on Blackboard, at <https://blackboard.usc.edu/>.

## Films:

- ❖ The Human Language Series, PBS:
  - #1 "Discovering the Human Language",
  - #2 "Acquiring the Human Language",
  - #3 "The Human Language Evolves"
- ❖ "Iris." Miramax. 2001.

## Course Outline:

The schedule of topics and readings may undergo changes, which will be announced in class.

---

## Part I: Language in the Mind

<b>Jan 15</b>	<b>Organization and overview of the course.</b>
<b>Jan 17</b>	<b>Linguistic science</b> <u>Reading:</u> Fromkin, V. et al. 2000. "Linguistics: The Scientific Study of Human Language" in V. Fromkin et al, ch. 1, 3-21. Anderson and Lightfoot 2000. "The Human Language Faculty as an Organ" <i>Annual Review of Physiology</i> 62.
<b>Jan 22</b>	<b>Language as a cognitive faculty</b> <u>Reading:</u> Pinker, S. 1995. ch. 2 "Chatterboxes" in S. Pinker <i>The Language Instinct</i>
<b>Jan 24</b>	<u>Film:</u> "Discovering the Human Language"

<b>Jan 29</b>	<b>The ingredients of language</b> <u>Reading:</u> Baker, M. 2001. ch. 1 “The Code Talker Paradox”, ch. 2 “The Discovery of Atoms”
<b>Jan 31</b>	<b>Universal grammar: the mind’s recipe for language</b> <u>Reading:</u> Baker, M. 2001. ch. 3 “Samples Versus Recipes”  <b>Paper 1 assigned</b>
<b>Feb 5-7</b>	<b>Understanding linguistic diversity</b> <u>Reading:</u> Baker, M. 2001. ch. 5 “Alloys and Compounds”, ch. 6 “Toward a Periodic Table of Languages” ch. 7 “Why parameters?”
<b>Feb 12</b>	<b>Writing workshop: critique of paper 1 (bring draft to class)</b>
<b>Feb 14</b>	<b>Review</b> <b>Paper 1 due</b>
<b>Feb 19</b>	<b>Exam 1</b>
<b>Feb 21</b>	<b>The instinct to learn a native language</b> <u>Reading:</u> Pinker, S. 1995. ch. 9 “Baby Born Talking – Describes Heaven” in S. Pinker <i>The Language Instinct</i> .
<b>Feb 26</b>	<u>Film:</u> “Acquiring the Human Language”

---

## Part II: Different Minds, Different Voices

<b>Feb 28</b>	<b>Losing language and memory to Alzheimer’s disease</b> <u>Reading:</u> Bayley, J. 1999. <i>Elegy for Iris: A Memoir</i> . 3-209  <b>Paper 2 assigned</b>
<b>March 4</b>	<b>Alzheimer’s disease continued</b> <u>Reading:</u> Bayley, J. 1999. <i>Elegy for Iris: A Memoir</i> . 211-275
<b>March 6</b>	<u>Film:</u> “Iris”

<b>March 11</b>	<b>Atypical language and other mental faculties in Williams Syndrome</b> <u>Reading:</u> Lenhoff, H. et al 1997. "Williams Syndrome and the Brain"
<b>March 13</b>	<b>Class cancelled</b> (I am out of town for a talk)  <b>Paper 2 due</b>
<b>March 18-20</b>	<b>Spring break</b>

---

### **Part III: The Biological Foundations of Language and Mind**

<b>March 25-27</b>	<b>Mapping language in the brain</b> <u>Reading:</u> Carter, R. 1999. "Crossing the Chasm."
<b>April 1</b>	<b>Language in another medium</b> <u>Reading:</u> Hickok, G. et al. 2001. "Sign Language in the Brain"
<b>April 3</b>	<b>Animal communication and evolution of language and mind</b> <u>Reading:</u> Hauser, M. et al. 2002. "The Faculty of Language"
<b>April 8</b>	<b>Exam 2</b>
<b>April 10</b>	<u>Film:</u> "The Human Language Evolves"
<b>April 15</b>	<b>The mind-body problem</b> <u>Reading:</u> Chomsky, N. 2002a. "Perspectives on Language and Mind" Chomsky, N. 2002b. "Language and the Brain" <b>Paper 3 assigned</b>
<b>April 17</b>	<b>Biological and artificial intelligence</b> <u>Reading:</u> Turing, A. 1981. "Computing Machinery and Intelligence" Searle, J. 1980. "Minds, Brains and Programs"

---

## Part IV: Extensions

<b>April 22</b>	<b>Linguistic determinism</b> <u>Reading:</u> Gleitman, L. R., & Papafragou, A. (2005). "Language and thought". In K. Holyoak & B. Morrison (Eds.), <i>Cambridge Handbook of Thinking and Reasoning</i> . New York: Cambridge University Press.
<b>April 24</b>	<b>Language, thought and culture</b> <u>Reading:</u> Colapinto, J. 2007. "The Interpreter" <i>The New Yorker</i> <b>Paper 3 due</b>
<b>April 29</b>	<b>Universals of human nature</b> <u>Reading:</u> Pinker, S. 2008. "The Moral Instinct" <i>New York Times Magazine</i> . January 13, 2008.
<b>May 1</b>	<b>Review and conclusions</b>
<b>May 13</b>	<b>Final exam 8- 10am</b>