



EAST TEXAS A&M
UNIVERSITY

English 462

Language Acquisition & Processing

COURSE SYLLABUS: Spring 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Gouda Taha

Office Location: DTH 214

Office Hours: MWF: 10:00 AM- 11:00 AM

University Email Address: Gouda.taha@tamuc.edu

Communication Response Time: Respond within 48 hours on M – F from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

If you have not heard from me, please assume I have not received your message and reach out to me again. I may not immediately respond to emails on weekends and holidays.

COURSE INFORMATION

Textbook(s) Required:

- Saxton, M. (2017). *Child Language: Acquisition and Development (2nd ed.)*. SAGE.
- Lightbown, P. & Spada, N. (2013). *How Languages are Learned (4th ed.)*. Oxford University Press

Software Required:

- D2L
- LeoMail
- A word processing program: *Students have free access to [Office 365](#).*

Suggested Equipment:

- Voice recorder, which will allow you to collect your own language data for the data analysis projects.

Optional materials:

- Supplementary reading materials will also be added to the course shell as needed.

Course Description

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

This course is an introduction to language acquisition and processing. All of us have learned a first language, and most of us either know or have tried to learn at least one other language as a child or adult. Thus, we know that both the process and results are different! There are many myths surrounding first and second language acquisition, and we will address several of these as we examine the major schools of thought and concepts that underpin the field of language acquisition. We will spend the first half of the semester looking specifically at L1 acquisition, and following Spring Break, we will look at L2 learning.

Learning Outcomes

In English 462,

- 1) The student will be an active and engaged participant in discussions by analyzing, constructing, and evaluating information presented within the textbooks and class activities.
- 2) The student will demonstrate their ability to work with language data as part of their language data analysis projects.
- 3) The student will demonstrate knowledge of the linguistic systems of English. As we progress through the data analyses and required readings, the student will be required to demonstrate an increased awareness of the structure and function of linguistic systems in English.
- 4) The student will demonstrate effective communication in both written and oral language in English as a result of online class activities and assignments.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

This class will be delivered completely online using Desire2Learn Brightspace (D2L), the new Learning Management System used by East Texas A&M University. To get started with the course, go to [MyLeo](#). You will need your CWID and password to log in to the course. Students are required to have regular access to a computer with an Internet connection. At a minimum, you must have Microsoft Office 2013, 2010, 2007 or Open Office. Microsoft Office is the standard office productivity software utilized by faculty, students, and staff. Microsoft Word is the standard word processing software, Microsoft Excel is the standard spreadsheet software, and Microsoft PowerPoint is

the standard presentation software. If you experience problems in accessing the course site or have other technological difficulties, please contact the CITE Help Desk at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@etamu.edu.

Instructional Methods

In this online course, we will have recorded sessions posted on D2L every week. You need to watch them and actively read the assigned reading materials. You also need to actively participate in the weekly discussion forums and submit all the assignments by their due dates. Unless stated otherwise the instructor will grade assignments within two weeks, and respond to emails within one business day. Please refer to the syllabus and/or our myLeo Online (D2L Brightspace) course shell before sending an email to your instructor. You may not receive a

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response if your questions are already answered on the syllabus or on myLeo Online (D2L Brightspace).

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to the instructor. For a light-hearted and humorous explanation of academic email etiquette, read “How to Email Your Professor (without being annoying AF)” by Laura Portwood-Stacer [here](#). In sum, all emails to your instructor should include the following elements:

1. Subject Line: Your subject line should be clear and specific. Recommended format: Name. Class and Section #. Topic of Email.
2. Salutation: Greet your instructor by their preferred name.
3. Body: Keep your message clear, concise, and respectful (it should not look like a text message). Use a respectful tone throughout. Remember to keep your audience in mind and that every interaction is a reflection of your academic persona.
4. Closing: End your email with an appropriate closing followed by your full name.

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

- Success in an online course requires self-discipline, organization, and motivation.
- All coursework will be completed through D2L. Be sure to access and follow the instructions in the course content area carefully.
- Assignment due dates are crucial, so check the course site regularly for announcements, updates, and discussions.
- Set aside dedicated days and times each week to complete your work, and aim to stay ahead whenever possible.
- To meet the learning outcomes, complete all readings and activities on time and in the order they are presented.
- As members of our online learning community, we are co-constructing knowledge together. Come prepared, share thoughtfully, respond respectfully, and engage fully in all learning processes.

AI use policy

The use of AI tools (such as ChatGPT or similar programs) is prohibited for all course assignments, including writing tasks and discussion posts. I would much rather see you practice and develop your own language and writing skills—even if there are a few errors—than read polished but impersonal AI-generated text.

AI may, however, be used as a study aid to help you deepen your understanding of course concepts. For example, if a term or idea mentioned in a lecture is unclear, you are welcome to use AI to explore or clarify it further.

In short: use AI to learn, not to complete your work.

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Best Practices

Students who have concerns about this course or the instructor should discuss these concerns with the instructor first. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of that conversation, the next person to contact is Dr. Shelby Miller, the course coordinator. Students should contact her via e-mail at Shelby.Miller@etamu.edu. If you bypass this chain of command, your concern will be ignored.

Your personal computer and internet access problems are not legitimate excuses for filing a ticket with the myLeo Online (D2L Brightspace) Help Desk. Only myLeo Online (D2L Brightspace)-based problems are legitimate reasons to contact the Help Desk. You are strongly encouraged to check for your browser compatibility before the course begins and take the myLeo Online (D2L Brightspace) tutorial offered for students who may require some extra assistance in navigating the myLeo Online (D2L Brightspace) platform.

Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Every student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

This syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

Unless stated otherwise, the instructor will grade assignments within two weeks, and respond to emails within one business day. Please refer to the syllabus and/or our myLeo Online (D2L Brightspace) course shell before sending an email to your instructor. You may not receive a response if your questions are already answered on the syllabus or on myLeo Online (D2L Brightspace).

GRADING

Assessment in this course will be based on the following scale:

A = 90%-100%

B = 80%-89%

C = 70%-79%

D = 60%-69%

F = 59% or Below

Total points corresponding to the final letter grades

A = 900 - 1000 Points

B = 800 - 899 Points

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C = 700 - 799 Points

D = 600 - 699 Points

F = 0 - 599 Points

Assignment Type	Points	Percentage of Final Grade
Discussion Boards	200	20%
Data Analyses (2)	300	30%
Article Review	100	10%
Midterm Exam	200	20%
Final Exam	200	20%

Extra Credit: There will be extra credit opportunities offered towards the end of the term.

ASSESSMENTS

As an instructor, my approach to classroom assessment is based on two main pillars. One is to provide feedback, either direct or indirect. This helps students see their areas of improvement, and I encourage all students to reach out to me in case they have any inquiries about the feedback received. Secondly, this approach is grounded in dynamic assessment that cultivates performance enhancement and is feedback- and revision-focused. That is, if you turn in your work on time, meet all the requirements of the assignment, and your submission demonstrates critical thinking and strong effort, then you will receive full credit.

Evaluation Methods

This course will utilize the following instruments to determine student grades and proficiency of the learning outcomes for the course. Detailed information and guidelines for each assignment will be available in D2L. For the course organization, please check the **course calendar on the last two pages of the syllabus**.

- **Discussion Boards (20%):** Online discussions provide students with opportunities to engage with readings and lectures, interact, and share insights with classmates. Your responses and ideas will be central to the class. ***Each Sunday by 11:59 pm***, each student must post a response in the discussion area of our electronic course shell to one aspect of the lecture/reading. Your original post should comprise a short paragraph and may focus on 1) what you found beneficial from the lecture/reading – particularly for pedagogical purposes; 2) personal/professional experiences to share with your colleagues that were prompted by the lecture/reading; 3) any questions about the lecture/reading (including what you may not have understood from the lecture/reading. You are also required to reply to two of your classmates' posts each week by the same deadline. Each reply needs to address a specific point brought up by your classmate and react to this point by giving your opinions and/or examples.

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- **Data Analyses (30%):** These assignments provide hands-on experience working with real first- and second-language data. The analysis process will be modeled in class, and students will complete two analyses independently. Data may come from student-collected samples or from the CHILDES/TalkBank language database.
- **Article Review (10%):** This assignment allows students to explore a topic of personal interest in greater depth. Each student will select one article cited in the textbook and write a 2–3 page review, due at the end of the semester. Guidance on locating these articles through the library will be provided in class.
- **Midterm Exam (20%):** The midterm exam will be an oral assessment Zoom call, which allows students to demonstrate their understanding of topics covered in the first half of the semester.
- **Final Exam (20%):** The final exam allows students to demonstrate their understanding of topics covered throughout the semester and synthesize their learning of key issues. It includes an oral final exam.

Submitting Assignments

All assignments must be submitted to D2L by the designated due date. If an assignment requires submitting a text-based file, files must be either Word documents, PDFs, or Google Docs. **No .pages files!** Also, if you are using Google Docs, you must be sure to grant the right sharing/viewing permissions when submitting the link. If I cannot access the file and have to ask for viewing permissions, it will be considered late. If this is a repeated issue, you will not be allowed to submit Google Doc files throughout the rest of the course. If you have technical issues in uploading the assignment to the course site, please contact CITE Help Desk at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@etamu.edu and email me to notify me of the problem.

The reasons you may not receive full credit on an assignment are:

Late submissions: The original deadline is important, both for you and your instructor! The day that you submit a major writing assignment marks the end of one unit and the beginning of a new one. This means that it is hard to catch up if you get behind. The deadline is also important for your instructor to provide feedback in a timely manner. However, I understand that sometimes mental or physical illness, family emergencies, work, and other unforeseen circumstances may affect your ability to complete work on time. If you need more time to complete an assignment, reach out to me before the due date. *You will only lose points on a late assignment if you DO NOT email me.* You will not lose points for a late assignment if reach out asking for an extension before the due date.

Misunderstood-the-assignment projects: Although many assignment prompts give you room to explore different aspects of language acquisition and development, certain requirements still need to be met, including engaging with the core concepts and questions in the prompt. For example, if the prompt asks you to define X and analyze Y and Z in contexts 1 and 2, but you only define X and summarize what that looks like in one context, then you may not receive full credit. Or, if an assignment asks you to

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support your argument with credible sources and you do not include any sources or only include sources that are not credible, then you may not receive full credit.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are the technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all coursework in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. You can also [check out other Brightspace support options](#).

D2L runs monthly updates during the last week of the month, usually on Wednesday. The system should remain up during this time unless otherwise specified in an announcement. You may experience minimal impacts to performance and/or look and feel of the environment.

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COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Because this is an online course, attendance is the responsibility of each student. I do not monitor logins or track participation automatically—it is up to you to stay engaged and on pace with the course schedule. All assignments are expected to be submitted by their deadlines; late work will not be accepted. Students who anticipate needing additional support or flexibility should contact the instructor immediately. If you are having difficulties completing your work, please let me know **before** the work is due.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

Students should also consult the [Rules of Netiquette](#) for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum:

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy, please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedures 13.99.99.R0.01](#)

Academic Integrity

Students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty, see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateschool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyFormold.pdf>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

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Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

East Texas A&M University

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

Nondiscrimination Notice

East Texas A&M University will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and East Texas A&M Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all East Texas A&M campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

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East A&M Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at East A&M, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit ETAMU.edu/counsel

Department or Accrediting Agency Required Content

Departmental-Specific Procedures

Student Grievance Procedure

Students who have concerns regarding their courses should first address those concerns with the assigned instructor in order to reach a resolution. Students who are unsatisfied with the outcome of that conversation or have not been able to meet individually with their instructor, whether in-person, by email, by telephone, or by another communication medium, should then schedule an appointment with the Department Head or Assistant Department Head by completing a Student Grievance Form (available in the main office, HL 141). In the event that the instructor is the Department Head, the student should schedule a meeting with the Dean of the College of Arts, Sciences, and Humanities after following the steps outlined above; if the instructor is the Assistant Department Head, students should schedule a meeting with the Department Head. Where applicable, students should also consult [University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.05 \("Student Appeal of Instructor Evaluation"\)](#).

Collection of Data for Measuring Institutional Effectiveness

In order to measure the level of compliance with the accreditation, throughout the semester, I may collect some of the ungraded texts you produce solely for an assessment of program effectiveness that in no way affects students' course grades or GPAs.

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COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

With the exception of the final, assignments and discussion posts will be due on Sunday midnight each week.

Week	Topics	Assignments	Due
Week 1 Jan 12- 18	Course Introduction Saxton, Chapter 1	Discussion Board #1	Sun. 1/18
Week 2 Jan 19-25	L1 Acquisition: Animal vs. Human & The Critical Period Hypotheses Saxton, Chapters 2-3	Discussion Board #2	Sun. 1/25
Week 3 Jan 26-Feb 1	L1: Input and Interaction & Language in the First Year (Examining Neurotypical and Neurodivergent Development) Saxton, Chapter 4-5	Discussion Board #3	Sun. 2/1
Week 4 Feb 2- 8	L1: The Acquisition of Lexicon & Morphology (Examining Neurotypical and Neurodivergent Development) Saxton, Chapter 6-7	Discussion Board #4 First Data Analysis	Sun., Feb. 8, 11:59 pm
Week 5 Feb 9- 15	PL1: Linguistic Nativism Saxton, Chapter 8	Discussion Board #5	Sun. 2/15
Week 6 Feb 16-22	L1: The Usage-Based Approach Saxton, Chapter 9	Discussion Board #6	Sun. 2/22
Week 7 Feb 23- Mar 1	L1: Nature vs. Nurture (Conclusion) Saxton, Chapter 10	Discussion Board #7	Sun. 3/1
Week 8 Mar 2- 8	Midterm	Midterm	
Week 9 Mar 9-15	L2 Acquisition Lightbown & Spada, Chapter 2	Discussion Board #8	Sun. 3/15
Week 10 Mar 16-22	L2: Individual Differences Lightbown & Spada, Chapter 3	Second Data Analysis	Sun., Mar. 22, 11:59 pm

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Week 11 Mar 23-29	L2: Explaining Learning Lightbown & Spada, Chapter 4	Discussion Board #10	Sun. 3/29
Week 12 Mar 30- Apr 5	L2: Teaching & Learning an L2 Classroom Lightbown & Spada, Chapter 5	Discussion Board #11	Sun. 4/5
Week 13 Apr 6- 12	L2 : SLL in the classroom Lightbown & Spada, Chapter 6	Discussion Board #12	Sun. 4/12
Week 14 Apr 13- 19	Guest speaker	Discussion Board #13	Sun. 4/19
Week 15 Apr 20-26	L2: Language Learning Revisited Lightbown & Spada, Chapter 7		
Week 16 April 27- May 1	Final Review	Article Review	
	Final Exam	Final Exam	

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