



INSPIRE 3EL3 – Experiential Learning Opportunities

C05 – Language and Aging

Interession 2021

COURSE OFFERING

Spring Interession, 2021

Mode: Asynchronous lectures (four 50-min segments per week) and Synchronous discussions in tutorial/office (two 2-hour sessions, Tuesday, and Thursday 6-8PM on zoom)

Office Hours: By Appointment

COURSE INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Magda Stroinska

Email: stroinsk@mcmaster.ca

SESSIONAL DATES

This class does not follow the regular start and end dates, drop and add dates or withdrawal dates for undergraduate students. After you enrol in the class, you will be able to check the dates by clicking on the 'Deadlines' for the class under 'My Class Schedule' in the Student Centre.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to the complex relationship between age and linguistic performance and competence. Language is often considered a uniquely human ability – while many other living beings communicate, only humans have developed the level of sophistication that allows us to talk about abstract concepts or past and future events that are not directly available to perception. Linguists know a lot about first language acquisition by babies and second language learning at different stages of life but linguistic decline that often accompanies aging is still not fully understood.

Healthy seniors who do not experience any pathological aspects of aging may still experience decline in some aspects of language production, including increased difficulty in finding words, slower speech, slips of tongue, etc. Production is generally more affected than comprehension, but understanding language too suffers from impaired hearing, processing of unusually complex or very long sentences, and new terminology or words that have changed meanings (e.g., in slang). These signs of linguistic decline often make care givers use what is called elder speak – a version of a baby talk that seniors may find confusing or even offensive.

For a very long time, most linguistic research was done on monolingual speakers, ignoring the reality that a growing percentage of world's population uses more than one language. In countries like Canada, more than 30% of the population is bilingual and that number is growing. Research shows that active bilingualism, i.e. a consistent use of more than one language on a



daily basis, appears to contribute to increased neuroplasticity associated with improved executive functions of the brain. Linguists believe that bilingualism helps the aging population to build a cognitive reserve that can offset, to a degree, the effects of dementia and cognitive decline. However, even healthy seniors may experience 2nd language loss and revert to their native tongue, contributing to their alienation and helplessness. Cognitive tests performed in the 2nd language may be inconclusive or indicate dementia while the problem is the loss of the 2nd language in which tests are done.

The rapidly growing proportion of seniors emphasizes the necessity to effectively communicate with that segment of the population. Unlike physical disabilities, cognitive, linguistic or communicative impairments are often invisible and may remain undiagnosed. Students will learn communication strategies for an improved interaction with seniors and for an empathy-based care.

Efforts will be made to ensure the course is fully accessible to mature students and seniors.

VIRTUAL COURSE DELIVERY

To follow and participate in virtual classes it is expected that you have reliable access to the following:

- A computer that meets the performance requirements [found here](#).
- An internet connection that is fast enough to stream video.
- Computer accessories that enable class participation, such as a microphone, speakers and webcam when needed.

If you think that you will not be able to meet these requirements, please contact uts@mcmaster.ca as soon as you can. Please visit the [Technology Resources for Students page](#) for detailed requirements. If you use assistive technology or believe that our platforms might be a barrier to participating, please contact [Student Accessibility Services](#), sas@mcmaster.ca, for support.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course promotes awareness and understanding of language issues related to aging. It will introduce students to problems related to changes in linguistic competence and performance in the aging population, including issues of L2 loss in aging bilingual immigrants; students will also explore linguistic aspects of the media representation of seniors, marketing for seniors, continuing education for mature students, accessibility, as well as physical and mental health needs of the aging population; finally, we shall address positive strategies for communication with people with dementia and Alzheimer's Disease.

CLASS STRUCTURE

- Asynchronous lectures (four 50-min segments per week) and,



- Synchronous discussions in tutorial/office (two 2-hour sessions, Tuesday and Thursday 6-8PM on zoom)

SESSION TOPICS

Week 1: Language throughout the lifespan: acquisition, development and attrition

Week 2: First and second language attrition in the old age

Week 3: Seniors in the media and in marketing – ageism?

Week 4: Aphasia, dementia, Alzheimer’s Disease: keep the conversation going!

COURSE MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Textbook: no textbook; texts will be provided on Avenue to Learn

METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

- 4 weekly reflection papers based on case studies 4 x 15%
- 1 research proposal due one week after the course ends 40%

POLICY ON MISSED WORK, EXTENSIONS, AND LATE PENALTIES

Standard McMaster policies pertaining to missed work (e.g., MSAFs) will apply. Extensions and late penalties will be considered and addressed on a case-by-case basis. See below regarding academic accommodations, missed work, and related issues.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COURSE POLICIES

Your registration and continuous participation to the various learning activities of *INSPIRE 3EL3* will be considered to be an implicit acknowledgement of the course policies outlined above, or of any other that may be announced during lecture or through other communication vehicles. It is your responsibility to read this course outline, to familiarize yourself with the course policies and to act accordingly. Lack of awareness of the course policies cannot be invoked at any point during this course for failure to meet them. It is your responsibility to ask for clarification on any policies that you do not understand. The instructor reserves the right to modify elements of the course and will notify students accordingly.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the



Academic Integrity Policy, located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- Improper collaboration in group work.
- Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

AUTHENTICITY / PLAGIARISM DETECTION

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., online search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

COURSES WITH AN ONLINE ELEMENT

Some courses may use online elements (e.g. email, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, usernames for the McMaster email accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses online elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss this with the course instructor.

ONLINE PROCTORING

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working



communities. These expectations are described in the Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, whether in person or online.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities Policy.

REQUESTS FOR RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC TERM WORK

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, including lectures by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or



image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

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