CIEE Seville, Spain

Course title: Psychology of Learning a Second Language
Course code: PSYC 3101 CSCS
Programs offering course: Advanced Liberal Arts, Business and Society, Communications, New Media and Journalism Spanish, Liberal Arts
Language of instruction: Spanish
U.S. semester credits: 3.00
Contact hours: 45.00
Term: Spring 2021

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the psychological aspects that influence the acquisition of a foreign language, such as on the motivational factors, personality traits, the degree of adaptation to a foreign socio-linguistic and culturally different context and other psychological factors. Students will also acquire the tools to identify the psychological aspects that promote and sometimes impede the learning of a foreign language: anxiety, motivations, affective and cognitive factors, learning styles and strategies, etc. Additionally, students will become familiar with the most recent research in the field of Second Language Acquisition. A good understanding of these psychological factors will help students meet the challenge that learning a foreign language presents. Taking advantage of CIEE Seville’s Culture and Language Assistants volunteering program, students will be able to intern as an English assistant teacher at primary, secondary or high school levels. This would be a good opportunity to acquire a more realistic perspective on the intricacies of learning a second language in an academic context.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- Rank the tools necessary to identify the psychological factors that facilitate and sometimes hinder the learning of a foreign language.
- Apply the knowledge acquired in the course during their time in Spain so that they have a more successful educational experience.
- Investigate the influence of personality traits, motivations, learning styles, etc. on the acquisition of a second language.
- Value through a deeper understanding their perception of the study abroad experience.
- Differentiate the tests and questionnaires most used internationally for psychology and second language acquisition, which will facilitate the completion of future research about this specialization or in general.

Course Prerequisites

As an introductory course, there are no specific prerequisites. Students do not have to have previously studied psychology or applied linguistics. The course requires an enthusiasm and disposition to study and complete projects at the university level. This usually guarantees success for the achievement of the course objectives. 4 semesters of college-level Spanish (or equivalent). Students need to have a GPA of at least 2.5.

Methods of Instruction

1. A brief oral exposition by the teacher on the subject at hand, followed by in-depth class discussion. Each theme ends with a series of practical activities for assimilation of the material.
2. Each theme will be accompanied by a text (article, essay, etc.), which will provide the basis for an activity to be completed by the student (summary, personal opinion, etc.).
3. Together with the final exam, the student will present a final journal of 3 pages (approx 1000 words) in which the student will reflect upon his/her personal Spanish learning experience in Spain. The objective is the synthesis of the material studied during the course with the student’s personal experience. The evaluation criteria are the following:
   1. Quality of content
   2. Organization and coherence
   3. Style, grammar, and presentation
4. Practical activities realized in class include:
   1. Students will present at least one article in class. The clear presentation of the fundamental ideas of the article and creativity will be valued. The presentation of the article will be accompanied by an activity that the rest of the students should complete to learn or assimilate the presented material. For this reason, the grade of this assignment will consist of two factors: presentation and activity
   2. Spanish songs will be listened to in class in order to identify words from the text (utility of the music in the acquisition of a second language)
   3. Viewing of a film about an intercultural aspect

**Linguistic Resource Center**

Students are encouraged to use the Writing Center for help with class activities as well as for the final essay.

**Assessment and Final Grade**

1. Midterm Exam
2. Final Exam
3. Activities
4. Final Project
5. Active Class Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Midterm Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Activities</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Final Project</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Active Class Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Course Requirements**

**Midterm Exam**

20 True or False questions and 5 short answers (Themes 1 to 4)

**Final Exam**

20 True or False questions and 5 short answers (Themes 5 to 10)

**Activities**

- Each week, the student must complete the activities of a Theme and make an essay of the corresponding reading. See weekly schedule.
- Each student makes one presentation in class about a selected topic (PowerPoint format)

**Final Project**

Final oral presentation in class of a topic that was of your special interest during the semester and that includes an activity that involves the rest of the students.

**Active Class Participation**

In-class oral contributions, short in-class writing assignments, having read the assigned materials before the scheduled class meeting, raising issues that you did not understand during your readings, asking questions during discussions, and provide your opinion and thoughts on various relevant subjects.

**Attendance**

Students are not allowed to miss class for unjustified reasons. For each unexcused absence, the participation portion of the grade will be lowered. Hence, it will be very difficult to receive a 100 in the class. Please keep this in mind. If a student misses class twice without a valid excuse (a note from a physician in the event of an illness), then the professor will automatically lower the final grade by 5 points (on a 100-point scale) for each class missed thereafter. Students with 6 or more absences will fail the course.

Students should arrive to class on time. Arriving more than 15 minutes late for a class will count as an unexcused absence. Please note that an excused absence is one that is accompanied by a doctor’s note: signed stamped and dated. Travelling and/or travel delays are not considered valid reasons for missing class.

*Notes from a physician will only be valid and admitted by the Program Manager if the doctor confirms that the visit could not have been arranged at another time, or that the student was too ill to attend class that day.

**Academic Honesty**
Students are expected to act in accordance with their university and CIEE’s standards of conduct concerning plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Use of online translators for work in Spanish will result in an automatic failure.

*N.B. Course schedule is subject to change due to study tours, excursions, and local holidays. Final schedules will be included in the final syllabus provided to students on site.*

**Weekly Schedule**

**Week 1**

Class: 1.1 Introductory Theme: The Multidimensionality of Learning a Second Language

Introduction to the Psychology of Learning a Second Language. Explanation of the scientific concepts of Multiple Determination and Negative Capability and its usefulness in understanding the phenomenon of second language acquisition

1. *Cómo dominar un idioma. Artículo de prensa*
2. Video Activity *Ken Robison Ted Talk: Schools Kill Creativity*. Colloquium

Class: 1.2 Introductory Theme: The Multidimensionality of Learning a Second Language


1. Student Presentation (ppt format, 10 minutes exposition+ activity proposed for the rest of the class)
2. Rest of the class: Short Essay about the reading (10 lines + 1 thoughtful question)
3. Instructor lecture

**Week 2**

Class: 2.1 Theme 1: The Mother Tongue and its acquisition

In order to understand the acquisition of a second language, we should first understand how we acquire the mother tongue and see what significant differences occur between both acquisitions.


1. Textbook activities. Theme 1.
2. In-Class activity: Do monkeys have anything interesting to say? William J. Cromie HARVARD GAZETTE ARCHIVES
3. BBC video: differences between animal and human communication

Class: 2.2 Theme 1: The Mother Tongue and its acquisition


1. Student Presentation (ppt format, 10 minutes exposition+ activity proposed for the rest of the class)
2. Rest of the class: Short Essay about the reading (10 lines + 1 thoughtful question)
3. Video Activity *Patricia Kuhl Ted Talk: Critical Period Hypothesis*. Colloquium

**Week 3**

Class: 3.1 Theme 2: Basic concepts in Second Language Acquisition

Exploring basic concepts in Second Language Acquisition and Learning.

1. Textbook activities. Theme 2.
2. Instructor lecture
3. Video Activity *Patricia Kuhl Ted Talk: Critical Period Hypothesis*. Colloquium

Class: 3.2 Theme 2: Basic concepts in Second Language Acquisition
Week 4
Class: 4.1 Theme 3: Factors that influence the learning of a second language

In this topic we will analyse the large number of variables that influence the acquisition and learning of a second language.

1. Textbook activities. Theme 3.
2. Instructor lecture
3. Video Activity Genie: The wild child.

Colloquium

Class: 4.2 Theme 3: Factors that influence the learning of a second language


1. Student Presentation (ppt format, 10 minutes exposition+ activity proposed for the rest of the class)
2. Rest of the class: Short Essay about the reading (10 lines + 1 thoughtful question to be discussed in class)
3. Reading in-class activity: *Your window to learn new languages may still be open*

Week 5
Class: 5.1 Theme 4: Intelligence and “Linguistic Aptitude”

and their influence on the learning of a second language

2. The students will take the MLAT (Modern Second Language Aptitude Test) to learn their aptitude for acquiring a second language.

Class: 5.2 Theme 4: Intelligence and “Linguistic Aptitude”

and their influence on the learning of a second language


1. Student Presentation (ppt format, 10 minutes exposition+ activity proposed for the rest of the class)
2. Rest of the class: Short Essay about the reading (10 lines + 1 thoughtful question to be discussed in class)
3. The students will take the MSCEIT (Emotional Intelligence Test) Online scoring

Week 6
Class: 6.1 Continuation of MLAT and MSCEIT

Class: 6.2 Mid-Term Exam on the previous topics

Week 7
Class: 7.1 Theme 5: “Anxiety”. Types of anxiety

and their influence on the learning of a second language

During this week we will explore your anxiety when learning a new language abroad. We will take some language anxiety tests to empirically measure this emotion.
Week 8
Class: 8.1 Theme 6: "Motivation". Types of motivation

and their influence on the learning of a second language

During this week we will explore your motivation to learn a new language. We will take some language anxiety tests to empirically measure it.

2. Instructor lecture

Class: 8.2 Theme 6: "Motivation". Types of motivation

and their influence on the learning of a second language


1. Student Presentation (ppt format, 10 minutes exposition+ activity proposed for the rest of the class)
2. Rest of the class: Short Essay about the reading (10 lines + 1 thoughtful question to be discussed in class)

Week 9
Class: 9.1 Theme 7: Learning “styles” and their influence on learning a second language

During this week we will explore your learning styles and how they influence your learning of a new language. We will take a learning styles survey to empirically measure them.

Completion of the learning style survey and the Second Language Strategies Test.

Class: 9.2 Theme 7: Learning “styles” and their influence on learning a second language


1. Student Presentation (ppt format, 10 minutes exposition+ activity proposed for the rest of the class)
2. Rest of the class: Short Essay about the reading (10 lines + 1 thoughtful question to be discussed in class)

Week 10
Class: 10.1 Theme 8: Personality traits

and their influence on the learning of a second language

During this week we will explore your personality traits and types according to the Big Five Personality Traits and Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. You will take the NEOPIR AND MBTI tests. Online correction.

Activity: the students will take a personality test (NEOPIR) and obtain their personal profiles based on the Big Five Personality Traits.

Class: 10.2 Theme 8: Personality traits
Week 11
Class: 11.1 Theme 9: Models of second language learning

During this week we will explore the main theoretical approaches to explain the learning of a second language

2. Instructor lecture

Class: 11.2 Theme 9: Models of second language learning


1. Student Presentation (ppt format, 10 minutes exposition+ activity proposed for the rest of the class)
2. Rest of the class: Short Essay about the reading (10 lines + 1 thoughtful question to be discussed in class)

Week 12
Class: 12.1 Final Project presentations

The presentation consists of an explanation of the main ideas and concepts of the student’s topic, illustrated with videos, photos, or other audio-visual supports. (10 minutes). Students will receive points if the class is actively involved in the presentation and/or if the student explains their personal motivation for choosing the topic.

Class: 12.2 Final Exam on themes 6-9

Course Materials

Readings

**Required**

- Bialystok, Ellen (1994) In other words: The science and psychology of second-language learning. New York: Basic books.

**Recommended**

**MOTIVATION AND SLA**


The Role of Students? Attitudes and Motivation In Second Language Learning In Online Language Courses. Calico Journal, 23(1), 49.

Adjusting to a Foreign Context and SLA


Relation between socio-economic status and motivation of learners in learning English as a foreign language. Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 6(4), 742-750.


Analysis of early foreign languages learning abroad. Education and Science without Borders,6(12), 76-80.


Second Language Learning Strategies & Styles

Correction techniques preferred by students during the process of learning a foreign language. Psychology of Language and Communication, 13(1), 39.


Practice for second language learning: Don't throw out the baby with the bathwater. International Journal of English Studies, 10(1), 155-165,170.

Learning and teaching styles in foreign and second language acquisition. Foreign Language Annals, 28(1), 21.

A study of foreign language learning styles used by georgian students. Psychology of Language and Communication,15(2), 121.


Strategies for learning a second or foreign language. Language Teaching, 44(2), 167-180.

Anxiety and SLA

Foreign language learning anxiety in upper-level classes: Involving students as researchers. Foreign Language Annals, 40(1), 122-142.


**SLA AND LEARNING DISABILITIES**


**PERSONALITY AND SLA**


**BRAIN COGNITION AND SLA**


**RESEARCH AND SLA**


Jourdenais, R. (2004). Appraising research in second language learning: a practical approach to critical analysis of


OTHERS


