

# Language

Psyc 354, Winter 2025

## Course Description

What is the role of language in how we think and interact? What does it take to comprehend and speak, and how do the skills to use language develop? What is the role of language in our communities and our culture? The course will provide an overview of the psychological study of language, sampling from topics such as language evolution, language development, communication, and social learning, among others.

## Learning Outcomes

Along with providing deeper understanding of how language works, this course aims to develop your critical thinking and communication skills. It will encourage you to observe language and engage with original scholarship in the area. Successful students will be able to:

1. define, provide examples of, and apply concepts of language research
2. compare and apply models of language learning, processing, and use
3. apply knowledge to derive conclusions from sample data
4. communicate orally and in writing with various audiences (peers, academics) about current language research
5. develop and execute teamwork strategies for disseminating information

## Suggested Time Commitment

In this course, you should expect to invest on average 8 to 10 hours per week. This will include the time you spend studying course material, practicing course objectives, and participating in course activities and assessments. You are encouraged to adhere to a pre-determined study schedule as you will be more likely to complete the course on time successfully.

## Required Course Materials

1. Sedivy, J. (2020). *Language in Mind*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Oxford University Press.  
Available from the Queen's bookstore and on-line retailers in print and as an e-book. \$229.99 print; \$73.99 e-book
2. The other readings listed in the syllabus are available through the eReserves system accessible through onQ or the Queen's library.
3. ONE of the following books. Available from the Queen's bookstore or on-line retailers. Refer to the Assignment 2. Prices from Amazon.ca on January 1, 2025
  - Sedivy, J. (2021). *Memory Speaks: On Losing and Reclaiming Language and Self*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap. \$24.95
  - Kinzler, K. (2020). *How You Say It: Why You Talk the Way You Do—And What It Says About You*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. \$23
  - McCulloch, G. (2019). *Because Internet: Understanding the New Rules of Language*. New York: Riverhead Books. \$24.95
  - Danesi, M. (2020). *The Art of the Lie: How the Manipulation of Language Affects Our Minds*. Lanham, MD: Prometheus Books. \$23

## Copyright of Course Material

Course materials created by the course instructor, including all slides, presentations, handouts, tests, exams, and other similar course materials, are the intellectual property of the instructor. It is a departure from academic integrity to distribute, publicly post, sell or otherwise disseminate an instructor's course materials or to provide an instructor's course materials to anyone else for distribution, posting, sale or other means of dissemination, without the instructor's express consent. A student who engages in such conduct may be subject to penalty for a

departure from academic integrity and may also face adverse legal consequences for infringement of intellectual property rights.

### **Educational Technologies, Help, Privacy, and Accessibility**

This course makes use of the following website(s), program(s), and/or application(s) for specific educational use/purposes: FeedbackFruits (peer learning), onQ (online learning, communication), Microsoft Teams (collaborative/peer learning).

Privacy: Be aware that your independent use of the website(s), programs, and/or application(s) used in this course, *beyond what is required*, is subject to their terms of use and privacy policy. You are encouraged to review the applicable privacy statements before using the site.

Accessibility: Queen's University is committed to developing courses that are accessible. For further information on accessibility compliance of the website(s), program(s) application(s) used in the course, please contact ITS Support Centre <https://www.queensu.ca/its/itsc>

## **Assessments**

### **Essential Course Requirements**

Midterm	16%	objectives 1, 2
Assignment 1: Misunderstandings	20%	objectives 1, 2, 3, 4
Assignment 2: Book club		
Book presentation	8%	objectives 4, 5
Participation	8%	objectives 4, 5
Feedback	8%	objectives 4, 5
Final exam (cumulative)	40%	objectives 1, 2

Proctored Midterm. The midterm exam will take place in class. It will consist of MCQ and short answer questions. Example MCQ and short answer questions will be provided for practice. Make-up date for those with approved Academic Considerations: March 1, 2025

Assignment 1: Misunderstandings The goal of this assignment is to provide you with an opportunity to work with language data first hand and apply what you are learning in the course. Detailed instructions are provided in the Assignment 1 handout. You should read the instructions and start listening for misunderstandings as soon as possible. Please follow APA style.

Assignment 2: Book club In a group with your classmates, you are asked to read ONE popular science book and develop "a presentation" of the book for your classmates. Your presentation will be peer-graded (8%). You will be working as a group to evaluate and provide peer-feedback to 4 presentations (8%). The final component of your grade here is your participation in your group (8%). Detailed instructions are provided in the Assignment 2 handout. The available books are listed above under Required Course Materials. This is more or less a whole term activity. You need to select a book and indicate your choice for us on onQ by the end of the Add period.

Proctored Final Exam: The final exam for this course will take place during the official exam period. It will consist of MCQ and short answer questions. Example short answer questions will be provided for practice. Make-up date for those with approved Academic Considerations: May 15-18, 2025

Once the exam schedule has been finalized, the exam date will be posted on your SOLUS account. The exam dates for each term are listed on the Faculty of Arts and Science webpage under "[Important Dates](#)." Student exam schedules for the Fall Term are posted on SOLUS immediately prior to Thanksgiving and on the Friday before Reading Week for the Winter Term. **Students should delay finalizing any travel plans until after the examination schedule has been posted. Exams will not be moved or deferred to accommodate employment, travel/holiday plans or flight reservations. For information regarding what is considered extenuating circumstances and qualifications for Academic Consideration, please visit the [Faculty of Arts and Science's Academic Consideration webpage](#).**

## Assessment Submission Policy

To build in flexibility and promote accessibility and inclusion for all students, this course has been designed with built-in grace periods where possible.

Assignment 1: If you are unable to submit the diary entries on time, the 1% will be folded into the assignment grade. In addition, Assignment 1 will have a built-in three-day grace period, which aligns with the Faculty of Arts and Science's policy for Academic Considerations. If you have extenuating circumstances when a submission is due, and these circumstances will last up to three (3) days, you can use the grace period without applying for formal Academic Considerations through the Portal. The grace period is automatically applied to papers submitted up to three (3) days late. However, if your circumstances will last more than three (3) days and you have documentation, please use the Academic Considerations Portal.

Assignment 2 (Book club): There will be no extension on your Journal submission. Updates can be done at any time until the deadline and depend on how you choose to schedule your work. Moreover, the updates are meant as building points of the larger assignment, here the book presentation. The success of the presentation depends on everyone's preparation and ability to contribute. There will be also no extension on the Presentation as it feeds into other students' work on Feedback. The Feedback will have a built-in three-day grace period (see Assignment 1). Note that the Journal, group Log(s), and Group Work Assessment are not graded but required to get Participation points. They need to be complete and submitted on time.

Late policy: Late submissions of Assignment 1 and Peer Feedback beyond the grace period and without long-term Considerations or Accommodations, will be penalized **5% per** every 24 hrs (or part thereof) that they are late, including weekends, unless arrangements have been made.

Please see the Academic Considerations for Students with Extenuating Circumstances and Accommodations for Disabilities sections of the syllabus for more information.

Regrade policy: If you believe an assignment/question was graded incorrectly, please contact your grader. Mistakes happen and we are always happy to review a grade. **You need to contact your grader, however, within a week of receiving your grade.** Include a description of the problem as you see it, so that the TA can prepare for the meeting. If you are not satisfied with the grader's response, you may contact the instructor including a written explanation of why you think your grade should be different. This needs to happen **within a week of receiving the TA's response.** As a general policy, the instructor will mark your entire test / assignment. Your grade may go up, stay the same, or go down. Regrade requests received after the deadlines noted above will not be considered.

## University Policies

### I. Academic Support

All undergraduate students face new learning and writing challenges as they progress through university: essays and reports become more complex; effectively incorporating research into writing becomes more important; the types of assignments become more diverse; managing your time and developing the skills you need to read and think critically gets more challenging. I encourage students to contact Student Academic Success Services (SASS). SASS offers many different ways to receive support:

- Free online or in-person [appointments](#) to get personalized support on writing and academic skills from expert staff and trained peers.
- [Workshops](#) and [drop-in programs](#). SASS' [Events Calendar lists events coming soon](#).
- [Online resources](#) that provide strategies for academic skills and writing development at university.
- If English is not your first language, SASS has specific resources for [English as Additional Language students](#), including weekly programs and EAL academic skills appointments. You can meet on an ongoing basis with an EAL consultant to work on your academic writing, speaking, listening, and reading skills.

### II. Accommodations for Disabilities

Queen's University is committed to working with students with disabilities to remove barriers to their academic goals. Queen's Student Accessibility Services (QSAS), students with disabilities, instructors, and faculty staff work together to provide and implement academic accommodations designed to allow students with disabilities equitable access to all course material (including in-class as well as exams). If you are a student currently experiencing barriers to your academics due to disability related reasons, and you would like to understand

whether academic accommodations could support the removal of those barriers, please visit the [QSAS website](#) to learn more about academic accommodations or start the registration process with QSAS by clicking **Access Ventus** button at [Ventus | Accessibility Services | Queen's \(queensu.ca\)](#)

VENTUS is an online portal that connects students, instructors, Queen's Student Accessibility Services, the Exam's Office and other support services in the process to request, assess, and implement academic accommodations.

To learn more go to: <https://www.queensu.ca/ventus-support/students/visual-guide-ventus-students>

### III. Academic Consideration for Students in Extenuating Circumstances

Academic Consideration is a process for the University community to provide a compassionate response to assist students experiencing unforeseen, short-term extenuating circumstances that may impact or impede a student's ability to complete their academics. This may include but is not limited to:

- Short term Physical or Mental Illness or Injury (stomach flu, anxiety/depression, mononucleosis, concussion, broken bones, surgery, medical treatments, etc.)
- Traumatic Event/Confidential (Bereavement, serious injury, illness or required treatment for a significant other/family member or a traumatic event such as divorce, sexual assault, social injustice, etc.)
- Requirements by Law or Public Health Authorities (court dates, jury duty, requirements to isolate, etc.)
- Significant Event (varsity athletic event, distinguished event, serving in the Reserve Forces, etc.)

Queen's University is committed to providing academic consideration to students experiencing extenuating circumstances. For more information, please see the [Senate Policy on Academic Consideration for Students in Extenuating Circumstances](#).

Each Faculty has developed a protocol to provide a consistent and equitable approach in dealing with requests for academic consideration for students facing extenuating circumstances. For more information, undergraduate students in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences should consult the Faculty's webpage on [Academic Consideration in Extenuating Circumstances](#) and submit a request via the [Academic Consideration Request Portal](#). Students in other Faculties and Schools who are enrolled in this course should refer to the protocol for their home Faculty.

Students are encouraged to submit requests as soon as the need becomes apparent and to contact their instructor and/or course coordinator as soon as possible once academic consideration has been granted. Any delay in contact may limit the options available for academic consideration. **Please contact [psyc.accom@queensu.ca](mailto:psyc.accom@queensu.ca) for accommodations/considerations.**

For more information on the Academic Consideration process, what is and is not an extenuating circumstance, and to submit an Academic Consideration request, please see the Faculty of Arts and Science's [Academic Consideration website](#).

### IV. Queen's Policy Statement on Academic Integrity

Queen's University is dedicated to creating a scholarly community free to explore a range of ideas, to build and advance knowledge, and to share the ideas and knowledge that emerge from a range of intellectual pursuits. Queen's students, faculty, administrators and staff therefore all have responsibilities for supporting and upholding the fundamental values of academic integrity. Academic integrity is constituted by the five core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility and by the quality of courage. These values and qualities are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Adherence to the values expressed through academic integrity forms a foundation for the "freedom of inquiry and exchange of ideas" essential to the intellectual life of the University.

The following statements from "The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity" (2nd edition), developed by the International Center for Academic Integrity (ICAI), contextualize these values and qualities:

1. **Honesty** Academic communities of integrity advance the quest for truth and knowledge through intellectual and personal honesty in learning, teaching, research, and service.
2. **Trust** Academic communities of integrity both foster and rely upon climates of mutual trust. Climates of trust encourage and support the free exchange of ideas which in turn allows scholarly inquiry to reach its fullest potential.
3. **Fairness** Academic communities of integrity establish clear and transparent expectations, standards, and practices to support fairness in the interactions of students, faculty, and administrators.

4. **Respect** Academic communities of integrity value the interactive, cooperative, participatory nature of learning. They honor, value, and consider diverse opinions and ideas.
5. **Responsibility** Academic communities of integrity rest upon foundations of personal accountability coupled with the willingness of individuals and groups to lead by example, uphold mutually agreed-upon standards, and take action when they encounter wrongdoing.
6. **Courage** To develop and sustain communities of integrity, it takes more than simply believing in the fundamental values. Translating the values from talking points into action -- standing up for them in the face of pressure and adversity — requires determination, commitment, and courage.

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with and adhering to the Senate [regulations](#) concerning academic integrity, along with [Faculty or School](#) specific information. Departures from academic integrity include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials, facilitation, forgery and falsification. Actions which contravene the regulation on academic integrity carry sanctions that can range from a warning, to loss of grades on an assignment, to failure of a course, to requirement to withdraw from the university.

#### Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools

Students must submit their own work and cite the work that is not theirs. Generative AI writing tools such as ChatGPT are only permissible when explicitly noted in the assignment instructions. In these cases, be sure to cite the material that they generate. Any other use constitutes a Departure from Academic Integrity.

Queen's [Student Academic Success Services](#) (SASS) offers a self-directed, online academic integrity module which we encourage all students to take which will help with:

- Understanding the nature of the academic integrity departure
- Understanding the expectations of and role of sources in scholarly writing
- Integrating sources into your writing (paraphrasing, quoting, summarizing)
- Understanding when and how to cite your sources
- Managing your time effectively to avoid the need for shortcuts
- Taking effective notes to ensure accuracy of source material and correct attribution

#### V. Turnitin

This course makes use of Turnitin, a third-party application that helps maintain standards of excellence in academic integrity. Normally, students will be required to submit their course assignments through onQ to Turnitin. In doing so, students' work will be included as source documents in the Turnitin reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarized text in this course. Data from submissions is also collected and analyzed by Turnitin for detecting Artificial Intelligence [\(AI\)-generated text](#). These results are not reported to your instructor at this time but could be in the future.

Turnitin is a suite of tools that provide instructors with information about the authenticity of submitted work and facilitates the process of grading. The similarity report generated after an assignment file is submitted produces a similarity score for each assignment. A similarity score is the percentage of writing that is similar to content found on the internet or the Turnitin extensive database of content. Turnitin does not determine if an instance of plagiarism has occurred. Instead, it gives instructors the information they need to determine the authenticity of work as a part of a larger process.

Please read Turnitin's [Privacy Policy](#), [Acceptable Use Policy](#) and [End-User License Agreement](#), which govern users' relationship with Turnitin. Also, please note that Turnitin uses cookies and other tracking technologies; however, in its service contract with Queen's Turnitin has agreed that neither Turnitin nor its third-party partners will use data collected through cookies or other tracking technologies for marketing or advertising purposes.

For further information about how you can exercise control over cookies, see [Turnitin's Privacy Policy](#).

Turnitin may provide other services that are not connected to the purpose for which Queen's University has engaged Turnitin. Your independent use of Turnitin's other services is subject solely to Turnitin's Terms of Service and Privacy Policy, and Queen's University has no liability for any independent interaction you choose to have with Turnitin.

*Portions of this document have been adapted, with permission, from the University of Toronto Centre for Teaching Support and Innovation tip sheet "[Turnitin: An Electronic Resource to Deter Plagiarism](#)".*



## VI. Notice of Recording

Classes may be recorded with video and audio (and in some cases transcription) and made available to students in the course for the duration of the term. Recordings will be stored on a platform supported by the University. The University has taken steps to configure these platforms in a secure manner. The recordings may capture your name, image or voice through the video and audio recordings. By attending these live classes, you are consenting to the collection of this information for the purposes of administering the class and associated coursework. If you are concerned about the collection of your name and other personal information in the class, please contact the course instructor to identify possible alternatives. To learn more about how your personal information is collected, used and disclosed by Queen's University, please see the [Notice of Collection, Use and Disclosure of Personal Information](#).

## Inclusion and Communication

### Land Acknowledgement

Queen's University is situated on the territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabek.

Ne Queen's University e'tho nón:we nikanónhsote tsi nón:we ne Haudenosaunee táhnon Anishinaabek tehatihsnonhsáhere ne onhwéntsya.

Gimaakwe Gchi-gkinoomaagegamig atemagad Naadowe miinwaa Anishinaabe aking.

### Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity

Equity in an educational institution is achieved when all members of our society have fair and equal opportunity to participate in and enjoy the benefits of an education, including the opportunity to experience success and human dignity while developing the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to contribute as leaders and citizens in society. Queen's is committed to the values of equity, diversity, and inclusivity. I will work to promote an environment where everyone feels welcome. Every member of the class is asked to show respect for every other member.

### Building a Classroom Community

I see students as active agents in their learning and this course is constructed with many opportunities to interact both in and outside class. For everyone to feel safe and free to participate, we are all expected to behave respectfully and with integrity at all times both in face-to-face and online interactions:

- Make a personal commitment to learn about, understand, and support your peers.
- Assume the best of others and expect the best of them.
- Recognize and value the experiences, abilities, and knowledge each person brings to the course.
- Acknowledge the impact of oppression on other people's lives and make sure your words and tone are respectful and inclusive.
- Encourage others to develop and share their ideas.
- Pay close attention to what your peers say/write before you respond. Think through and re-read what you have written before you post online or send your comments to others.
- Be open to having your ideas challenged and challenge others with the intent of facilitating growth.
- Look for opportunities to agree with one another, building on and intentionally referencing peers' thoughts and ideas; disagree with ideas without making personal attacks, demeaning, or embarrassing others.

Class Attendance: Your presence and participation in class contributes to the knowledge and skills that you will develop throughout this course. I expect that you attend class regularly, participate in class conversations and learning activities. These types of activities provide active engagement, promote a deeper understanding of the course content, and contribute to your success in this course.

### Fostering Accessibility

All of us have a shared responsibility for fostering accessibility and promoting meaningful inclusion of those with disabilities. The [Accessibility Hub](#) at Queen's University's Human Rights & Equity Office offer a host of [tutorials](#) that provide us all with practical tips for:

- creating accessible documents, e.g., to submit to your teaching team or share with peers in peer feedback activities/in a presentation,
- emails, e.g., while communicating with group members or your teaching team, and
- meeting practices (e.g., in tutorials/labs/seminars or virtual meetings).

### How The Teaching Team Will Communicate with You and How You Can Communicate with Us:

1. Please activate notifications for the **Announcements** forum on the course's onQ page. I will use it to distribute important information and updates about the course. "Important information" means information that you are responsible for, e.g., deadlines, details about assignments, etc.
2. Following university policy, we will communicate with students via Queen's email. Please check your email regularly to ensure you do not miss important information related to this course.
3. Questions about the course content and assignments:
  - **Post your questions in the Course Questions discussion forum on onQ as very likely your questions will be shared by other students.** Feel free to help answer your peers' questions on this forum. The teaching team will monitor this discussion forum daily and answer questions within two business days.
  - For questions of private nature, please email the instructor. I aim to respond within two business days.
  - **Please use "Psyc 354:" in the subject line.**
4. Do take advantage of **my office hours** if I can help you with anything (including grad school/career questions) or to just chat about the course! Getting to know my students is one of the best parts of my job. You can come to my office (Humphrey 349) or videocall through Teams. You do not need to give me a heads up unless you would like me to check or review something before the meeting.

### Course Feedback

At various points during the course, you may be asked to take part in a variety of feedback activities, such as surveys and questionnaires. This feedback enables the teaching team to improve the course. All surveys are anonymous and are directly related to activities, assessments, and other course material.

### Name/Pronoun

If, for whatever reason, you wish to change how your name appears in onQ and/or on class lists, please follow these steps. You may also use this process to add your pronouns to the appearance of your name.

1. Log into SOLUS.
2. Click on Personal Information tab.
3. Click on the Names tab
4. Click on the Add New Name tab
5. Choose Preferred from the Name Type drop down menu
6. Enter the name you would like to appear in onQ and/or on class lists.
7. Click Save.

Please allow 24 to 48 hours for your name to be registered within the system. If you have further questions or concerns, please contact ITS at Queen's University.

# Schedule of Readings and Activities – SUBJECT TO CHANGE

## Changes will be posted to onQ

## Important University Dates

Please visit the [Faculty of Arts and Sciences Sessional Dates website](#) for all academic deadlines.

Week	Dates	Topic	Materials	Activities & Assessments
1	Jan 8	Introduction	<b>**Syllabus**</b> Chapter 1	Introductions
	Jan 10			Book choice survey opens
2	Jan 15	Origins	Chapter 2: Origins of Human Language	Book choice survey closes Friday Jan 17 <sup>th</sup> , 5pm
	Jan 17			
3	Jan 22	Thought	Chapter 13: Language Diversity	Book Clubs set-up. First Organizational Log expected by February 14 <sup>th</sup> , 5pm
	Jan 24			
4	Jan 29	Identity	Ireland, M.E., & Mehl, M.R., (2014). Natural language use as a marker of personality. In T. M. Holtgraves (Ed.), <i>Oxford library of psychology. The Oxford handbook of language and social psychology</i> (p. 201-208). Oxford University Press.  Eckert, P. (2005). Stylistic practice and the adolescent social order. In A. Williams and C. Thurlow (Eds.) <i>Talking Adolescence: Perspectives on Communication in the Teenage Years</i> . (pp. 93-110). New York: Peter Lang.	
	Jan 31			
5	Feb 5	Connecting	Chapter 12: The Social Side of Language  Duck, S., & Usera, D. A. (2014). <i>Language and interpersonal relationships</i> . In T. M. Holtgraves (Ed.), <i>Oxford library of psychology. The Oxford handbook of language and social psychology</i> (p. 188–200). Oxford University Press.	
	Feb 7			
6	Feb 12	In-class Midterm 1		In-class Midterm 1



				Misunderstandings assignment – diary entries due Friday, Feb 14 <sup>th</sup> , 5 pm
				First organizational Log for book club expected by February 14 <sup>th</sup> , 5pm
	Feb 14			
	Feb 17-21		Family day, Reading Week: NO CLASSES	
7	Feb 26	Sound	Chapter 4: Learning Sound Patterns, 4.1 – 4.3 Chapter 7: Speech Perception 7.1 – 7.3	
	Feb 28			
8	Mar 5	Sign	Chapter 5: Learning Words, 5.1 – 5.3 Chapter 8: Word Recognition, 8.1 – 8.3	
	Mar 7			
9	Mar 12			
	Mar 14	Structure	Chapter 9: Understanding Sentence Structure and Meaning, 9.1 – 9.4 Chapter 11: Discourse and Inference, 11.1, 11.4-11.5	
10	Mar 19			Misunderstandings Assignment due Friday March 21 <sup>st</sup> , 5 pm  Book journal due Sunday, March 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 5 pm
	Mar 21	Language as Action	Maass, A., Arcuri, L., & Suitner, C. (2014). Shaping intergroup relations through language. In T. M. Holtgraves (Ed.), <i>Oxford library of psychology. The Oxford handbook of language and social psychology</i> (p. 157–176). Oxford University Press	
11	Mar 26	Book club	Finalizing your group presentation	In-class group work  Book presentations due Tuesday April 1 <sup>st</sup> , 5pm
	Mar 28	Book club	Finalizing your group presentation	In-class group work  Book presentations due Tuesday April 1 <sup>st</sup> , 5pm

12	April 2	Book club	Presentations peer feedback	In-class group work Book presentations due Tuesday April 1 <sup>st</sup> , 5pm
	April 4	Conclusion Overflow class		Peer feedback due Friday, April 4 <sup>th</sup> , 5pm Book Club Reflection & Group Work Assessment due Friday April 4 <sup>th</sup> , 5pm
Final exam: April 7-23 inclusive				