Linguistics & Languages
COGSCIL 6XX3
Topics in Linguistic Theory
Fall 2023

Instructor Information

John Colarusso
Email: colaruss@mcmaster.ca
Office Hours:
By zoom, Monday and Tuesday 3:30 - 4:20
Contact by e-mail: colaruss@mcmaster.ca

Course Information

Lectures: One two-hour session each week.
Labs: none
Tutorials: none

Course Dates: 09/05/2023 - 12/31/2023
Units: 3.00
Course Delivery Mode: In Person
Course Description: issues in different aspects of Linguistic Theory and Advanced Philology. Consult the Department for the topic to be offered.

Hours of Study: At the student's discretion.

Instructor-Specific Course Information

Instructor: Dr. John Colarusso

Email: colaruss@mcmaster.ca

Location: CNH 532

Phone: (905) 529-7070/ 23902

Office Hours: by appointment through Zoom

Course lecture notes will be made available.

Meeting Details

We will meet in PGCLL M25, Friday 10:30 - 12:20

Important Links

- [Mosaic](#)
- [Avenue to Learn](#)
- [Student Accessibility Services - Accommodations](#)
- [McMaster University Library](#)
- [eReserves](#)

Course Learning Outcomes

- This course will examine the origins of modern syntactic theory as a reaction against the behaviourism of B. F. Skinner. Its basis in mathematical developments of the mid-twentieth century will be emphasized. Revised Extended Standard Theory, Government and Binding, and Minimalism will be examined briefly as parts of a coherent effort to model the mental capacity of language. Efforts to extend this enterprise beyond language will be discussed in a rigorous manner. The underlying method of the course will be to render key concepts in a rigorous manner, most of which are otherwise traditionally presented by means of mere plausibility arguments.

Required Materials and Texts

Chomsky, Noam, Language and Mind (3rd edition) Custom Courseware coursepack compiled by John Colarusso, available as an eReserve

Class Format

In Person

Course Evaluation

Homework,(5 assignments, 20% each). These will be short (one page) essays of an exact and concise form.

Grading Scale

Grade	Equivalent Grade Point	Equivalent Percentages
A+	12	90-100
A	11	85-89
A-	10	80-84
B+	9	77-79
B	8	73-76
B-	7	70-72
C+	6	67-69
C	5	63-66
C-	4	60-62
D+	3	57-59
D	2	53-56
D-	1	50-52
F	0	0-49

Course Schedule

1) Skinnerian Behaviourism and the concept of the science of the mind.

(Coursepack (CP), pp. 1-16; Chomsky ch. 1) 2 weeks

Homework #1

2) Chomsky's critique of Skinner and the concept of a generative system

(CP: 17 – 43; Chomsky chs. 2 and 3) 2 weeks

Homework #2

3) Innateness, the language acquisition device, modularity, Language Faculty

(CP: 45 -72; Chomsky ch. 5) 3 weeks

Homework #3

4) Grammars beyond language: mathematics, music, dance, folklore, literature

(lectures; Chomsky, ch. 7) 3 weeks

Homework #4

5) Formal issues and infinity, or "How Big is Language?"

(CP: 73 - 133) 3 weeks

Homework #5

Late Assignments

If you know that you will be late in handing in your assignment, you must seek an extension from your instructor.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

If you know that you cannot attend class, please inform your instructor ahead of time.

Turnitin.com

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., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

Generative AI: Use Prohibited

Students are not permitted to use generative AI in this course. In alignment with McMaster academic integrity policy, it "shall be an offence knowingly to … submit academic work for assessment that was purchased or acquired from another source".

This includes work created by generative AI tools. Also state in the policy is the following, "Contract Cheating is the act of "outsourcing of student work to third parties" (Lancaster & Clarke, 2016, p. 639) with or without payment." Using Generative AI tools is a form of contract cheating. Charges of academic dishonesty will be brought forward to the Office of Academic Integrity.

APPROVED ADVISORY STATEMENTS

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-proceduresguidelines/

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

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. Avenue to Learn, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

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Courses with an On-line Element

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn, 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, user names for the McMaster e-mail 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 on-line 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

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the [Policy on 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, Avenue to Learn and/or McMaster email.