PSYC467/667 – Topics in Psycholinguistics
‘Events in language and cognition:
How we talk and think about what happens’
Fall 2018
Monday 4.00-7.00, 134 Alison

Instructor: Dr. Anna Papafragou
Office: 109 Wolf Hall
Email: apapafragou@psych.udel.edu
Tel: (302) 831 2752

Course goals: This is a seminar on how we think and talk about what happens in the world around us. This is a complex topic that relates event representation in language to event perception. The seminar pays particular attention to the question of whether and how event language might affect (and be affected by) cognitive processes, how different languages represent events, and how children acquire language-general and language-specific ways of encoding events. The course incorporates cross-linguistic, cognitive and developmental perspectives on a new and rapidly changing research area.

Course readings: Papers (listed below) available from www.udel.edu/sakai.

Grading:
Your grade will be a weighted sum of the following:

- Quizzes on readings & class participation: 50%
- Presentations of assigned readings: 15%
- Written project (also presented orally): 35%

Quiz on Readings: You will need to read approx. 2 papers per class. At the beginning of each class I will distribute a short quiz that covers each of the assigned papers and checks for basic comprehension. Responses will be graded.

Class Participation: Come prepared to discuss the papers assigned to each class. Explain your ideas to other class members with different backgrounds. You should not feel you need to be absolutely confident in an idea to present it to others. The point of the seminar is to discuss controversies in the field – several issues are still open so think about how to address these issues.

Presentation of Papers: You will need to lead class discussions once or twice during the semester (number of presentations will depend on class size). You should prepare a short powerpoint presentation to help people follow along. The rest of the class will not have read the papers so your role will be to (a) summarize the main hypothesis and empirical part of the paper (use up to 7 slides per paper) and (b) raise points for discussion (3-5 slides).

Project: This can be: (a) a summary of several papers not discussed in class and a critical response to the papers’ arguments; (b) a proposal about follow-up studies, or a set of experiments to test an alternative hypothesis; (c) a combination of the two, or some other kind of appropriate project. Length: approx. 3,000 words. In preparation for your final project, you need to hand in a project abstract (500 words) and a bibliography of about 10 papers by November 5th. All projects will be presented during the last class.
meetings. Written versions of your projects are due on December 7th (this gives you extra time to incorporate comments from your class presentation).

Class Schedule

Core (obligatory) readings are marked with stars; the rest of the readings are optional. I will present material from both of these kinds of readings in my lectures.

**WEEK 1, September 10: Organizational issues and background.**

**WEEK 2, September 17: Events in language and cognition.**

**WEEK 3, September 24: Cross-linguistic event encoding.**

**WEEK 4, October 1: Events and language acquisition.**

October 1: Deadline to sign up to present a paper

**WEEK 5, October 8: Contextual aspects of event encoding.**

**WEEK 6, October 15: Event memory.**

**WEEK 7, October 22: Homologies between event language and thought. (class-led)**

**WEEK 8, October 29: No class, Anna is away.**

**WEEK 9, November 5: Event concepts from infancy to adulthood. (class-led)**


November 5: Project abstracts and bibliographies due today!

WEEK 10, November 12: Implications for everyday reasoning (class-led)

WEEK 11, November 19: No class, Thanksgiving week.

WEEKS 12-13, November 26 and December 3: Class presentation of projects.

December 7: Final written projects due!