

Thinking about Language

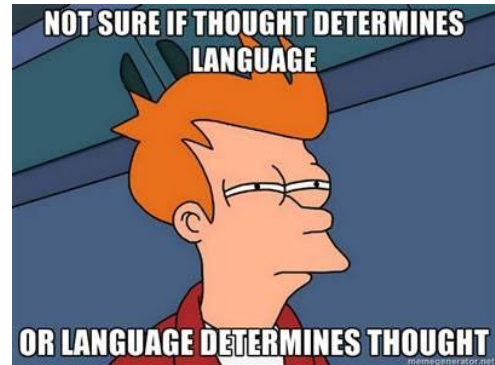
COLL-C 104

Indiana University

Spring 2024

Lectures: M/W 1:50–2:40p
Biology (JH) 124

Professor: **Dr. Ann Bunger** (she)
Email: acbunger@indiana.edu
Office: Ballantine Hall (BH) 520
Student drop-in hours: M/W noon–1p,
or by appointment



Associate Instructors

	Yi-An Jason Chen (he)	Esra Onal (she)		
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Student drop-in hours:	BH 521 M 9-11a, or by appointment	BH 521 T 3-5p, or by appointment		
Sections:	F 10:20a	BH 144	F 10:20a	JH A106
	F 11:30a	BH 209	F 11:30a	JH A106

Undergraduate Teaching Assistants

Megan Coen (she)
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A few notes about communication:

Personal e-mail is the best way to reach members of the instructional team. It will likely take us longer to get back to you if you message us through Canvas. Some tips:

- Include our course number—C104—in your email subject and a word or two about the topic of your email.
- Keep in mind that emails are professional communications. Include a greeting (e.g., Hello Professor Bunger!) and a sign-off. Don't put things in writing that you wouldn't say out loud.
- If you'd like to send the same email to multiple instructors, use CC rather than sending separate emails.

In addition, everyone on the instructional team has weekly **student drop-in hours**. These will be casual open sessions—you are welcome to drop in to ask questions or just to say hi. You should also feel free to contact us to set up something that works better for you.

Course Description

This Critical Approaches course surveys the broad question of the complex relationship between language and thought, both in the individual and the species. This approach to the study of linguistic relativity will draw from diverse disciplines, including anthropology, biology, cognitive science, linguistics, and psychology. Students will learn about how human language is structured and acquired, and the extent to which language acquisition impacts non-linguistic cognitive activities. We will address questions such as: What does it mean to “know” a language? How is this knowledge acquired? Is language a uniquely human capacity? How can languages differ? What kinds of cognitive differences can we observe in speakers of different languages? To what extent are language and thought independent? Students will address these questions through a variety of assignments, including linguistic analysis, experimental design, and critical review of literature about linguistic relativity. This course counts toward fulfillment of the S&H Breadth requirement.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the semester, you will be able to:

- Use appropriate terminology to discuss linguistic and cognitive phenomena
- Identify and categorize units of language and represent them appropriately
- Describe how languages differ in the way they encode various aspects of human experience
- Draw from multiple disciplinary perspectives to critically assess the relationship between language and thought across diverse cultures
- Propose an experimental study that investigates the relationship between language and thought

Teaching and Learning Methods

This course has been designed to engage you actively as you develop an understanding of the material. Foundational concepts will be introduced in lectures and readings, and you will practice applying these concepts by participating in problem-solving activities during class and on assignments. In particular, the smaller Friday Sections will provide opportunities for active engagement in linguistic analysis and/or discussion. These sessions are not limited to review or homework preparation. Feel free to ask questions at any time!

The Canvas site for our course is divided into weekly Modules. Each week's module will include material for you to read, watch, and explore, discussion boards to check your understanding of the material, and any other current assignments. At the end of each week, Dr. Bunker's slides will be added to that week's module. You will also find a schedule for the semester and links to individual assignments in the lower half of the course homepage.

Course Requirements

Required Textbook

There is one required textbook for this course:

Denham, K., & Lobeck, A. (2019). *Why study linguistics*. Routledge.

Either an ebook or a paper copy of this book will be fine. Supplemental readings and all other course materials will be made available on Canvas.

Evaluation

Your learning in this course will be evaluated through a combination of low-stakes (quizzes, discussion boards, homeworks, quizzes) and higher-stakes (experiment proposal, exams) assessment methods.

Discussion Boards	10%
Quizzes	20%
Homeworks	30%
Experiment Proposal + Presentation	20%
Final Exam	20%
Extra Credit	+2%

Discussion Boards: Discussion board entries will be due on Thursdays by 5pm ET.

Discussion board prompts may serve as advance preparation for, reflections about, or reviews or extensions of weekly topics. Late discussion board entries will not be accepted, but 2 will be dropped from your final grade to provide some flexibility.

Quizzes: Each week in your Friday Section you will take a short quiz on topics from that week of classes. These are meant to provide a low-stakes review of key concepts and skills—if you've been keeping up with the material, we expect them to be easy. If you miss a quiz for any reason, you will not be able to make it up, but your lowest 4 quiz grades will be dropped.

Homework Assignments: There will be 5 homework assignments, each worth 6% of your final grade. Homeworks will assess your skills at problem solving, critical thinking, and independent research.

Unless otherwise specified, you are expected to submit your assignments on Canvas by the beginning of class on the day they are due. Late homeworks will be accepted, but will receive a lowered grade (10% off for each day late). Give your files an informative file name, something like—Smith HW1—and be sure to write your name and the time of your discussion section on all assignments. Assignments should be typed with reasonable formatting (when in doubt, go with double-spaced 12-point Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins on all sides).

We encourage you to visit the instructors during drop-in hours to discuss assignments. You are also permitted to discuss your homework assignments with other students who are

currently taking the course. We expect this discussion to involve an exchange of ideas rather than simply an exchange of papers to check or share answers. If you do discuss your work with other students, list the names of each of them at the top of the assignment that you submit. Be careful not to use this discussion as an opportunity to cheat. Plagiarism includes copying off of handouts, class notes, the textbook, and other students. You must always state answers in your own words. You may never use someone else's words verbatim or lightly paraphrased, unless they are set off in quotation marks and properly attributed. See the policies related to **Academic Misconduct** in this syllabus.

Experiment proposal + Presentation: In groups of about four, you will hypothesize a possible correlation between some property of language and some non-linguistic aspect of cognition and design an experiment to test that correlation. Groups will present their ideas in class, but students will independently write up their own explanations of the experiment.

Final exam: Your final assessment for the course will take the form of an exam with multiple choice and essay components. You will receive the essay question in advance to give you time to prepare.

Extra credit: A menu of extra credit options will be offered later in the semester. Extra credit will be due by 5p ET on the last day of classes.

Course Outline

Readings and due dates. Denham & Lobeck readings can be found in our required textbook. Check Canvas for updates and additional materials. Unless otherwise specified, all assignments are due by class time on the day indicated in the schedule. **This schedule does not include weekly discussion boards (due R by 5p) or quizzes (in-class on F).**

		M	W	F
Week 1 1/8–1/12	Introduction to Language and Thought		Read: Pinker Instinct ch1; Napoli & Lee- Schoenfeld 2010 ch4	
Week 2 1/15–1/19	Meaning: Words	Read: Denham & Lobeck ch2	Read: Alter 2013 ch1&2	
Week 3 1/22–1/26	Meaning: Metaphor & Pragmatics	Read: Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Semino 2021 HW1 due	Read: Denham & Lobeck ch6	

Week 4 1/29–2/2	Structure: Morphology	Read: Denham & Lobeck ch4	Read: Pinker Instinct ch5	
Week 5 2/5–2/9	Structure: Syntax	Read: Denham & Lobeck ch5 HW2 due	Read: Pinker Instinct ch4	
Week 6 2/12–2/16	Crosslinguistic & Cross-cultural Variation	Read: Pinker Instinct ch8	Read: Alter 2013 ch6; Ro 2020	
Week 7 2/19–2/23	Return to Relativity	Read: Birner LSA Pamphlet; Bloom & Keil 2001 HW3 due	Read: Deutscher ch6	
Week 8 2/26–3/1	Color Terms	Read: ; Pinker Instinct ch3 (excerpt)	Read: Deutscher ch9	
Week 9 3/4–3/8	Object Concepts	Watch: concepts and categories video HW4 due	Watch: Boroditsky TED talk	
SPRING BREAK 3/11–3/15				
Week 10 3/18–3/22	Space & Time	Read: Deutscher ch7	Watch: Boroditsky LongNow video	
Week 11 3/25–3/29	Number	Read: Hiraiwa 2017 HW5 due	Read: Vuolo 2013; Everett 2013	
Week 12 4/1–4/5	Linguistic & Conceptual Development	Read: Denham & Lobeck ch9 Watch: LingSpace acquisition video	Read: Bowerman & Choi 2003 (excerpt)	

Week 13 4/8–4/12	Animal Communication & Language Evolution	Read: Napoli & Lee-Schoenfeld 2010 ch6 Watch: TED videos	Read: Pinker Instinct ch11 + ch2 (excerpts); Jackendoff LSA Pamphlet	
Week 14 4/15–4/19	Group Presentations	We will not meet for lectures this week, and there will be no discussion board or quiz. Instead, you will meet in groups with an instructor to talk about your group project.		Group Presentations
Week 15 4/22–4/26	Wrap-up	Read: Unal & Papafragou 2016		Experiment Proposals and any extra credit submissions due by 5p ET
The final exam will be due by 2:40p ET on F May 3.				

Additional Policies and Resources

Accessibility

<http://studentaffairs.indiana.edu/disability-services-students/index.shtml>

This semester is likely to be chaotic in ways that we can't yet anticipate. Please know that we care about your mental, emotional, and physical health and are open to finding creative solutions to any issues that may come up. We are dedicated to making sure this course and its associated content are accessible to all students. If you encounter any material that is not easily accessible to you (e.g., file sizes too large for internet capacity, text incompatibility with e-readers), or if there are other issues that affect your ability to make progress, please let Dr. Bungler (acbunger@indiana.edu) know as soon as possible so that we can find a solution. In addition, any student who would like to discuss accommodations for a qualified disability is requested to speak directly to the **Office of Disability Services for Students** (Wells Library, Suite W 302; iubdss@indiana.edu; 812-855-7578) and to Dr. Bungler as early as possible in the semester (preferably within the first week of class). These services are confidential, but they may take time to put into place, and they are not retroactive.

Attendance and Participation

Regular engagement is essential to achieving the learning outcomes of this course. You are expected to attend and to arrive on time for all lectures and discussion sections. You are responsible for all notes, announcements and handouts given out in class. If you would like to obtain materials for a class that you missed for reasons other than an emergency or documented illness, first speak to a friend in the class. And please visit our drop-in hours if there is something that requires clarification!

Students missing class for a religious observance can find the officially approved accommodation form by going to the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs webpage for religious accommodations (<https://vpfaa.indiana.edu/faculty-resources/teaching-resources/religious-observances-information.html>). The form must be submitted at least 2 weeks prior to the anticipated absence.

Communication and Student Drop-in Hours

Everyone on the instructional team has weekly **drop-in hours**, which is time that we have set aside to talk to you. Drop in anytime during these scheduled times to ask questions or just to say hi. You should also feel free to contact us to set up something that works better for you. Outside of these times, **personal e-mail** is the best way to reach individual members of the instructional team. (Canvas email is convenient, but not entirely reliable. If you do want to discuss a grade, however, Canvas email is the way to go.) Please be clear in the subject line as to what the message is concerning. We'll do our best to reply to your e-mails within 48 hours. We will also be communicating with you by **Canvas Announcement**. Go to your Canvas Account page to make sure you'll be receiving notifications of Announcements when they are sent.

Emotional Wellbeing and Support

<http://healthcenter.indiana.edu/counseling/>

If you are struggling with your emotional well-being, please consider contacting IU's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS: 812-855-5711). The instructional team for this course is happy to listen to you, but we have no counseling training and the folks at CAPS do. In addition, we may be legally required to report certain things that you share with us (e.g., reports of sexual assault, suicidal thoughts).

Inclusion

Respect for cultural and biological diversity are central to the field of Linguistics. From both a scientific and a human perspective, there is value in considering the different opinions, backgrounds, and experiences that individuals contribute to the classroom. As we share ideas in this course, we may not always agree with each other, but we will work together to maintain an atmosphere of openness and respect for all perspectives. If you witness or experience a bias incident on campus, you may report it online at biasincident.indiana.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office (812-855-8187).

Land Acknowledgement

We wish to acknowledge and honor the Indigenous communities native to this region, and recognize that Indiana University Bloomington is built on Indigenous homelands and resources. We recognize the myaamiaki, Lenape, Bodwewadmik, and saawanwa people as past, present, and future caretakers of this land.

Late work and Grading Disputes

You are responsible in this course for keeping up with deadlines. No late quizzes will be accepted, and discussion boards will not be accepted after midnight (11:59p) on Thursdays. Late homework assignments will be accepted, but will be penalized 10% for each day they are late. The final exam may only be rescheduled with documentation of an extended family or medical emergency. For questions about these policies, or if you believe that a grading error has been made, contact Dr. Bunger (acbunger@indiana.edu). For regrades, you should be prepared with specific details about the nature of the error. Please keep in mind that regrades may result in a lower score rather than a higher one. Finally, please note that we would be happy to talk with you about your grades over Zoom or by Canvas email, but the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) prohibits us from discussing them with you through our regular email accounts.

Misconduct of various sorts

<http://www.iu.edu/~code/code/responsibilities/academic/index.shtml>

As a student at IU, you are expected to adhere to the standards and policies detailed in the Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct, including responsibilities to uphold and maintain academic and professional honesty and integrity. When you submit an assignment with your name on it, you are signifying that the work contained therein is yours, unless otherwise cited or referenced. Any ideas or materials taken from another source for either written or oral use must be

fully acknowledged. Using online transcription, translation, paraphrasing, or text generation tools and presenting the output as your own work constitutes plagiarism. See Part II-G of the Code for detailed descriptions of types of academic misconduct that will not be tolerated, including (but not limited to) cheating, plagiarism, and facilitation of academic misconduct. Ignorance of what constitutes misconduct is not a valid excuse. All suspected violations of the Code will be handled according to University policies. Sanctions for academic misconduct may include a failing grade on the assignment, a reduction in your final course grade, or a failing grade in the course, among other possibilities, and must include a report to the Dean of Students, who may impose additional disciplinary sanctions.

In addition, you should be aware that selling the instructor's notes/study guides or uploading course assignments to the web in exchange for access to materials for other courses is not permitted. Violations of this policy will be reported to the Dean of Students (Office of Student Conduct) as academic misconduct (Violation of Course Rules). Additionally, you should know that selling a faculty member's notes/study guides individually or on behalf of one of these services using IU email, or via Canvas may also constitute a violation of IU information technology and IU intellectual property policies; additional consequences may result.

The instructors teaching this course hold the exclusive right to distribute, modify, post, and reproduce course materials, including all written materials, study guides, lectures, assignments, exercises, and exams. Some of the course content may be downloadable, but you should not distribute, post, or alter the instructor's intellectual property. While you are permitted to take notes on the online materials and lectures posted for this course for your personal use, you are not permitted to re-post in another forum, distribute, or reproduce content from this course without the express written permission of the instructors.

Sexual Misconduct and Title IX

As your instructors, one of our responsibilities is to create a positive learning environment for all students. IU policy prohibits sexual misconduct in any form, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, sexual exploitation, and dating and domestic violence. If you have experienced sexual misconduct, or know someone who has, the University can help. If you are seeking help and would like to speak to someone confidentially, you can make an appointment with the IU Sexual Assault Crisis Services at (812) 855-5711, or contact a Confidential Victim Advocate at (812) 856-2469 or cva@indiana.edu.

It is also important that you know that University policy requires us to share certain information brought to our attention about potential sexual misconduct, with the campus Deputy Sexual Misconduct & Title IX Coordinator or the University Sexual Misconduct & Title IX Coordinator. In that event, those individuals will work to ensure that appropriate measures are taken and resources are made available. Protecting student privacy is of utmost concern, and information will only be shared with those that need to know to ensure the University can respond and assist. We encourage you to visit <http://stopsexualviolence.iu.edu/index.html> to learn more.

Student Academic Center

<https://sac.indiana.edu/>

If you are struggling academically, or just want to hear about new learning strategies, perspectives, and behaviors that can facilitate academic success, the Student Academic Center offers a range of free on-line and face-to-face resources to support student academic success.

Student Assistance (Administrative, Financial, Food Insecurity, etc.)

<https://studentaffairs.indiana.edu/student-advocates/>

The Student Advocates Office (SAO) can help students work through personal and academic problems as well as financial difficulties and concerns. SAO also assists students working through

grade appeals and withdrawals from all classes. SAO also has emergency funds for IU students experiencing emergency financial crisis.

<https://studentaffairs.indiana.edu/student-support/crimson-cupboard/index.html>

If you have limited access to nutritionally adequate or safe foods, you might be interested in visiting Crimson Cupboard, an on-campus food pantry (located in Campus View Apartments, 800 N. Union St.) that offers free healthy food to IU Bloomington students. Students can visit the pantry once a week.

Student Rights

Any student who believes another person in a class is threatening their personal safety or the class may step out of class without consequence.

Technology

It is your responsibility as a member of our classroom community to avoid the use of technological devices that may distract others. You may use a laptop, tablet, or cell phone during class time for purposes that are related to our class (e.g., note-taking, use of online textbooks, group work, looking up answers to questions, checking the time). Non-course-related use of these devices is prohibited. No photos, videos, or audio recordings may be made in the classroom without prior permission from Dr. Bunger. First violations of this policy will result in a warning and/or public call-out. Additional violations will result in the loss of 1% from your final course grade. Students who repeatedly violate this policy will incur further restrictions on their use of devices. Turnabout is fair play: If you catch any of the instructors misusing their own devices, you may earn extra credit.

References for Supplemental Readings

- Alter, A. (2013). *Drunk tank pink: And other unexpected forces that shape how we think, feel, and behave*. Penguin.
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- Bloom, P., & Keil, F. C. (2001). Thinking through language. *Mind & Language*, 16(4), 351–367.
- Bowerman, M., & Choi, S. (2003). Space under construction: Language-specific spatial categorization in first language acquisition. In D. Gentner, & S. Goldin-Meadow (Eds.), *Language in Mind* (pp. 387–427). MIT Press.
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- Hiraiwa, K. (2017). The faculty of language integrates the two core systems of number. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8, 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00351>
- Jackendoff, R. (2018) *How did language begin?* [pamphlet]. Linguistic Society of America. <https://www.linguisticsociety.org/sites/default/files/4-26-18%20edit%20pdf.pdf>
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- Ro, C. (2020, Jan 16). What happens if you have no word for 'dinosaur.' *BBC Future*. <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20200116-what-happens-when-you-have-no-word-for-dinosaur>
- Semino, E. (2021). “Not soldiers but fire-fighters”: Metaphors and Covid-19. *Health Communication*, 36(1), 50–58. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10410236.2020.1844989>
- Unal, E., & Papafragu, A. (2016). Interactions between language and mental representations. *Language Learning*, 66, 554–580. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lang.12188>
- Vuolo, M. (2013, Oct 16). What happens when a language has no numbers? *Slate*. <https://slate.com/human-interest/2013/10/piraha-cognitive-anumeracy-in-a-language-without-numbers.html>