SPAN 260: Instructed Second Language Acquisition

**Professor:** Julio Torres, PhD  
**Time:** 3:30-6:20  
**Room:** HH 342  
**E-mail:** j.torres@uci.edu  
**Office hours & Office:** Mondays, 12-2 (or by appointment)  
Humanities Hall 322H

************************************************************************

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

In this course, adopting a cognitive-interactionist approach, students will get an overview of theoretical and empirical issues that address adult second language (L2) development under manipulated learning conditions, or *instructed second language acquisition*. We will look at how findings on variables (e.g., corrective feedback, interaction, motivation, working memory) from laboratory and classroom contexts explain rate of L2 development. We conclude by considering how the contributions of the field of Instructed SLA can inform our pedagogical choices as language instructors.

**TEXTBOOK:**


Empirical articles will be provided.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

1. Define key constructs associated with the process of developing an L2 under manipulated conditions.

2. Summarize and explain major and undisputed cognitive processes in the development of an L2 in an instructed setting.

3. Lead classroom discussions on primary studies from the field.
4. Critique primary studies as far as their research designs and implications.

5. Apply general findings from the field of instructed SLA to teaching pedagogy when appropriate.

COURSE COMPONENTS:

1. PARTICIPATION. Students are expected to come prepared to class with readings done and all assignments completed. Also, students should listen respectfully while others present and work cooperatively with peers. Students should also contribute their insights during classroom discussions.

2. HOMEWORK ACTIVITIES. In pairs/groups, students will complete a number of activities from the textbook and will hand in responses for a pair/group grade.

3. PRESENTATION OF EMPIRICAL ARTICLES. Students will present a research article (or two) in class using PowerPoint or Prezi format. A specific guideline will be provided as to the format of presentation as well as a rubric for evaluation.

4. BLOG ENTRY. Students will write a post for a foreign language education blog site summarizing and explaining (in lay terms) findings from the field of instructed SLA that are pertinent and crucial in the foreign language classroom.

5. FINAL ASSIGNMENT. Students have a choice from one of the following final assignments below:

(i). LITERATURE REVIEW. Students will choose a topic of interest from the field of instructed SLA and will conduct a literature review of the topic and address the following areas: brief and concise summary of the issues at stake, a critique of the findings and future directions as well as how do the current state of knowledge can inform classroom teaching practice. Students will present the paper to the class using PowerPoint or Prezi.

OR....

(ii). EMPIRICAL STUDY PROPOSAL. Students will choose a topic to conduct a study on or choose to replicate and improve one of the studies addressed in the class, and produce a study proposal that includes the following: brief literature review that motivates research questions, research questions/hypotheses, instruments, proposed
coding and analyses of the data. Students will present the study proposal to the class.

**COURSE EVALUATION**

Participation: 10%

Homework Assignments: 10%

Presentations: 25%

Blog Entry: 25%

Final Assignment: 30%

**GRADING SCALE:**

- **A+** = 100.0 – 97
- **B+** = 89.99 – 87
- **C+** = 79.99 – 77
- **D+** = 69.99 – 67

- **A** = 96.99 – 93
- **B** = 86.99 – 83
- **C** = 76.99 – 73
- **D** = 66.99 – 63

- **A-** = 92.99 – 90.0
- **B-** = 82.99 – 80.0
- **C-** = 72.99 – 70.0
- **D-** = 62.99 – 60.0

**COURSE PROGRAM:**

* April 1st:

  * Introduction to course
  
  * What does a theory of SLA need to explain? What are the problems?
  
  
  * Leow (1999): Issues of reliability and validity in empirical research
April 8th:

* Read Chapter 2: The Nature of Second Language Knowledge

Do Activity 1: p. 35-36

* Articles to present:


Rebuschat & Williams (2012): Implicit and explicit knowledge in second language acquisition

April 15th

* Read Chapter 3: Interaction in the Second Language Classroom

Do Activity: The Scholarship Task, p. 55-56

* Articles to present:


Gurzynski-Weiss & Baralt (2014): Exploring learner perception and use of task-based interactional feedback in FTF and CMC modes

April 22nd:

* Read Chapter 4: Focus on Form

Do Activity #3 on page 74-75

Articles to present:
Leeman (2005): *Recasts and second language development: Beyond negative evidence*

Lyster & Izquierdo (2009): *Prompts versus recasts in dyadic interaction*

**May 6th:**

* Read Chapter 5: The Acquisition of Grammar

Do Activity on p. 93

*Articles to present:*

Morgan-Short & Bowden (2006): *Processing instruction and meaningful output-based instruction: Effects on second language development*

Stafford, Bowden & Sanz (2012): *Optimizing language instruction: Matters of explicitness, practice and cue learning*

**May 13th:**

* Read Chapter 7: The Acquisition of Pronunciation

*Articles to present:*

Moyer (2011): *An investigation of experience in L2 phonology: Does quality matter more than quantity?*

Kissling (2013): *Teaching pronunciation: Is explicit phonetics instruction beneficial for FL learners?*

**May 20th:**

* Read Chapter 10: Individual Differences and Instructed Second Language Acquisition I

Guest speaker: Dr. Ellen J. Serafini, Assistant Professor, George Mason University
Article to present:

Kim, Payant & Pearson (2015): The intersection of task-based interaction, task complexity and working memory

May 27th:

* Read Chapter 9: Contexts of Instructed SLA

Do Activity, on p. 160-161

Articles to present:

Grey, Cox, Serafini & Sanz (2015): The role of individual differences in the study abroad context: Cognitive capacity and language development during short-term intensive language exposure


June 3rd:

Students presentations of final assignments

June 10th

Final assignments are due!