

Universidad de Costa Rica  
 Sistema de Estudios de Posgrado  
 Master's Program in Teaching English as a Foreign Language  
 PF-0302: Second Language Acquisition  
 I-2024

### Course Syllabus

Name: Second Language Acquisition	Requisites: none
Code: PF-0302	Co-requisites: none
Credits: 4	Cycle: I
Classwork: a. Synchronous: 2 hours a week b. Asynchronous: 10 hours a week	Classification: Open to students admitted to the MA/TEFL Program)
Delivery mode: virtual	Modality: Theoretical

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### DESCRIPTION

This is an introductory course to the current state of second language learning studies designed for both in-service teachers and teacher trainees. It will provide students with a general understanding of the theoretical orientations on language learning that seem most productive and significant from the linguistic, psycholinguistic, and sociolinguistic perspectives. It will also address non-language issues that affect Second Language Acquisition. Finally, this course will provide a SLA theory that includes the most current and relevant issues that affect this complex field. Students will also carry out a literature review and develop a research proposal to relate these theories to a specific area of interest within the domain of SLA.

### GENERAL OBJECTIVES

A. To understand a range of theoretical positions regarding second language acquisition.

B. To understand how internal and external factors operate to promote (or constrain) second language acquisition, in general, and the acquisition of certain skills, in particular .

C. To develop the theoretical background that would allow them to evaluate the goals, strengths, and limitations of a variety of theories in the field of second language acquisition.

## **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

A. To review the empirical evidence underpinning SLA theories: claims and scope of the theory; the view of language involved in the theory; the view of the language learning process; the view of the learner; and the nature and extent of empirical support.

B. To understand a variety of research approaches characteristic of the different traditions in SLA research.

C. To understand the relationship between L1 and L2 acquisition theories.

D. To view learners as active participants in their learning process.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This course will be 100% virtual and mostly based on lectures by the instructor. Given that this course is highly theoretical, it is expected that students consult in depth the material provided prior to every weekly synchronous session on *Zoom*. The UCR's institutional platform *METICS* may be used as a repository, to run evaluations or to provide additional material. The reading material will be compiled by the instructor in a printed booklet. Individual and group work are interwoven in the course both for the presentation of theoretical issues and the preparation of class projects. Regarding consultation, the instructor will assign *Zoom* sessions, host a *Telegram* group and communicate with students via the UCR's e-mail service.

## **EVALUATION**

### A. Percentages

1. Exam 1 .....	20%
2. Exam 2 .....	20%
3. Assignments .....	30%
4. Literature review and research proposal .....	25%
5. Short presentation on research topic .....	5%

### B. Comments

1. Assignments will include video and/or article critical analyses, fieldwork activities, in-class presentations of assigned topics, and others.

2. Students are expected to do all reading assignments and participate actively in class discussions.
3. By agreement among the Master's program Committee members, all oral and written assignments will be graded 70% content and 30% correct language use.

**Textbook:** Mitchell, R., & Myles, F. (2004). *Second Language Learning Theories* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Hodder Arnold.

**Bibliography for additional consultation:**

Cook, V. (2001). *Second Language Acquisition and Language Teaching*. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc.

Bergmann, et al. (Eds.) (2007). *Language Files* (Tenth Edition). Ohio: The Ohio State University Press.

Dornyei, S. (2009). *The Psychology of Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ellis, R. (1990). *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Gass, S & Selinker, L. (2008). *Second Language Acquisition: An introductory Course*. (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.) New York: Routledge

Guasti, Maria. (2002). *Language Acquisition: The Growth of Grammar*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Johnson, J. S., & Newport, E. (1989). Critical period effects in second language learning: The influence of maturational state on the acquisition of ESL. *Cognitive Psychology*, 21(1), 60–99.

Lightbrown P., and Spada, N. (1999). *How Languages Are Learned*. London: Oxford University Press.

Ortega, L. (2009). *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*. London: Hodder Education.

Saville-Troike, M. (2006). *Introducing Second Language Acquisition*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Thornbury, Scott. (1999). *How to Teach Grammar*. Essex, England: Longman.

\*Additional reading material may be provided by the instructor electronically.

## PROPOSED TIMETABLE 1-2024

1 March 11 - 15	-Introduction -Getting to know each other (educational background and research interests) -Course outline, materials & class rules -First Language Acquisition (introductory lecture) *Pages 1-5 (Guasti)
2 March 18 - 22	-First Language Acquisition vs. Second Language Acquisition *Pages 12-26 (Dornyei) -Discussion of research proposal guidelines and topic selection (related to either acquisition of vocabulary, grammar or phonetics)
<b>March 25 – 29</b> <b>EASTER</b>	NO CLASS
3 April 1 - 5	-Mitchell & Miles, Chapter 1, SLL: Key concepts and issues
4 April 8 - 12	-The Critical Period Hypothesis *Pages 233-266 (Dornyei) - Johnson & Newport (1986) (lecture by the instructor) -Universal Grammar (lecture by the instructor)
5 April 15 – 19	-Mitchell & Miles, Chapter 2, SLL: The recent history of second language learning research
6 April 22 - 26 <b>Semana U</b>	Theories of Language Acquisition (Bergmann, 311-325)  <b>Review for Exam 1</b>
7 April 29 – May 3 <b>Wed, May 1<sup>st</sup></b> <b>Holiday</b>	<b><u>EXAM 1</u></b>  <b>Take home exam</b>
8 May 6 – 10	Bilingual Language Acquisition (Bergmann, 339-342) <b>Feedback on Exam 1</b> Research progress report (half of the group meets with the instructor)
9 May 13 – 17	Research progress report (half of the group meets with the instructor)  The Psychology of Second Language Acquisition Pages 71-103 (Saville-Troike)
10	*The Psychology of Second Language Acquisition

May 20 – 24	Pages 71-103 (Saville-Troike continued)
11 May 27 - 31	*Language and the brain; pages 27-42 (Dornyei) Language and the brain 137-148 (Bergman)
12 June 3 - 7	-Cognitive Approaches to Second Language Learning (lecture by the instructor + class activity)
13 June 10 - 14	-Mitchell & Miles, Chapter 6: Input and interaction in L2 Learning
14 June 17 - 21	Learning and teaching *Pages 183-190 (Saville-Troike)
15 June 24 - 28	<b><u>EXAM 2</u></b>
16 July 1 – 5	-Feedback on Exam 2 -Short Presentation of Research Project
Finals Week July 8 – 12	Submit Research Project (final draft)