

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-2026

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* (2nd 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*. (3rd 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 1-2026

1. March 09–13	-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 16–20	-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)
3. March 23–27	-Mitchell & Myles, Chapter 1, SLL: Key concepts and issues
4. April 06–10	-The Critical Period Hypothesis *Pages 233-266 (Dornyei) - Johnson & Newport (1986) (lecture by the instructor) -Universal Grammar (lecture by the instructor)
5. April 13–17	-Mitchell & Myles, Chapter 2, SLL: The recent history of second language learning research
	EASTER (no class)
6. April 20–24 Semana U	Theories of Language Acquisition (Bergmann, 311-325) Review for Exam 1
7. April 27–May 01 May 1st Holiday	<u>EXAM 1</u> Take home exam
8. May 04–08	Bilingual Language Acquisition (Bergmann, 339-342) Feedback on Exam 1 Research progress report (half of the group meets with the instructor)
9. May 11–15	Research progress report (half of the group meets with the instructor) The Psychology of Second Language Acquisition Pages 71-103 (Saville-Troike)

10. May 18–22	*The Psychology of Second Language Acquisition Pages 71-103 (Saville-Troike continued)
11. May 25–29	*Language and the brain; pages 27-42 (Dornyei) Language and the brain 137-148 (Bergman)
12. June 01–05	-Cognitive Approaches to Second Language Learning (lecture by the instructor + class activity)
13. June 08–12	-Mitchell & Miles, Chapter 6: Input and interaction in L2 Learning
14. June 15–19	Learning and teaching *Pages 183-190 (Saville-Troike)
15. June 22–26	<u>EXAM 2</u>
16. June 29 July 03	-Feedback on Exam 2 -Short Presentation of Research Project
Finals Week	Submit Research Project (final draft)

Lineamientos en caso de entrega tardía de asignaciones

En caso que una persona estudiante no envíe una asignación en la fecha indicada, se le podrá otorgar hasta un máximo de 5 días hábiles para su entrega, descontándole un 10% del valor de la nota obtenida por cada día hábil de atraso. Una vez cumplido este plazo, la persona docente no recibirá ninguna entrega parcial o total. Sin embargo, la persona estudiante quedaría exenta de esta penalización si existe una situación que justifique el atraso, según lo establecido en el artículo 24 del Reglamento de Régimen Académico Estudiantil. Cualquiera sea el caso, es obligación de la persona estudiante informarle a su docente, por los medios institucionales oficiales, de la causa de la demora y aportar los documentos probatorios pertinentes.

Aprobado por la Comisión del Posgrado en Enseñanza del Inglés