## General Information

**Unit convenor and teaching staff**
- **Unit Convenor**
  - David Kaplan

**Senior Tutor**
- Kelly Rombough
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**Tutor**
- Polly Barr
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- Inga Hameister
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**Credit points**
- 3

**Prerequisites**
- 12cp

**Corequisites**

**Co-badged status**

**Unit description**
Human language is evolutionarily unique and culturally ubiquitous. It is central to human culture and humanity's place in nature. In this unit you will gain a basic knowledge of the brain mechanisms responsible for language. You will learn about how the brain develops the capacity for language in infancy; brain mechanisms of language production and understanding; and the nature of language breakdown due to brain injury. You will gain an understanding of theories about the nature of language and its relationship to other aspects of human cognition. You will learn about neuroimaging techniques and experimental methods for studying the language networks of the brain.

## Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at [http://students.mq.edu.au/student_admin/enrolmentguide/academicdates/](http://students.mq.edu.au/student_admin/enrolmentguide/academicdates/)
Learning Outcomes

1. The ability to explain contemporary issues concerning the relationship between human language and the brain in light of scholarly theory and empirical work in the cognitive sciences, and to critique popular or prejudicial claims about the evolution and nature of language from an informed and evidence-based perspective.

2. The ability to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of competing explanations and theories of brain and language: specifically, the capacity to evaluate critically, integrate, and apply carefully key concepts related to language, the mind/brain, and culture in relevant areas of social policy and political theory, education, and the cognitive sciences.

3. The ability to apply findings from empirical research on brain and language, relating to current data, theories, and policy implications, to real-world contexts and debates about the complex neural bases of human linguistic capacities.

General Assessment Information

Requirements to pass the unit

A passing grade is contingent on completion and submission of all assessments. Failure to submit any assessments [online quizzes, written essay, and formal exam] will automatically result in a fail grade and any subsequent pieces of work will not be assessed.

Late Penalties

Late submission of an assignment will attract a penalty of 5% of the maximum mark for every day that the assignment is late (including weekend days). For example, if the assignment is worth 40 marks and your assignment is submitted 2 days late, a penalty of 2x5% x 40 = 4 marks will be applied and subtracted from the awarded mark for the assignment. Work submitted more than 14 days after the submission deadline will not be marked and will receive a mark of 0. Please note that it is the student’s responsibility to notify the University of a disruption to their studies and that requests for extensions for assignments must be made via the University’s Ask MQ System (as outlined in the Disruption to Studies Policy).

Final Grade

Your final grade is determined by your performance in meeting the learning outcomes for the unit. The Standard Numerical Grade (SNG) reflects the extent to which your performance matches the grade descriptors, as outlined in the Macquarie University Grading Policy. Please note that your final mark may be scaled and therefore may not necessarily be a raw sum of the marks received for the individual assessment tasks.


**Assessment Tasks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online Quizzes</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>During Semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>During Semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Essay</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>10:00, 06/05/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Exam</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Examination Period</td>
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**Online Quizzes**

*Due: During Semester  
Weighting: 15%*

This quiz is low risk and will cover basic course content.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

- The ability to explain contemporary issues concerning the relationship between human language and the brain in light of scholarly theory and empirical work in the cognitive sciences, and to critique popular or prejudicial claims about the evolution and nature of language from an informed and evidence-based perspective.

**Participation**

*Due: During Semester  
Weighting: 5%*

Initiation of and active participation in online discussions.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

- The ability to explain contemporary issues concerning the relationship between human language and the brain in light of scholarly theory and empirical work in the cognitive sciences, and to critique popular or prejudicial claims about the evolution and nature of language from an informed and evidence-based perspective.

**Written Essay**

*Due: 10:00, 06/05/2016  
Weighting: 40%*
The research report will involve a critical evaluation of evidence and theory pertaining to the nature of language, its instantiation in the brain, or its relationship to other aspects of human cognition.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:
- The ability to explain contemporary issues concerning the relationship between human language and the brain in light of scholarly theory and empirical work in the cognitive sciences, and to critique popular or prejudicial claims about the evolution and nature of language from an informed and evidence-based perspective.
- The ability to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of competing explanations and theories of brain and language: specifically, the capacity to evaluate critically, integrate, and apply carefully key concepts related to language, the mind/brain, and culture in relevant areas of social policy and political theory, education, and the cognitive sciences.
- The ability to apply findings from empirical research on brain and language, relating to current data, theories, and policy implications, to real-world contexts and debates about the complex neural bases of human linguistic capacities.

**Formal Exam**

**Due:** Examination Period  
**Weighting:** 40%

Formal end of semester exam.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:
- The ability to explain contemporary issues concerning the relationship between human language and the brain in light of scholarly theory and empirical work in the cognitive sciences, and to critique popular or prejudicial claims about the evolution and nature of language from an informed and evidence-based perspective.
- The ability to apply findings from empirical research on brain and language, relating to current data, theories, and policy implications, to real-world contexts and debates about the complex neural bases of human linguistic capacities.

**Delivery and Resources**

The lectures will be fully online via iLearn, with interactive activities, and each topic in the course will be delivered by experts in the field of cognitive science. In addition students will attend face-to-face tutorials on a weekly basis.

It is essential that students have adequate access to the internet as most of the course material and activities are accessed online in the form of:
Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from Policy Central. Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:


Disruption to Studies Policy: http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html. The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the Learning and Teaching Category of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/
Results

Results shown in iLearn, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in eStudent. For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au.

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit http://students.mq.edu.au/support/

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- **Workshops**
- **StudyWise**
- **Academic Integrity Module for Students**
- **Ask a Learning Adviser**

Student Enquiry Service

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

Equity Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the Disability Service who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy. The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

**Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills**

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.
This graduate capability is supported by:

**Learning outcome**

- The ability to explain contemporary issues concerning the relationship between human language and the brain in light of scholarly theory and empirical work in the cognitive sciences, and to critique popular or prejudicial claims about the evolution and nature of language from an informed and evidence-based perspective.

**Assessment tasks**

- Online Quizzes
- Written Essay
- Formal Exam

**Problem Solving and Research Capability**

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

**Assessment tasks**

- Online Quizzes
- Written Essay

**Effective Communication**

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

**Assessment tasks**

- Participation
- Written Essay

**Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative**

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to
handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

**Assessment task**
- Participation

**Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking**

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

**Learning outcomes**
- The ability to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of competing explanations and theories of brain and language: specifically, the capacity to evaluate critically, integrate, and apply carefully key concepts related to language, the mind/brain, and culture in relevant areas of social policy and political theory, education, and the cognitive sciences.
- The ability to apply findings from empirical research on brain and language, relating to current data, theories, and policy implications, to real-world contexts and debates about the complex neural bases of human linguistic capacities.

**Assessment tasks**
- Online Quizzes
- Participation
- Written Essay
- Formal Exam

**Creative and Innovative**

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

**Assessment tasks**
- Participation
- Written Essay
Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

**Assessment task**

- Participation

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**Changes since First Published**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01/03/2016</td>
<td>Changed fortnightly to weekly.</td>
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