



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF LINGUISTICS AND APPLIED LANGUAGE STUDIES

MASTER OF ARTS

LALS 520 LEARNERS AND SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

15 POINTS

TRIMESTER 2 2016

Key dates

Trimester dates: 11 July to 13 November

Teaching dates: 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 July

Mid-trimester break: 22 August to 4 September

Last assessment item due: 23rd September

Withdrawal dates: Refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds.

If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test in the last three weeks of teaching, or an examination, it may instead be possible to apply for an aegrotat (refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats).

Class times and locations

On campus at RELC Singapore, 9-11 am Monday to Friday

By distance

Names and contact details

Course coordinator

Dr Anna Siyanova Office: von Zedlitz Building, Room VZ 203
Phone: (direct line) (04) 463 5922
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Course administrator

Janet Attrill Office: von Zedlitz Building, Room VZ210
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 Post: As above

Communication of additional information

Additional information about this course and information about any changes will be announced in on campus classes and posted on the course website in Blackboard.

Prescription

This course looks at the role of the learner and the effect of individual differences on second language learning. Issues such as learner motivation, affect, aptitude and learner response to feedback are explored.

Course content

LALS 520 explores the role of learner characteristics and other determinants in language acquisition as well as current issues of interest in instructed SLA. In particular, the course addresses selected issues in linguistics, psychology, and education that bear on the abilities of children and adults to understand and use second languages, especially in educational settings. The topics provide analyses of how acquisition problems are solved by learners and of the factors that constrain or facilitate second language development. Finally, the applications of language acquisition research are considered in the field of second language pedagogy.

LALS 520 provides students with opportunities to study:

- a. The influence of cognitive processes on language learning
- b. Individual variables and their influence on language acquisition
- c. Connections between SLA research and language teaching.

The lecture schedule will be made available on Blackboard before the first class.

Course learning objectives (CLOs)

Students who pass this course will be able to:

1. identify variables (including learner traits) that have been found to influence the pace and nature of second language acquisition
2. advise others on language education issues by drawing from research findings
3. recognise gaps in the SLA research and propose avenues for further research in SLA
4. apply SLA research findings to critically appraise classroom practices.

Teaching format

The course is delivered in two modes: on campus at RELC and by distance. On campus classes are run as workshops. For distance students, the course is available at <http://blackboard.vuw.ac.nz>. Blackboard is Victoria's online teaching and learning system. In both modes, students are expected to participate actively in activities and discussions. Further information about Blackboard is available under Frequently Asked Questions, under the Study tab of the School website.

When you enrol you will automatically be given a computer user account, which will be on your *Confirmation of Study* form. Usually, it is the first six letters of your family name and four letters of

your first name. So if your name is Robert Cameron, your user name might be *camerorobe*. Your password will be your student ID number. You need to use this computer user account when you access journals from off-campus. For help, contact its-service@vuw.ac.nz or phone (04) 463 5050. For IT services available to students see <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/its>

If you are an international student the following site could be useful: <http://www.victoria-international.ac.nz/>.

Mandatory course requirements

In addition to achieving an overall pass mark of 50%, students must:

1. obtain at least 40% in each piece of assessment in order to demonstrate the achievement of all CLOs in the course;
2. attend all ten classes (on-campus)*;
3. participate in each of the ten web-based discussions (distance)**.

*If an absence is unavoidable, then the course member should participate in the Blackboard Discussion Board for that week. Contact Anna beforehand to make this arrangement.

**Course members studying by distance must make a contribution to each topic of the Discussion Boards. If this is not possible, please email the course coordinator.

Any student who is concerned that they have been (or might be) unable to meet any of the Mandatory Course Requirements because of exceptional personal circumstances, should contact the course coordinator as soon as possible.

Workload

It is anticipated that students will invest 150 hours in this course, which includes attending classes / contributing to the discussion board on Blackboard, reading the essential and recommended texts, and preparing the assessment items. Probably around 90 hours should be allocated to assessment on the course. Of this, around 4-6 hours may be required for Assessment 1; around 35 hours for Assessment 2, and around 50 for Assessment 3.

Assessment

The following table outlines the assessment components for LALS 520:

	Component	Value	Word count	Due date	Learning objectives
1.	Two article reviews	10%	300-350 words each	Between 11 th and 22 nd July	4, 3, 2
2.	A critical appraisal of a classroom practice	45%	1500-2000	12 th August, 5 pm	2, 3
3.	A case study report, comparing two learners	45%	1500-2000	23 rd September, 5 pm	1, 3

The purpose of these assessment components is to allow you to investigate in depth topics of your choosing from the course, and to explore the pedagogical implications of the research findings discussed in the course. Details of the assessments will be given out in the first class on campus and posted on Blackboard at the beginning of the course.

The assignment details and marking criteria will be made available on Blackboard in the first week of class.

Submission and return of work

Assessment 1 should be emailed to the course co-ordinator during the first two weeks of the course. Assessments 2 and 3 will be submitted through Blackboard, both by distance and face-to-face students. Feedback on each assignment will be sent back via email within two weeks after the due date. Instructions on how to use the Blackboard assignment tool are on the Blackboard website. As a backup measure only, assignments may be submitted as email attachments to lals-ma@vuw.ac.nz

Extensions and penalties

Extensions

Late submissions will **not be accepted** unless the student makes an appointment as soon as practically possible with the course coordinator to explain the lateness (before the assignment is due to be submitted). The circumstances under which an extension will be considered are outlined in section 3.2.1 of the Assessment Handbook.

(See: www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf).

Penalties

No specific penalty will be imposed if you obtain permission to submit an assignment before the due date. Late work will not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with the course coordinator. Also, consult the course coordinator in case your text exceeds the word limit. Without prior arrangements in that regard, the course coordinator maintains the right to give only minimal feedback on the text.

Materials and equipment and/or additional expenses

No specific materials are needed for LALS 520, but regular access to the internet is important.

Set texts

Ellis, Rod (2015). *Understanding second language acquisition*. 2nd Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Additional readings will be made available on Blackboard.

Textbooks and student notes can be ordered online at www.vicbooks.co.nz

Recommended reading

Recommended articles will be made available on Blackboard.

Class representative

There is one class representative for the MA programme. Details are posted on Blackboard.

Student feedback

One of the recent changes to the course has been the introduction of a new type of assessment – writing short article reviews and submitting them to the course lecturer for feedback. Last year, students overwhelmingly liked this addition and reported that the feedback provided helped them improve their academic writing before the assignments were due. In previous years, students also commented on the textbook used and some felt it didn't help them learn as much as they had hoped. This year, a different textbook has been adopted.

Student feedback on University courses may be found at www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php.

Other important information

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism
- Academic Progress: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin
- Grades: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades
- Special passes: refer to the *Assessment Handbook*, at www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy
- Student support: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support
- Students with disabilities: www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability
- Student Charter: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter
- Subject Librarians: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library-v2/find-your-subject-librarian>
- Terms and conditions: www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract
- Turnitin: www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin
- University structure: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure
- Victoria graduate profile: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile
- VUWSA: www.vuwsa.org.nz