### Course overview

This course explores the applications of computational linguistics to questions in the social sciences and humanities. These include (but are not limited to) questions about the role of psychological processes, such as deception and honesty, differences in gendered uses of language, the relationship between status and hierarchy, and differences in semantic meanings over time and across contexts. Language is used to accomplish most human activities, from buying a cup of coffee, teaching, and navigating personal relationships to negotiating peace treaties and trade deals. Sometimes content words (nouns, main verbs, and most adjectives and adverbs) are the subject of inquiry, while other times function words (the lexical "glue" that hold content words together, like prepositions, articles, and conjunctions) are the most telling and revealing units of analysis that linguists and other social scientists explore.

Language and linguistic inquiry has increased in both academic and policy relevance in recent years. In the academy, interdisciplinary scholarship has cross-pollinated between fields such as...
computer science, psychology, linguistics, political science, international relations, and other humanities and social science disciplines. In the policy domain, resurgent populism across the world in places like Venezuela, Hungary, and Philippines has transpired alongside increased political polarization in many places across North America, Europe, and Southeast Asia. Social media and social movements provide a wealth of information about how people think, and how they behave. New computational linguistics and quantitative text-as-data approaches can help us understand, and in some cases forecast, the changes in social and political environments around the world. Pretrained models that leverage huge datasets allow us to apply transfer learning to address questions in smaller corpora in a way that has not been practical before. Interdisciplinary research leverages the strengths of quantitative and qualitative methods across many fields to address contemporary problems from several perspectives, with fresh eyes and new methods.

Public Lectures via Zoom: Registration Required
https://memphis.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYudu-srjIrHNX9aqcUps-4DXhoqfBu0

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<th>Schedule of Classes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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<td>1. August 25</td>
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<td>2. September 1</td>
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<td>3. September 8</td>
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<td>11. November 3</td>
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<td>13. November 17</td>
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No Class: Thanksgiving Break

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Discussion Leader</th>
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<tr>
<td>14. December 1</td>
<td>Maliki</td>
<td>(Alikhani et al., 2019; Sinno et al., 2021)</td>
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Wednesday, December 11 1-3pm FINAL PAPER DUE

Grading
A 90-100 B 80-89 C 70-79 D 60-69 F Below 60

Your grade will be earned based on the following criteria:

Discussion Leader 10%. You will serve as discussion leader once during the semester. You will be responsible for presenting the readings for the week and facilitating the discussion with your classmates. You can use the speaker questions generated by your classmates as conversation starters. Discussion leaders do not need to make formal presentations (e.g., using PowerPoint), but they should prepare a very brief exposition of the assigned readings (5 minutes) and questions that can be posed to the group to initiate discussion (these can be informed by students’ posted responses). The presentation will take place at the beginning of the class and serve as the jumping off point for class discussion. Plan on roughly 30–45 minutes in total to discuss each journal article.

Assignments. Assignments are due to be submitted to eCourseware by the beginning of class unless otherwise noted. These include Article Notes and Speaker Questions. During the time scheduled for your final, we will have a roundtable discussion presentation on each of your papers. You will be expected to give a brief five minute presentation of your paper (PowerPoint slides will help), followed by five minutes of discussion/q&a.

Article Notes 10%. You will be responsible for turning in article notes during the semester. Upload them to eCourseware. I encourage you to collaborate and share your article notes with your classmates.

Citation:
Research Question:
Theory:
Hypotheses:
Data and Methods:
Results:
Conclusions:
Place in the literature:
Questions, comments or critiques:

Speaker Questions 5%. Each week you will write two substantive questions pertaining to the theme of the week, given the context of the speaker’s background. Upload them to the eCourseware discussion board by noon on the day of class.

Attendance 10%. If you are not experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or other illnesses, please attend class and arrive on time. If anyone in class needs to quarantine and is unable to attend in-person, we will make arrangements to hold class virtually via Zoom.

Participation 15%. This is a discussion-driven seminar. You will be evaluated on the quality of your participation, not just the quantity.

Final Paper 50%. Your final paper must be uploaded to eCourseware. I will be using TurnItIn.com for originality checking.

Final Paper: Option 1. You may write a final solo-authored 6-8 page research paper in APA format suitable for conference publication. Your final paper will address a question related to computational linguistics and social sciences and humanities. The paper must be 6-8 full pages of substantive written material, not including the title page or citations. Please use Times New Roman 12pt font with 1” margins. All papers must include a literature review that describes previous work in that area and motivates the question(s) addressed by your research. You should cite 5-10 articles in your paper; I strongly recommend using Zotero or comparable citations management software.

Final Paper: Option 2. If you are working on your thesis or dissertation and plan to use computational linguistics techniques as part of your analyses, you can propose a paper that helps to fulfill some of your degree requirements (i.e., literature review, research design, data analysis, etc.). We will work together to establish timelines and progress metrics in consultation with your dissertation/thesis advisor.

Final Paper: Option 3. If you are interested in writing a paper for publication or conference presentation, collaboratively with me and/or your classmates, you may choose this option. We will follow the scientific method and develop a research design on a mutually agreed upon topic. You may collect and analyze new data or use existing data.

Class Participation. Class participation includes contributing meaningfully to discussion, asking interesting and relevant questions, and communicating respectfully and collaboratively with your classmates.

Data Analysis. We will be using a “canned” data set for our analyses this semester to explore the themes of the course. We will use Stata software for our analysis. You may access Stata through the University here: https://www.memphis.edu/umtech/solutions/software/software.php. You can also purchase a Stata student license for $94/year: https://www.stata.com/order/new/edu/profplus/student-pricing/.

Extra Credit. None.

Technology/Cell phone use policies. Turn off/silence your cell phones. No texting or recreational internet surfing during class. Headphones are not permitted in class. Handheld recorders are not permitted in class. Taking pictures of powerpoint slides with cell phone cameras is not permitted. **If you need an exemption from these policies for SDS accommodation reasons, please let me know the first week of class.**

Respect for Diversity. Diversity means the fair representation of all groups of individuals, the inclusion of minority perspectives and voices, and the appreciation of different cultural and socioeconomic group practices. We aspire to foster and maintain an atmosphere that is free from discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or intimidation. Academic courses will aim at providing opportunities for students to discuss issues of diversity including, but not limited to, ethnicity, gender, disability and sexual orientation as they can be related to course content. The University of Memphis has adopted policies prohibiting discrimination based upon race, sex, disability, or sexual orientation. In addition, the American Psychological Association has explicit policies regarding the issues of and writing about race, gender, class, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, and religion. You may find information on these standards in the APA Publication Manual or on the APA webpage: http://www.apa.org/pi/oema/.

Academic (Dis)honesty. Plagiarism or cheating may result in your case being referred to the University’s Academic Integrity Committee that addresses academic misconduct. This decision is up to the discretion of the instructor. Students are expected at all times to behave in accordance with the university’s Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Students should be familiar with the academic regulations outlined in the Student Bulletin of the University of Memphis and to observe policies regarding student conduct at the University. Please become familiar with The University of Memphis’ Academic Honesty policy. It may be found online here: http://www.memphis.edu/studentconduct/misconduct.htm

Special Accommodations for Disabilities. If you have a disability that interferes with completion of any coursework, please let the instructor know privately at the beginning of the course, and he will seek consultation on how best to adapt course materials or instruction. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Resources for Students (DRS), 110 Wilder Tower, 678-2880.
Errata

- Refer to your syllabus early and often. This syllabus is a guide that will help you navigate the course. Most of your questions can be answered by checking your syllabus.
- Late assignments will not be accepted, and make-up quizzes and exams will not be rescheduled without appropriate documentation for University-sanctioned absences.
- Any written work, including homework, quizzes, exams and papers, will be returned to students in class on one day only. If you are absent on the day that homework is returned, it is your responsibility to pick up your written work during office hours.
- Class emails will be sent to the address that the University has on file for you, which is most likely your University account. If you use other email accounts, it is your responsibility to have your University messages forwarded to that account. If you do not, you may miss crucial class announcements. I use eCourseware for all course materials, including posting links and documents used in class. You may access course materials as well as your grades (updated regularly throughout the semester) on eCourseware. Consider all emails to be professional communication. As such, they should include a greeting, a body, and a closing signature that includes your name and any relevant contact information. Class emails will be sent to the address that the University has on file for you, which is most likely your University account. If you use other email accounts, it is your responsibility to have your University messages forwarded to that account. If you do not, you may miss crucial class announcements. Any supplementary materials required for this course are available on eCourseware.
- You must complete the assigned readings before class. We cover a lot of material in a short amount of time, so please be prepared by reading the assigned chapters before class. Powerpoint lectures will not be posted online.
- If you are having problems with the material covered in your classes, or problems outside of class that affect your attention or participation, let me know sooner rather than later via email or by visiting office hours.
- Career and Psychological Counseling Center: Free, confidential mental health services are available for students. More information may be found here: http://www.memphis.edu/cpcc/faq.php

Works Cited