

Course Description

This course provides students with a comprehensive view of the theoretical foundation of second language learning. Course content examines the relationship between these foundations and the linguistic approaches to ESL which have grown out of them. Historical perspectives on the development of various ESL approaches give the student an appreciation of the influence of several disciplines, notably psychology, linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, social psychology, and education. Beyond examining the various approaches to language teaching, students also examine the relationship between first and second language acquisition, draw on the connections between theory and practice, investigate cognitive variations of language learners, consider personality and sociocultural variables, and study the pragmatic functions of language.

Course Structure, Approach, and Philosophy

This course is designed to give students an understanding of issues related to theoretical foundation of language learning and teaching theories that inform our understanding of how second languages are learned by children and adults. Through readings, discussions, and activities, we will critically examine the language acquisition processes from learners' and language instructors' perspectives and analyze the socio-cultural, psychological, and instructional factors that can affect the language learning process. The course is designed to promote knowledge construction gained through exposure to scholarship in the field of SLA, while making connections to our own personal language learning experiences and the language learning experiences of members of our local community. The readings will provide the stimulus for discussion. We learn best by doing. You will read and write throughout the course, and reflect on the readings and assignments. Throughout the course, students will have many opportunities to reflect upon and develop their personal theory of second language acquisition, which they will use as a foundation for their (future) practice.