

SLHS 4560: LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT
Speech-Language Pathology Prerequisites (SLPP) Program
University of Colorado Boulder

CREDITS	3
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Covers the development of language in childhood and into adult life, emphasizing the role of environment and biological endowment in learning to communicate with words, sentences, and narratives.

COURSE MODALITY

SLHS 4560 is a fully online, asynchronous course delivered across the standard academic term. Instruction occurs through structured weekly modules, and students are required to progress according to scheduled release dates and assignment deadlines. Although there are no synchronous class meetings, the course is instructor-paced and follows the university semester calendar. The instructor will hold regular virtual office hours to provide additional support and clarification. Participation is optional, and recordings are made available for students who are unable to attend.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

SLHS 4560: Language Development will enable learners to:

1. Analyze the structure of language by defining language and its relationship to speech, hearing, and communication, and by explaining the major domains (phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics) and their components across development.
2. Evaluate major theories of language acquisition by comparing nativist and empiricist perspectives, defining key theoretical constructs (e.g., theory, evidence), and applying these frameworks to typical language development.
3. Describe and interpret typical language development across the lifespan (infancy through school age), including phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, narrative, and early literacy development, and identify key developmental milestones.
4. Apply principles of language analysis by transcribing and analyzing language samples, calculating mean length of utterance (MLU), identifying grammatical morphemes and phonological processes, and interpreting morphosyntactic growth using tools such as SALT conventions.
5. Differentiate language difference from language disorder by examining bilingual language development, dialectal variation, sociocultural influences (e.g., SES), Developmental Language Disorder (DLD), autism spectrum disorder (ASD), and Intellectual Disability, and by identifying defining characteristics and red flags.
6. Explain the relationship between language, cognition, culture, and literacy by describing emergent literacy skills, phonological awareness, metalinguistic development, narrative structure, and the reciprocal relationship between oral and written language within ecological and social contexts.

COURSE ALIGNMENT MAP

Teaching Materials: Slides & Video Lectures, Canvas Resources (course materials and support content), Review Guides (quiz preparation materials), Answer Keys (assignment and lab solutions)

Required Texts (e-text, used, and previous editions are acceptable):

Pence Turnbull, K. L., & Justice, L. M. (2012). *Language development from theory to practice* (3rd ed.). Pearson.

MODULES	KEY CONTENT	MODULE/UNIT OBJECTIVES
Week 1	Language Types of Communication	Define the term language. Describe how language relates to speech, hearing, and communication. Describe the major domains (& components) of language. Identify several remarkable features of language.
Week 2	Domain, Components, & Remarkable Features Language Acquisition Theories	Describe the major domains of language. Describe the components of language. Identify several remarkable features of language. Obtain a basic understanding of some major language acquisition theories. Be able to define ‘theory’, ‘nativist’, ‘empiricist’, and evidence.

Week 3	Infant Speech Perception & Phonological Development Morphological Development & Syntactic Development	Discuss important concepts related to early phonological development. Explain the paradigms we use to understand what infants know and prefer Explain statistical learning Discuss important concepts related to early morphological development. Define the term syntactic development Identify the types of sentence modalities (declarative, negatives, interrogatives)
Week 4	Semantic Development Pragmatic Development	Identify major building blocks in early semantic development. Explain how children learn words through statistical learning. Describe the varied semantic taxonomy. Explain important concepts related to early pragmatic development. Understand how communication can be used for different purposes. Describe how extralinguistic cues are involved in pragmatic development.
Week 5	Language Sampling Morphologic Analysis	Understand the steps involved in language transcription (e.g., from collecting a language sample to calculating the MLU). Learn to count free and bound morphemes. Familiarize yourself with selected SALT convention codes. Calculate the mean length utterance.
Week 6	Infant Skills Vocalizations Early Foundations	Identify major language-development milestones that occur in infancy. Understand the differences between perceptual and conceptual features. Describe the pre-linguistic, early vocalization stages. Be prepared to identify different types of vocalization stages. Explain some early foundations for language development. Explain factors that contribute to infants' individual language achievements.
Week 7	Toddler Language Development Semantics	Explain what characterizes a first word. Describe how a child builds its lexicon and semantic network. Understand the differences between over- and under-extension. Describe how children use gestures to support language learning.
Week 8	Toddler Language Development Pragmatics Phonological Processes	Explain Theory of Mind and its importance in toddlers' pragmatic development Know the range of communicative intents or discourse functions. Identify and provide examples of different types of phonological processes. Describe different types of grammatical morphemes that appear in toddlers. Explain why MLU is used to measure children's morphosyntactic skills.
Week 9	Preschool Language Development	Identify major language-development milestones that occur in the preschool period. Explain the different types of words they learn (e.g., deictic, locational, etc.). Explain the difference between contextualized and decontextualized language. Explain the difference between fast and slow mapping and why that is critical for vocabulary development. Describe why shared storybook reading is critical for language and literacy development. Describe what phonology looks like in the preschool period.
Week 10	Narrative Development	Describe the different types of narratives. Explain how preschool and school age narratives differ. Explain the importance of story grammar elements in a true narrative.
Week 11	Preschool and School-Age Literacy Development	Describe and provide examples of emergent, pre-literacy skills. Define phonological awareness skills. Explain the symbiotic relationship between oral and written language. Explain the importance of metalinguistic skills in written language development. Identify the differences between spoken and written language. Describe the different stages of reading development (i.e., from decoding to construction/reconstruction)

Week 12	Language Differences & Diversity	Describe the connection between language and culture. Explain what a dialect is. Understand the relationship between socioeconomic status and vocabulary development. Explain other factors that are related to SES that could impact vocabulary development.
Week 13	Bilingual Language Development	Explain factors that influence bilingual language proficiency (e.g., input, attitudes, family members, etc.) Define different types of bilinguals. Describe the benefits of codeswitching. Explain what shared vs distributed vocabulary skills is.
Week 14	Developmental Language Disorder	Identify several defining characteristics of DLD Distinguish Language Disorder from Language Differences and Language Delay (that resolves) Explain why it is important to understand the overall impact of language development on the child (i.e., Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Model)
Week 15	Autism & Intellectual Disability	Define Autism Spectrum Disorder Identify red flags (warning signs) of ASD Identify core deficits of Autism Describe language characteristics in people with Down Syndrome and Intellectual Disability

ASHA 2020 CERTIFICATION STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THIS COURSE

This upper-division course provides foundational knowledge aligned with the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) 2020 KASA Standards, including:

- Standard IV-B: Biological, neurological, acoustic, psychological, developmental, linguistic, and cultural bases of human communication and swallowing across the lifespan.
- Standard IV-C: Characteristics of communication and swallowing disorders and differences, including the etiologies, signs and symptoms, and impact on individuals across the lifespan.

GRADING CRITERIA AND POINTS BREAKDOWN

Final grades will be calculated based on the number of points earned out of the total possible points as follows:

Assignment / Assessment	Points	% of Grade
Syllabus & Calendar Quiz	10	2.2%
Participation Activities (15x, 5 points each)	75	16.5%
Discussion Board Posts (10x, 10 points each)	100	22%
Unit Tests (4x, 60 points each)	240	52.7%
LSA Practicum (1x, 30 points)	30	6.6%
Total Points Possible:	455	100%

GRADING SCALE

Grades are assigned based on the percentage of the total points earned and calculated using the following scale.

Letter Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
Percentage Grade *	93+ -100	90- <93	87- <90	83- <87	80- <83	77- <80	73- <77	70- <73	67- <70	63- <67	60- <63	<60

*< indicates less than

SUBMISSION POLICIES

Assignments and quizzes are submitted in Canvas and due on the date posted in Canvas. Late submissions will be reduced by 25% of the total possible points per day late (i.e., on the 4th day late, the submission is worth 0 points).

COURSE PLAGIARISM POLICY

Students should submit their own work in this course. Review Honor Code and Student Conduct for University policies.

GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) COURSE POLICY

Students should not use AI tools during quizzes. Students should give credit to AI tools when used on assignments.

INCLUSIVITY

This course is committed to creating a learning environment where everyone feels respected, valued, and supported. Diverse perspectives, identities, and experiences strengthen our learning community, and all students are encouraged to participate fully. We strive to maintain a classroom culture that is accessible, inclusive, and free from discrimination. If you encounter barriers to your learning or have needs that are not being met, please reach out so we can work together to ensure your success.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND CLASS EXPECTATIONS

This is a challenging, fast-paced, and interdisciplinary course. Experience shows that students who are successful in the course critically think about course material and use these strategies:

- Devote the appropriate amount of time to studying and working through the course material each week. For this class, it is estimated you should spend about 6 to 9 hours.
- Review learning goals for each week.
- It may be helpful to use the Sandwich Technique (Skim readings - Attend Class - Re-read after class) to help solidify course concepts.
- Refer to the posted slides as a reference in studying for exams and completing course assignments.
- Communicate and stay in touch. If you have challenges or issues that come up, let me know as soon as possible so that we can work with you and help support your success as a student.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Honor Code

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the [Honor Code](#). Violations of the Honor Code may include but are not limited to: plagiarism (including use of paper writing services or technology [such as essay bots]), cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. Understanding the course's syllabus is a vital part of adhering to the Honor Code. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution: StudentConduct@colorado.edu. Students found responsible for violating the Honor Code will be assigned resolution outcomes from Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution and will be subject to academic sanctions from the faculty member. Visit [Honor Code](#) for more information on the academic integrity policy.

Accommodation for Disabilities, Temporary Medical Conditions, and Medical Isolation

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or DSinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) on the Disability Services website. If you have a temporary illness, injury or required medical isolation for which you require adjustment, please contact the instructor as soon as possible.

Accommodation for Religious Obligations

Campus policy requires faculty to provide reasonable accommodations for students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments, or required attendance. Please communicate the need for a religious accommodation in a timely manner. See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

Preferred Student Names and Pronouns

CU Boulder recognizes that students' legal information does not always align with how they identify. If you wish to have your preferred name (rather than your legal name) and/or your preferred pronouns appear on your instructors'

class rosters and in Canvas, visit the [Registrar's website](#) for instructions on how to change your personal information in university systems.

Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all instructional settings, whether in person, remote, or online. Failure to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, marital status, political affiliation, or political philosophy.

Additional classroom behavior information

- [Student Classroom and Course-Related Behavior Policy.](#)
- [Student Code of Conduct.](#)
- [Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance.](#)
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Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation

CU Boulder is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. University policy prohibits [protected-class](#) discrimination and harassment, sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner abuse (dating or domestic violence), stalking, and related retaliation by or against members of our community on- and off-campus. The Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) addresses these concerns, and individuals who have been subjected to misconduct can contact OIEC at 303-492-2127 or email OIEC@colorado.edu. Information about university policies, [reporting options](#), and [OIEC support resources](#) including confidential services can be found on the [OIEC website](#). Please know that faculty and graduate instructors are required to inform OIEC when they are made aware of incidents related to these concerns regardless of when or where something occurred. This is to ensure the person impacted receives outreach from OIEC about resolution options and support resources. To learn more about reporting and support a variety of concerns, visit the [Don't Ignore It page](#).

Mental Health and Wellness

The University of Colorado Boulder is committed to the well-being of all students. If you are struggling with personal stressors, mental health or substance use concerns that are impacting academic or daily life, please contact [Counseling and Psychiatric Services \(CAPS\)](#), located in C4C, or call (303) 492-2277, 24/7.