

How to Break ‘Da Vinci’s Code’: Theories, Methods, and Approaches in Foreign Language Teaching

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Office Hours:
Course credit: 2
Grading: Letter grade
Meeting: 2 hours once/week

Course description and goals:

In this course we will explore the theories and methodologies that have been popular in foreign language teaching from the early 20th century until today. Through readings and discussions, students will discover the techniques and activities instructors use as well as why they use them. In addition, we will find out the answers to questions such as: How are languages acquired? Does grammar need to be taught, or can learners just ‘pick it up’ from context? Is reading and writing in a foreign language the same as reading and writing in one’s native language? Is there such a thing as a good language learner? Finally, students will create and conduct a survey to discover how and why learners’ expectations of what should happen in the foreign language classroom do not always match the instructors’ approaches.

Required text:

Johnson, Keith. 2001. *An introduction to foreign language learning and teaching*. Essex, England: Pearson Education Limited.

Books available on closed reserves in the Main Library:

Larsen-Freeman, Diane. 2000. *Techniques and principles in language teaching*. Second edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Richards, Jack C. and Theodore S. Rogers. 2001. *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. Second edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Readings available on the Internet where indicated.

Grading:

Attendance, facilitation of discussion, preparation for class	15%
10-minute presentation	10%
Carmen questions/comments for discussion	20%
Questionnaire project	25%
Final reaction paper	30%

Grading Scale:

A 93-100	B+ 88-89	B- 80-82	C 73-77	D+ 68-69	E 64-0
A- 90-92	B 83-87	C+ 78-79	C- 70-72	D 65-67	

Attendance, facilitation of discussion, preparation for class: To make for a productive seminar in which we discuss the course themes, I require that students attend all class meetings, read the assigned text(s) before coming to class, and participate in class discussion.

10-minute presentation: In groups of two students will be assigned one of the following teaching methods or approaches. You will read about your method or approach and give a brief 10-minute presentation to the class on the objectives, key features, and typical techniques.

- 1) Direct Method
- 2) Audiolingual Method
- 3) Community Language Learning
- 4) The Silent Way
- 5) Suggestopedia
- 6) Total Physical Response
- 7) Natural Approach
- 8) Communicative Language Teaching
- 9) Task-Based Language Teaching
- 10) Content Language Teaching

Information on all the methods and approaches can be found in Larson-Freeman and in Richards and Rodgers. Information on 1-8 can also be found at: http://www.englishraven.com/method_direct.html. Information on 9 can also be found at: <http://www3.telus.net/linguisticsissues/syllabusdesign.html>. Information on 10 can also be found at: <http://www.carla.umn.edu/cobaltt/cbi.html>.

Carmen questions/comments for discussion: Students are required to post two questions or comments for discussion from each assigned reading no later than two days before the next class meeting. Students will occasionally also be asked to post their answers/reactions to a question or comment posted by the instructor.

Questionnaire project: During class in the ninth week, we will create a questionnaire to explore foreign language students' understanding and expectations about language learning and acquisition. Each student is expected to participate in the creation of the survey and ask 8-10 students who are not enrolled in this freshman seminar and who are currently taking a foreign language at the 100 level to complete the questionnaire. All students will calculate the averages of the responses in preparation for class discussion during week 10. *NOTE: Participants are only allowed to complete one survey. That is, the same respondent may not be used twice.*

Final reaction paper: Students will write a 4-5 page reaction paper (typed, double-spaced, 1” margins, 12 pt font), in which they will summarize the results of their questionnaire, compare it with the overall class results, and discuss the results in terms of their understanding of language learning and the acquisition process.

Academic misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info_for_students/csc.asp).

Disability services

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1

Introduction to the course

History of language teaching: Where we’ve been and where we are going

Homework: Read about your assigned teaching method and be prepared to describe the objectives, key features, and typical techniques in class in a short, 10-min presentation with your partner.

Week 2

History of language teaching: Where we’ve been and where we are going

Homework: Johnson pp. 75-115 and your reaction to a question/comment posted by the instructor on Carmen.

Week 3

Learning and acquisition: Some theories

Homework: Johnson pp. 116-138 and two Carmen discussion questions/comments

Week 4

Individual language learners: Some differences

Homework: Johnson 139-158,

http://www.seasite.niu.edu/Tagalog/Teachers_Page/Language_Learning_Articles/profile_of_a_successful_language.htm, and two Carmen discussion questions/comments

Week 5

Successful language learners: What they do

Homework: Johnson pp. 269-283 and your reaction to a question/comment posted by the instructor on Carmen.

Week 6

The four skills: Reading and listening

Homework: Johnson pp. 283-290, the ACTFL Guidelines:

http://www.seasite.niu.edu/Tagalog/PDFACTFLGuidelines/links_to_actfl_guidelines.htm, the National Standards: <http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3392>, and two Carmen discussion questions/comments

Week 7

The four skills: Speaking and writing, the ACTFL Guidelines and the National Standards

Homework: Johnson pp. 236-268

Week 8

The grammar controversy

No homework!

Week 9

Develop in class the “Foreign language learner survey”

Homework: Ask 8-10 students who are not enrolled in this freshman seminar and who are currently taking a foreign language at the 100 level to complete the questionnaire and calculate the averages in preparation for class discussion. NOTE: Participants are only allowed to complete one survey. That is, the same respondent may not be used twice.

Week 10

Discussion of the Foreign language learner surveys

Homework: 4-5 page reaction paper due on Tuesday of finals week by 5:00 PM.

Janice M. Aski is assistant professor and director of the Italian language program. She specializes in foreign language pedagogy and historical Italian/Romance linguistics. She is a co-author of the first-year Italian textbook, *Avanti!*. Her research in foreign language pedagogy explores a variety of topics, such as testing, teaching reading at the elementary level, and how first-year Italian textbooks and grammar practice activities reflect the most current research in second language acquisition. Her publications in historical Italian/Romance linguistics focus on the social, pragmatic, and cognitive aspects of phonological and morphological change. She has taught a wide range of undergraduate courses in Italian language as well as the history of the Italian language. She is the recipient of the 2004 Colleges of the Arts & Sciences Outstanding Teaching Award.