

COURSE SYLLABUS – Summer 2015

Language and its Expression of the World

语言与现实

Dr. Henriette Hendriks

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will introduce how language "translates" reality (Linguistic Relativity in the technical term). The students will realise that sometimes culture will influence what a language looks like, what words it does or does not have, the way it expresses emotions, feelings, politeness, etc. By directly comparing expressions, structures and discourse in English with other languages, and in particular Mandarin Chinese, it should make students more sensitive to how language can influence people's perceptions of the speaker, culture (and possibly the world) more general.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the course, the student will:

- Learn how languages are similar (or not), and how that influences our perception of the world;
- Realize how people speak about spatial and motion events;
- Find out if it is possible to get a complete translation of a language into another language;
- Be familiar with similarities and differences at the word, sentence, discourse and culture level;
- Understand the situations in the world of finance or economics and how language can depict it (or not).

TEXTBOOKS AND OTHER MATERIALS

No textbooks required.

Teaching handouts will be provided in class.

METHODOLOGY AND POLICIES

>1.5 hours of Lecturing in the morning followed by a 30 minute task related to the lecture.

>1.5 hour of Lecturing in the afternoon followed by short presentations of the work by the students.

This set-up will prevent students from getting too tired, and will allow them to incorporate some of the information by doing a task.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

The tasks and presentations indeed count toward the students' final evaluation.

About Professor Henriette Hendriks

Dr. Henriette Hendriks is currently Head of the Department of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics and co-chair of the University of Cambridge Language Sciences Initiative. She obtained her BA in Sinology, MA in Sinology and Linguistics and PhD from Leiden University in 1993. She worked as a researcher at the Max Planck Institute in Nijmegen for 12 years and has been working at the University of Cambridge since 1998. Her main research interests are in the interaction between language and cognition, and typological differences across languages. Research questions concern the influence of language-specific differences on first- and second-language acquisition, and the effects of cognitive maturity on the acquisition process.

Dr. Henriette Hendriks is the reviewer for over ten world famous linguistic journals and publishers. And she is also the evaluator of research projects in the area of general linguistics, language acquisition, psycholinguistics and psychology of language for several renowned organisations such as the European Research Council (PF7), the ESRC, the AHRC, Leverhulme Trust, and so on.