COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course provides an introduction to theories and research that support a rich and nuanced understanding of oral language development and the multiple important roles that oral language plays in providing a foundation for literacy development. We will investigate the development of the major domains of oral language (phonology, vocabulary, grammar, and extended discourse) from birth through adolescence, and we will explore oral language development for both monolingual English speakers and children who are learning two languages. We will also explore how this deep understanding of oral language development can inform educators’ practical decision-making about language instruction.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS FOR THE COURSE:
• How do different theoretical perspectives (e.g., psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, developmental) answer the question “what is language?”
• How does oral language development in early childhood (from birth through the beginning of formal reading instruction in kindergarten or first grade) lay a foundation for learning to read and write?
• In what ways does learning to read and write in school accelerate oral language development (from around first grade through late adolescence)?
• In what ways is oral language development (and its relationships with literacy development) similar and different for children learning two languages, compared to monolingual children?
• How can instruction (in PreK through high school) support oral language development in today’s urban classrooms, to meet the needs of children from a wide range of socioeconomically, linguistically, and culturally diverse backgrounds?

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES
The activities in this course will enable you:
1) Articulate and explain your own useable theory of oral language development as it relates to literacy development, with attention to linguistic, socioeconomic, and cultural diversity.
2) Develop a particularly deep understanding of oral language development during the one or more developmental periods (e.g., early childhood, childhood, adolescence) that will be the focus of your professional work.
3) Critically analyze instructional approaches designed to support oral language development in classrooms.

CLASS MEETINGS
Tuesdays, 4:55-6:35       Location: Bobst LL139
INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFORMATION
Email: michael.kieffer@nyu.edu  Office: East Building, Room 526
Office Hours: To be announced

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Class Participation (10%): Given the short time we have together, students are expected to attend each class and be prepared to engage in deep discussion of the issues raised by the assigned readings. Thoughtful preparation is particularly important, because the class lectures, discussions, and activities will be designed to extend, critique, and supplement, rather than summarize, the ideas in the readings. Please do not enroll in the course if you know that you will be unable to attend two or more sessions. (Course Objectives 1, 2, & 3)

Further details for each of the requirements below will be made available on NYU Classes.

Analyses of Oral Language Use (30%): Many prominent theories of language development are based in close observation and careful analysis of children’s use of language as their interact with others and their world. These analyses involve recording, transcribing, and analyzing patterns (often at a micro level) of how children and adolescents use language in various contexts. Over the course of the semester, you will work alone or with one partner on a series of three analyses of language use, each in a different context that provides supports and expectations for different types of language: 1) Informal play between a child and an adult, 2) Interactive book reading with one or more children/adolescents and an adult, and 3) A classroom discussion involving several children/adolescents (with or without a teacher). For each analysis, you will video-record up to 20 minutes, select and transcribe 5 minutes from the video, and write a brief paper carefully analyzing the transcript using your observations and ideas from the course. The first paper will be 2 pages (typed, double-spaced) focusing on the first transcript (Due Sept. 23), the second paper will be 3 pages analyzing the second transcript and comparing/contrasting it to the first (Due Oct. 21), and the third paper will be 4 pages analyzing the third transcript and comparing/contrasting it to the others (Due Nov. 25). You will have flexibility in the age of the child or adolescent, so that you can focus this work on your particular age/grade ranges of interest. We will also work to collect transcripts with children from various ages and backgrounds, so that we can compare our findings. These will be graded based on evidence of critical thinking, careful analysis, use of specific evidence from the transcripts, integration of ideas from the course, and writing clarity. (Course Objectives 1 & 2)

Take-home Midterm Exam (25%): During class on November 4, you will receive a take-home midterm exam to be completed by the following class session on November 11. This is an opportunity for you to solidify and demonstrate what you have learned so far in the course, from the course readings and activities. To succeed on this exam, you will need to carefully and actively read the required readings each week. The exam will consist of essay responses to three questions, which you will choose from five options that reflect major themes of the course. Each of the three essay responses should be no more than two double-spaced pages. Each response should synthesize, integrate, and apply ideas from several course readings, with appropriate citations. Well-written essay responses may also integrate ideas from my power-point presentations, for your peers’ contributions in class discussions, or from insights from class activities, all with appropriate citation. Each answer
should also directly connect to your “useable theory of oral language development” and your developing approach to supporting oral language in classrooms. This will be graded based on evidence of close reading, critical analysis of ideas from the course, and writing clarity. (Course Objectives 1, 3)

**Final Project (35%):** Your final project is an opportunity to synthesize and apply ideas from the course, while also pursuing an area of particular interest that aligns with your personal professional goals. You will write an 8-10 page paper (typed, double-spaced, standard font and margins) choosing one of the three formats below, each of which will require substantial outside reading on a topic of your choice. You will write a one-page proposal for your final project that identifies the format you’ve chosen, your focal question, and potential sources (Due November 18). The final paper is due by email to Michael, before our last class session on **Tuesday, December 9.** (Course Objectives 2, 3)

1) **Research Paper on an Instructional Question:** Do a review of research focused on a particular question related to oral language instruction. You will specify an important instructional question, and then collect and review multiple relevant sources (perhaps 7-10 sources) from theory and research related to this question. Well-written papers will include one or more theoretical pieces on language, empirical articles that described language development, and research studies that evaluated instructional approaches. Your paper should not just summarize the arguments and findings from the sources, but should synthesize them in a way that provides guidance for instructional decisions.

2) **Student Case Study:** Do a careful case study on the language development and language needs of individual student with whom you work or have worked in the past. After identifying the student, you will need to collect multiple sources of information about the students’ language strengths and needs, such as assessment data, informal observations, transcribed language samples, and information about her/his demographic background and educational history. Your paper will provide a close analysis of this students’ data that describes her/his strengths and areas for improvement and provides suggestions for instructional methods to help her/him improve. To do so, you should draw on ideas from the course as well as outside sources (perhaps 4-5 sources) that are most relevant to this students’ age, strengths, and needs.

3) **Research-based School Language & Literacy Improvement Plan:** Do a review of research focused on a particular challenge related to language instruction facing a specific school (your own school or one at which you might work). You will specify this challenge, and then collect and review multiple relevant sources (perhaps 7-10 sources) from theory and research related to this challenge. Well-written papers will draw on both research on language development and instruction and research on factors involved in school improvement (e.g., professional development, teacher recruitment and training, organizational culture and trust, school leadership). Combining insights from these sources, create a school literacy plan describing how the instructional leadership of a specific PreK, elementary, middle, or high school can address this challenge to accelerate the language development of its students. In addition to providing research-based guidance about instruction, this plan should also prioritize different goals, describe potential challenges to meeting those goals, and identify approaches to address those challenges.
COURSE CORE READINGS
The following texts should be available at the NYU bookstore as well as online vendors. All other required readings below will be posted as links or PDFs on NYU Classes.


## COURSE SCHEDULE

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<th>Topics &amp; Activities</th>
<th>Readings Due</th>
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<tr>
<td>1) Sept. 2</td>
<td>• Introduction to the Course&lt;br&gt;• Psycholinguistic, Sociocultural, and Developmental Perspectives on Oral Language&lt;br&gt;• From Language to Literacy (and back again)</td>
<td>• Syllabus&lt;br&gt;• Snow, Griffin, &amp; Burns, Ch. 2, pp. 15-22 (PDF on NYU Classes)&lt;br&gt;• Fillmore &amp; Snow, p. 1-36: <a href="http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED444379.pdf">http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED444379.pdf</a></td>
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<td>2) Sept. 9</td>
<td>• Nature &amp; Nurture: Evolved endowments and social scaffolding&lt;br&gt;• From prelinguistic communication to talking&lt;br&gt;• Contexts for language use: Home &amp; School</td>
<td>• Cazden, Ch. 1, Ch. 3&lt;br&gt;• Bruner, Ch. 1-2</td>
<td>Choose a partner for language use analyses &amp; discuss possible contexts for analysis #1.</td>
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<td>3) Sept. 16</td>
<td>• Pragmatics &amp; early language acquisition: Learning to “get things done with words”&lt;br&gt;• Role of observation in understanding language development</td>
<td>• Bruner, Ch. 3-6</td>
<td>Bring transcript for Language Use Analysis #1 to class</td>
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<td>4) Sept. 23</td>
<td><strong>Vocabulary: How do word meanings get learned?</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Vocabulary development in early childhood&lt;br&gt;• Social &amp; language background influences on vocabulary</td>
<td>• <a href="http://www.npr.org/2011/01/10/132740565/closing-the-achievement-gap-with-baby-talk">http://www.npr.org/2011/01/10/132740565/closing-the-achievement-gap-with-baby-talk</a>&lt;br&gt;• Harris et al. in N&amp;D&lt;br&gt;• Vasilyeva &amp; Waterfall in N&amp;D&lt;br&gt;• Hammer et al. in N&amp;D</td>
<td>Language Use Analysis #1 Due</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Reading Materials</td>
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| 5) Sept. 30 | • PreK vocabulary instruction  
• Vocabulary instruction, part 1: Multifaceted, robust approaches  
• Neumann in N&D  
• Stahl & Nagy, Ch. 1-6 |  
| 6) Oct. 7   | • Vocabulary instruction, part 2: Metalinguistics & independent word learning  
• Vocabulary for ELLs  
• Stahl & Nagy, Ch. 7-14  
• Kelley et al. (2010) |  
| Oct. 14 – No class; Fall Recess |  |  
| 7) Oct. 21 | **Phonology: Language is sounds – to be discriminated, analyzed, and mapped to symbols**  
• Vocabulary development & phonological awareness development  
• Phonology & lexical quality  
• Language variation & what should count as a reading error  
• Metsala in N&D  
• Perfetti & Hart (2005)  
| Analysis of Language Use #2 Due |  
| 8) Oct. 28 | **Grammar- How do we put words together?**  
• What is grammar and why is it important?  
• Language variation & grammar development  
• Zwiers, Ch. 2  
• Schleppegrell & Go, A.L.  
|  
| 9) Nov. 4  | • Academic & disciplinary grammar  
• Snow & Uccelli (2009)  
• Zwiers, Ch. 4  
| Take-home Midterm Starts |
| 10) Nov. 11 | Catch-up Week  
<p>|  | Take-home Midterm Due |</p>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading Material</th>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 18</td>
<td>Extended Discourse – How do we explain, argue, debate, and tell stories?  • Classroom discourse</td>
<td>• Cazden (2001)- Chapters 2, 4, 5</td>
<td>Final Project Proposal Due</td>
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<td>Nov. 25</td>
<td>• Sociocognitive perspectives on discourse  • Culture, identity, ideology, &amp; discourse</td>
<td>• Cazden – Ch. 7  • Gee (2001).  • Moll, L. C. (1992).</td>
<td>Analysis of Language Use #3 Due</td>
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<td>Dec. 2</td>
<td>• Enhancing classroom discourse</td>
<td>• Cazden, Ch. 8  • Michaels, O’Connor, &amp; Resnick (2008)  • Nystrand &amp; Gamoran (1991)</td>
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<td>Dec. 9</td>
<td>• From language to literacy &amp; back again, revisited</td>
<td>• Paris in N&amp;D  • Stanovich (1986)</td>
<td>Final Project Due</td>
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COURSE POLICIES

Attendance
As noted above, fulfilling the requirements for the course requires arriving promptly to and attending each class session. If you cannot avoid missing a class, please email me prior to the class session to let me know and to submit any assignments due at that session. You are allowed one absence (with proper email notification prior to the class session) without it affecting your participation grade. Any additional absences may have a major negative impact on your class participation grade and overall course grade. Arriving late to class frequently may also have an impact on your class participation grade and overall course grade.

Professionalism
Please respect the norms for classroom decorum that are appropriate for graduate students and professional educators. In particular, please be mindful about your use of electronic devices and how that may impact your engagement in discussions with your peers. Ipads and laptops can be useful for taking notes, but can also serve as barriers to interacting with your peers. Cell phones should not be used during class.

Communication
Information and communication related to this class will be distributed via e-mail and the NYU Classes website. Given the tight timelines of this course, it is crucial that you check your e-mail for course-related information on a daily basis and refer to the NYU Classes site when necessary.

Late Assignments
Assignments are due before class on the day noted above. Most of the requirements for the course must be completed by the due date to fulfill your obligations to your peers and the class community, so late submissions are not possible. Individual assignments that are submitted after the due date will be graded at 50%. No assignments will be accepted later than one week past the due date.

Academic Integrity
The NYU policy is published at http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/policies/academic_integrity. A major part of academic integrity is giving appropriate credit for the sources for the ideas you use, whether those sources are texts, instructors, or peers. If you have questions about when citation is appropriate, contact me. Please use the APA citation system in your written work. If you don’t know it, check out the citations in text and reference list tabs at the following tutorial: http://flash1r.apa.org/apastyle/basics/index.htm?__utma=185732729.1128450448.1342206010.1342206010.1342206010.1&__utmb=185732729.2.10.1342206010&__utmcc=185732729.__utmx=.&__utmz=185732729.1342206010.1.1.utmcsr=(direct)|utmcmd=(none)&utmcmid=(none)&utmdev=(none)

Accommodations
Special needs of any sort (for example, physical or psychological disability, learning disability, and limited academic English proficiency) should be discussed with me. For
accommodations, please register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980, 240 Greene Street, www.nyu.edu/csd.