

**Who:** Prof. Karin Stromswold & Prof. Kristen Syrett  
**What:** Language Games & Talking Heads  
**When:** Tuesdays 10:20-11:40 AM  
**Where:** Busch SEC 207  
**Why:** Because language is amazing!

**How to contact us:**

Prof. Stromswold: [karin.stromswold@rutgers.edu](mailto:karin.stromswold@rutgers.edu)  
 Prof. Syrett: [kristen.syrett@rutgers.edu](mailto:kristen.syrett@rutgers.edu)

Textbook: Any edition of Steven Pinker's *The Language Instinct: How the Mind Creates Language*.  
 Harper Perennial Modern.

**Requirements**

**There are two simple major requirements: class attendance+participation, and forum postings.**

- **You must show up to class and actively participate to pass!** Simply being physically present is not enough! You may not use your laptop in class. There is no need for it, and you'll just be tempted to do other things with it than take notes.
- **You must post to the discussion forum on a weekly basis to pass!** We will use the discussion forum on Sakai. Each week, we will ask you to do a brief (and hopefully fun) activity outside of class and post something at least one paragraph length to the forum. These will be graded. They are due by Sunday at 7 pm.

**Schedule and Topics**

[no class]

Sept 5 *No class meeting!*

[1]

Sept 12 Introduction to Language games & talking heads (Stromswold & Syrett) Forum 01 due  
*Recommended reading:* Pinker, chapter 1 FRIDAY 9/15!

[2]

Sept 19 Baby talk: How we learn words (Syrett) Forum 02 due  
*Recommended reading:* Pinker chapter 9 Sunday 9/17

[3]

Sept 26 Auditory illusions and misunderstood song lyrics: Phonology (Stromswold) Forum 03 due  
*Recommended reading:* Pinker chapter 6 Sunday 9/24

[4]

Oct 3 Say what? Slips of the tongue, tip of the tongue & lexical access (Stromswold) Forum 04 due  
*Recommended reading:* "Slips of the tongue" by Fromkin Sunday 10/1

[5]

Oct 10 Splitting hairs & stretching the truth: Pragmatics (Syrett) Forum 05 due  
*Recommended:* *Introduction to Pragmatics* by Birner (ch. 1: section 1.1.1 only) Sunday 10/8

[6]

Oct 17 Strange & misleading sentences: Syntax (Stromswold) Forum 06 due  
*Recommended reading:* Pinker chapter 7 Sunday 10/15

[7]

Oct 24 Language, culture, and identity: Forum 07 due  
 Endangered Languages, Language Revitalization (Syrett)  
*Recommended reading:* *New Yorker* article 'Can dying languages be saved?' by Judith Thurman,  
*Recommended reading:* *NY Times* article 'Does your language shape how you think?' by Deutscher

[8]

Oct 31 Broken brains: The neural bases of language (Stromswold) Forum 08 due  
*Recommended reading:* Pinker chapter 10 and parts of chapter 2

[no class]

Nov 7 *No class meeting!*

[9]  
Nov 14 Doctor Dolittle's dilemma: Animal communication (Syrett) Forum 09 due  
*Recommended reading: Pinker chapter 11*

[no class]  
Nov 21 *No class meeting! (Note: Rutgers Thanksgiving schedule this day!)*

[10]  
Nov 28 Guest lecture – Sudha Arunachalam Forum 10 due  
Followed by talk in the Center for Cognitive Science (RuCCS) at 1 pm