Instructor: Ellis, Nick
LING 351 001 - ELI 351 001 - LING 551 001 - PSYCH 344 001

Written Comments

900 Comment on the quality of instruction in this course.

Student 1
NA

Student 2
Dr. Ellis is a great professor, whose energy helped this class along. I really liked the no exam policy - it made the class much more interesting, and I learned more from completing the projects and papers.

Student 3
NA

Student 4
Excellent. Professor Ellis did a great job of lecturing and explaining topics and getting discussion rolling during class. I am really pleased with his enthusiasm and excitement over SLA and it helped me get more interested in it! He was more than eager to help everyone with their projects and proposals and always responded to questions in a timely manner. I really enjoyed the structure of this course--lectures, group projects, papers, writing assignments, discussions, and presentations as opposed to multiple choice tests and midterms. I really think that the way he structured the course helped me to learn more about the topic itself vs learning just what I would have been tested on. Projects, presentations, and writing assignments helped me and the other students in the class to really develop a deep meaning of our topic, and develop more understanding than we would have had if we were just being tested on it.

Student 5
NA

Student 6
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I'm not sure it was fair to grade each others research papers in the way they were; I was in a group where everybody else knew each other and were friends outside of class, so they ranked each other above me, even though I felt my paper deserved a higher ranking.

Student 7
Very good. Apparent professor not only knew a lot but enjoyed teaching the topics. However, sometimes it got a little dull. Would have been nice to incorporate more group discussion into everyday lecture. Today was good.

Workload distribution was also good. Liked that everything counted for something but nothing was worth too much more than anything else. It helped to make the course enjoyable rather than stressful.

Student 8
Overall, I enjoyed this course alot. I thought the professor was really passionate about the topic. Also I feel that the absence of tests/exams made the class different and in many ways, better than a typical class at UM. I enjoyed working on the projects as it gave us a chance to delve more deeply into one particular topic. The things I would suggest adding to this course would be that I would like to see more organized discussions in class. Also, an outline of SLA would be helpful before lecture. For those of us without any linguistic background, sometimes it was hard to follow what is presented in lecture.

Student 9
I really enjoyed the fact that there were no exams, and I liked the term research project. The conferences were also very interesting and I wish I was able to go to all of them. It would be nice if there were more discussions like the ones we had on the last day of class. Readings are also pretty good! Thank you for your instruction in this class, I really enjoyed it, and learned a lot about a topic that greatly interests me! [:

Student 10
NA

Student 11
I think it was good. Professor Ellis is clearly one of the top in his field, and his knowledge and expertise shows it. I enjoyed the format of the class, a project instead of an exam. I don't like being graded on technical things, so I felt like I had more freedom in choosing what I wanted to write about and what my project would be about.

Student 12
I thought this course had a very good application component involved. Focusing on a certain area that students were interested in created a good work dynamic but I think the only problem may be just trying to find a way to keep students interested in other groups topics. Otherwise it was a great course!

Student 13
NA

Student 14
We didn't get feedback from assignments very quickly, at times that was frustrating. Overall I liked the course and I don't necessary have an interest in Linguistics.

Student 15
NA

Student 16
I enjoyed having a class that wasn't exam/quiz based. I think it helped my learning of the subject. Sometimes I felt like the course requirements were not very clear and our written assignments had vague instructions. I have never had so much group work in class and I think there were positives and negatives to it. The positive was that it never let me get behind on my work for this class because other people were depending on me. The negative was that it was a LOT of group work which was very time consuming and difficult to coordinate. In class instruction mostly did not incorporate a discussion aspect and only a few students who were well-versed in the subject participated. Students lost motivation to pay attention during class because there was a lack of engaging instruction. For the future I think it would be more beneficial to have more small group discussion like the last class because students will feel more comfortable voicing their opinion if they are not well-versed in the subject. I believe it is important to have group thought and contribution for SLA learning.

Student 17
This course was really interesting! I loved the group presentations on the different chapters because it was nice to learn from your peers and get an overview of the different aspects of SLA. Also, I liked the research project at the end of the term and the presentations about the different studies. Finally, I really appreciate how there were no exams or quizzes or anything of that sort...really took the pressure off and allowed me to enjoy the class and learn. Thank you for a great semester Professor Ellis!
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Student 18  
NA

Student 19  
Great instruction, good mix of instruction by professor and discussion. Very interesting classes and variety of topics. Enjoyed not having tests! Really enjoyed the project (great idea) and the variety of assignments.

Student 20  
I liked how the class focused on studying a subject more in depth instead of general knowledge exams. I feel like I learned a lot about the field of SLA over the course of this semester, especially my own topic. The conferences were also very interesting to attend. I'm glad that they were available this semester. I wish the research paper was not weighted the same as the conference paper(s). I feel like I had to put much more work into the research paper with my group than I had to for summarizing and analyzing a conference argument. The research project was a great learning tool and overall, very interesting to design and carry out.

Student 21  
I really enjoyed the semester long research assignment. But, I feel like each chapter can be extended further to incorporate the other factors so we can understand how individual topics factor in SLA. Perhaps more discussion and small quizzes would help people learn more.

Student 22  
I thoroughly enjoyed this course. Nick Ellis is a very engaging teacher; he has a good understanding of his field and is clearly passionate about what he does. I liked that there was a balance of theoretical and practical aspects of the class. Writing a paper and doing a hands-on research project gave valuable insight into two different academic processes.

Part of me wishes our group work hadn't been so narrow. Because each group focused on one chapter of the book, I sometimes felt that we were doing that to the exclusion of other topics. I would have liked the opportunity to get a broader first-hand understanding of all the available topics - perhaps by writing the paper on one, and doing the research project on something else, rather than having the same subject for both.

Student 23  
It was hard to really pay attention to the course once we were divided into chapter topics because unless you were really interested in the class subject as a whole, none of the lectures really mattered to your assignments or chapter topic. Overall, the assignments were good and enjoyable and fairly graded and the professor was very enthusiastic and easy to talk to. No exams or quizzes was great, but if there is a way to make the class more integrative to all the topics that would probably be more beneficial and engaging.

Student 24  
I enjoyed the course overall, but having more in depth assignments or activities to better understand the material would have been helpful. The light workload did not challenge or motivate me to learn more about linguistics and second language acquisition.

Student 25  
I liked the variety that was offered in the course. There were lectures, presentations, group activities, and that was really nice.

Student 26  
NA

Student 27  
NA

Student 28  
Instructor was very knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and most importantly, welcoming of any and all student input. Having a different background than linguistics/psych, the course wasn't quite what I expected in terms of content, but I still learned a great deal.

Student 29  
It was wonderful and I'd love to continue taking classes like this!
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Student 30

I felt like the percentage each of the projects were worth did not reflect the amount of work needed for each. For example, the group project should have been worth much more and the conference paper much less.

* The quartiles are calculated from Winter 2012 data. The university-wide quartiles are based on all UM classes in which an item was used. The school/college quartiles in this report are based on upper division classes with an enrollment of 16 to 74 students in Division of Humanities in the College of LS&A.

** SA - Strongly Agree, A - Agree, N - Neutral, D - Disagree, SD - Strongly Disagree, NA - Not Applicable.