

## School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies Course Outline

### LALS 542, Sociocultural theories of language teaching and learning Trimester 3, 2007

**Course Coordinator:**

**Dr Elaine Vine**  
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<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals>



**Class times and rooms:**

Class weeks for this course for both on-campus and distance students are the weeks beginning 26 November, 3, 10 and 17 December 2007, 7, 14, 21 and 28 January, and 4 and 11 February 2008.

Please note that the University closes down from Saturday 22 December 2007 and re-opens on Thursday, 3 January 2008. There will be no university services available during that period, but you will still have access to Blackboard and the library online.

**On-campus group class meeting time:** Mondays, 4.10 - 6.00pm  
Room: 24 Kelburn Parade, Room 103.

Monday 21 January 2008 is a public holiday. I will negotiate alternative arrangements with the on-campus group for the class meeting that week.

**LALS main office:** VZ210, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Von Zedlitz Building, Kelburn Parade

**LALS 512 Course Administrator:**

Rachel Scholes, Postgraduate administration  
Sarah Dunstan, Distance education administration

Tel: 463 5600/463 5255  
Fax: 463 5604

**Web contact:** [www.blackboard.vuw.ac.nz](http://www.blackboard.vuw.ac.nz)

**Content:**

This course explores what sociocultural theories of learning contribute to our understanding of the teaching and learning of language in educational contexts. It examines how spoken and written language are used in teaching and learning, and considers implications for class practice.

Week beginning	Course Week #	Topics	Assignments
26 Nov	1	Introduction to the course	
03 Dec	2	Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)	
10 Dec	3	Scaffolding	
17 Dec	4	Scaffolding	Assignment 1 due by 5pm, Thurs 20 Dec 2007
24 Dec	University closedown no classes		
31 Dec	University closedown no classes		
07 Jan	5	SCT v SLA	
14 Jan	6	Activity theory	
21 Jan	7	Activity theory	
28 Jan	8	Social identity	
04 Feb	9	Social identity	
11 Feb	10	Communities of practice	
	no classes		Assignment 2 due by 5pm, Mon 18 Feb 2008

**Objectives:**

By the end of this course you should:

1. have an understanding of the nature and scope of sociocultural theories of learning;
2. have explored some contributions of sociocultural theories of learning to our understanding of how spoken and written language are used in teaching and learning;
3. appreciate implications for classroom practice with respect to some first and/or second language contexts for the teaching and learning of language; and
4. be able to examine language teaching/learning materials and practices critically in terms of their assumptions about how learning occurs.

**Expected Workload:**

Students are expected to devote on average 12 hours per week to this course in order to maintain satisfactory progress. This includes class contact hours for on-campus students.

**Readings:****Required:**

There is no set textbook for this course.

The required readings will be available to download either from the Blackboard website or from the Library website.

In preparation for each class week you should read the required readings which will be advised on the Blackboard website and in on-campus classes.

You are expected to participate in a critical discussion of the reading material in class (on-campus students) or on Blackboard (distance students). Through your participation in discussion and in activities related to the readings, you will demonstrate your progress towards meeting the course objectives in a broad way, as compared with the in-depth evidence provided by your assignment work.

### **Recommended:**

It is possible to complete the course on the basis of the required readings only. However, as a postgraduate student, you should be extending your reading beyond the required readings. Some books which take sociocultural theory perspectives are listed in the "Extended Reading" section at the end of this course outline. However, much of your extended reading will arise from your own literature searches, particularly for journal articles, and your selection will be guided by your own needs and interests within the framework of the course.

**Materials and equipment:** None.

### **Assessment requirements:**

This course will be examined by in-term assessment. There is no final examination. The final grade will be awarded on the basis of your marks for two assignments, and your contribution in class discussion:

	<b>Due date</b>	<b>Weighting</b>	<b>Required length</b>
Assignment 1	5pm Thursday 20 December 2007	40%	1500-2000 words
Assignment 2	5pm Monday 18 February 2008	50%	2000-2500 words
Contribution to class discussion		10%	

Both assignments address course objectives 1-4, as does the class discussion.

The required length applies to the 'body' of the assignment (excluding list of references and any appendices). Provide a word count of the assignment 'body' on each assignment. Quotations and in-text references are included in the word count of the assignment 'body'.

Details of the two assignments are provided at the end of this course outline.

You should decide for yourself how best to organise and present your work, taking account of section 6.0 on 'Stylistic conventions' in the School's MA Programme Handbook 2007. The MA Programme Handbook 2007 is available from the School office, or you can download it from the School website (<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals>) where you will find it under MA (Applied Linguistics, Linguistics, TESOL).

### **Contribution to class discussion:**

You are expected to contribute to a class discussion through written responses which may be either posted on the Blackboard discussion board or read aloud in on-campus classes. You will gain one mark for each course week in which you make at least one timely, relevant and appropriate written response. Timely means that you read aloud your response in the class meeting for that course week, or that you post it in the Blackboard discussion forum for that course week, preferably in the relevant week, but no later than the end of the following calendar week.

## **Submitting assignments:**

You can submit your assignments in hard copy either by mail or in person to the School office, or by e-mail attachment to [lals-542@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:lals-542@vuw.ac.nz), in which case each assignment should be a single document in either WORD or PDF format. If you submit an assignment in hard copy, just one copy is required. Your assignment will be returned to you with written feedback after the course coordinator has provisionally assessed it. The School will keep a copy of each assignment for use in external and overall assessment of your MA work.

### General guidelines

- Set margins to at least 2.5 cm
- Set line spacing to 1.5
- Set font size of 12 point
- Include page numbers
- Include a title page which shows the course number and name, your name, the course lecturer, the title of the assignment, and the date the assignment is due
- Provide a word count at the end of the assignment (not including the list of references and any appendices)

### Hard copy submissions

- Type on one side of A4 paper
- Staple pages together
- Avoid presenting assignments in bulky folders or sleeves unless necessary
- Avoid inserting individual pages in clearfile sleeves.

## **Penalties:**

Please take careful note of the length requirement for each assignment. If an assignment exceeds the word limit, only the first part of the assignment, from the beginning up to the word limit, will be considered for assessment purposes. It is important both academically and professionally that you be able to explain your ideas concisely and coherently.

## **Mandatory Course Requirements (Terms):**

These are the minimum course requirements which must be satisfied in order to earn the right to be assessed for a final grade. On-campus students are expected to attend all classes and contribute to class activities and discussions. Distance students are expected to contribute to on-line discussion at least once for each 'course week'. All students must submit the two assignments.

## **Communication of additional information:**

Additional information about this course and information about any changes will be announced in class for on-campus students, and posted on the course website in Blackboard for distance students.

## **General University policies and statutes**

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the Victoria University Calendar available in hard copy or under 'About Victoria' on the VUW home page at [www.victoria.ac.nz](http://www.victoria.ac.nz).

## **Student and staff conduct**

The Statute on Student Conduct together with the Policy on Staff Conduct ensure that members of the University community are able to work, learn, study and participate in the academic and social

aspects of the University's life in an atmosphere of safety and respect. The Statute on Student Conduct contains information on what conduct is prohibited and what steps are to be taken if there is a complaint. For information about complaint procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct, contact the Facilitator and Disputes Advisor or refer to the statute on the VUW policy website at:

[www.victoria.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct)

The Policy on Staff Conduct can be found on the VUW website at:

[www.victoria.ac.nz/policy/staffconduct](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/policy/staffconduct)

### **Academic grievances**

If you have any academic problems with your course you should talk to the tutor or lecturer concerned; class representatives may be able to help you in this. If you are not satisfied with the result of that meeting, see the Head of School or the relevant Associate Dean; VUWSA Education Coordinators are available to assist in this process. If, after trying the above channels, you are still unsatisfied, formal grievance procedures can be invoked. These are set out in the Academic Grievance Policy which is published on the VUW website at:

[www.victoria.ac.nz/policy/academicgrievances](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/policy/academicgrievances)

### **Academic integrity and plagiarism**

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means *no cheating*. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. The University defines plagiarism as follows:

*The presentation of the work of another person or other persons as if it were one's own, whether intended or not. This includes published or unpublished work, material on the Internet and the work of other students or staff.*

It is still plagiarism even if you re-structure the material or present it in your own style or words.

*Note: It is however, perfectly acceptable to include the work of others as long as that is acknowledged by appropriate referencing.*

Plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria and is not worth the risk. Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct and may be penalized severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course
- suspension from the course or the University.

Find out more about plagiarism, and how to avoid it, on the University's website:

[www.victoria.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html)

### **Students with Impairments** (see Appendix 3 of the Assessment Handbook)

The University has a policy of reasonable accommodation of the needs of students with disabilities. The policy aims to give students with disabilities the same opportunity as other students to demonstrate their abilities. If you have a disability, impairment or chronic medical condition (temporary, permanent or recurring) that may impact on your ability to participate, learn and/or achieve in lectures and tutorials or in meeting the course requirements, please contact the course coordinator as early in the course as possible. Alternatively, you may wish to approach a Student Adviser from Disability Support Services (DSS) to discuss your individual needs and the available options and support on a confidential basis. DSS are located on Level 1, Robert Stout Building:

Telephone: 463-6070

Email: [disability@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:disability@vuw.ac.nz)

The name of your School's Disability Liaison Person is in the relevant prospectus or can be obtained from the School Office or DSS.

## **Student Support**

Staff at Victoria want students to have positive learning experiences at the University. Each faculty has a designated staff member who can either help you directly if your academic progress is causing you concern, or quickly put you in contact with someone who can. In the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences the support contact is **Dr Allison Kirkman, Murphy Building, room 407** and **Dr Stuart Brock, Murphy Building, room 312**. Assistance for specific groups is also available from the Kaiwawao Maori, Manaaki Pihipihinga or Victoria International.

### ***Manaaki Pihipihinga Programme***

This programme offers:

- Academic mentoring for all Māori & Pacific students at all levels of undergraduate study for the faculties of Commerce & Administration and Humanities & Social sciences. Contact [Manaaki-Pihipihinga-Programme@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Manaaki-Pihipihinga-Programme@vuw.ac.nz) or phone 463 6015 to register for Humanities & Social Science mentoring and 463 8977 to register for mentoring for Commerce and Administration courses
- Post graduate support network for the above faculties, which links students into all of the post grad activities and workshops on campus and networking opportunities
- Pacific Support Coordinator who can assist Pacific students with transitional issues, disseminate useful information and provide any assistance needed to help students achieve. Contact; [Pacific-Support-Coord@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Pacific-Support-Coord@vuw.ac.nz) or phone 463 5842.

Manaaki Pihipihinga is located at: 14 Kelburn Parade, back court yard, Room 109 D (for Humanities mentoring & some first year commerce mentoring) or Room 210 level 2 west wing railway station Pipitea (commerce mentoring space). Māori Studies mentoring is done at the marae.

### ***Student Services***

In addition, the Student Services Group (email: [student-services@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:student-services@vuw.ac.nz)) is available to provide a variety of support and services. Find out more at: [www.victoria.ac.nz/st\\_services/](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/)

VUWSA employs Education Coordinators who deal with academic problems and provide support, advice and advocacy services, as well as organising class representatives and faculty delegates. The Education Office (tel. 463-6983 or 463-6984, email at [education@vuwsa.org.nz](mailto:education@vuwsa.org.nz)) is located on the ground floor, Student Union Building.

## **Assignment details:**

### **Assignment 1**

Assignment 1 is due by 5pm on Thursday 20 December 2007, but you may hand it in before then if you wish. It counts for 40% of the final grade for the course.

Topic: Discuss the concepts "ZPD" and "scaffolding". Relate them to each other and to your own experience(s) of language teaching and/or learning.

#### Guidelines:

- Support your discussion with specific examples from your own experience(s). When you are describing and commenting on your own experience(s), use an "I/me/my" style, rather than a traditional impersonal academic style of writing.
- Give your assignment a title which reflects what you see as the point of your discussion.
- Provide a word count of the body of the assignment (excluding your list of references and any appendices).

#### Criteria for assessment:

- Understanding of theoretical concepts as shown in your discussion.
- Using specific examples to support your discussion.
- Evidence that relevant required and extended reading, appropriately referenced, informs your work.
- Organising and presenting your assignment clearly and coherently.

Length: 1500-2000 words (Note the 'Penalties' statement above re assignment length.)

### **Assignment 2**

Assignment 2 is due by 5pm on Monday 18 February 2008, but you may hand it in before then if you wish. It counts for 50% of the final grade for the course.

Topic: Discuss the concepts "activity theory" and "social identity". Relate them to each other and to your own experience(s) of language teaching and/or learning.

Guidelines and Criteria for assessment: As for Assignment 1.

Length: 2000-2500 words (Note the 'Penalties' statement above re assignment length.)

### Extended Reading:

The books listed here are by no means the only materials you could read, just some possible starting points. However, much of your extended reading will arise from your own literature searches, particularly for journal articles, and your selection will be guided by your own needs and interests within the framework of the course.

Forman, E. A. Minick, N., & Stone, C. A. (eds.) 1993. *Contexts for learning: Sociocultural dynamics in children's development*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Halliday, M. A. K. 1978. *Language as social semiotic: The social interpretation of language and meaning*. London: Edward Arnold.

Kirshner, D., & Whitson, J. (eds.) 1997. *Situated cognition: Social, semiotic, and psychological perspectives*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Kramsch, C. (ed.) 2002. *Language acquisition and language socialization: Ecological perspectives*. London and New York: Continuum.

Lantolf, J. P. (ed.) 2000. *Sociocultural theory and second language learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lantolf, J. P., & Appel, G. (ed.) 1994. *Vygotskian approaches to second language research*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Lantolf, J. P., & Thorne, S. L. 2006. *Sociocultural theory and the genesis of second language development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. 1991. *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lee, C. D., & Smagorinsky, P. (eds.) 2000. *Vygotskian perspectives on literacy research: Constructing meaning through collaborative inquiry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mercer, N. 2000. *Words and minds: How we use language to think together*. London and New York: Routledge.

*Mind, Culture, and Activity*, 1998, 5(2). Special issue: Concepts, contexts, and transformation: Scientific and everyday concepts revisited.

*Modern Language Journal*, 1994, 78(4). Special Issue: Sociocultural theory and second language learning.

Moll, L. C. (ed.) 1990. *Vygotsky and education: Instructional implications and applications of sociohistorical psychology*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Norton, B. 2000. *Identity and language learning: Social processes and educational practice*. New York: Longman.

Rieber, R. W., & Carton, A. S. (eds.) 1987. *The collected works of L. S. Vygotsky. Volume 1: Problems of general psychology*. New York: Plenum Press.

Rogoff, B. 1990. *Apprenticeship in thinking: Cognitive development in social context*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Tharp, R. G., & Gallimore, R. 1988. *Rousing minds to life: Teaching, learning, and schooling in social context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.



- Toohy, K. 2000. *Learning English at school: Identity, social relations and classroom practice*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Van der Veer, R., & Valsiner, J. 1991. *Understanding Vygotsky: A quest for synthesis*. Oxford, Blackwell.
- Van der Veer, R. 1994. *The Vygotsky reader*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Vygotsky, L. S. 1962. *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. 1978. *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wells, G. 1999. *Dialogic inquiry: Towards a sociocultural practice and theory of education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wenger, E. 1998. *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wertsch, J. V. 1991. *Voices of the mind: A sociocultural approach to mediated action*. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Wong, S. 2006. *Dialogic approaches to TESOL: Where the ginkgo tree grows*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.