Communication Disorders in Context: What Do We Know About Aphasia?
Maggie Zhang ('24, Undeclared, zzhang4@haverford.edu)

Description

Communication disorders is an umbrella term for impairments in the ability to receive, send, process, and comprehend concepts or verbal, nonverbal and graphic symbol systems. Symptoms range in severity and thus can be less evident in some cases— in fact, though nearly one in 12 children ages 3-17 in the US has had a disorder related to voice, speech, language, or swallowing in the past 12 months according to a research conducted by National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, public awareness of communication disorders is still low.

This seminar will focus on the study and treatments of speech sciences in a wider social context, including both clinical and non-clinical elements. It offers a comprehensive overview of basic aphasiology and other related topics including but not limited to classification of aphasia and its current issues, apraxia, language processing, bilingualism, aphasia/apraxia treatments and art education. We will also look into the influence of visual art in aphasia treatment, such as the role of art therapy and artistic expressions of people with disabilities.

Proposal of this seminar is inspired by work conducted by multiple student organizations and the Access and Disability Services board with a goal of raising more public awareness on communication disorders and other related impairments in the Haverford community. While at present the College does not offer classes with a communication disorders/speech impairments focus, this seminar aims to provide students with an opportunity to learn about disorders that are less addressed and to develop academic interests in not only speech sciences but also disability studies, art therapies, linguistics, educational studies and cognitive science. By fostering knowledge about these relevant topics, the seminar helps promote this less studied field in our community and provides an ideal archetype of classes with communication sciences and disorders emphasis that should be added to the Bi-College curriculum in the future.

This course should appeal most immediately to students who study psychology, linguistics, neuroscience, biology, health studies, education, and visual studies/fine arts; but given the interdisciplinary nature of its theme, students of different academic backgrounds (such as sociology, philosophy, anthropology, and language studies, etc.)
can also benefit from discussions on different approaches to disability studies from a social science and humanities perspective and the non-clinical side of communication disorders. For example, topics such as consciousness and philosophy of mind will also be included in our discussion.

Seminar Outline

- First meeting: **Introduction + Historical Perspectives**
  - History of brain-language relationships and aphasia study
  - Brain and language
    - Basic brain anatomy ([https://youtu.be/D1zkVBHPh5c](https://youtu.be/D1zkVBHPh5c))
    - A history of speech language pathology ([http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~duchan/new_history/overview.html](http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~duchan/new_history/overview.html))

- Second meeting: **"Neurophilosophy" + Classification of Aphasia**
  - Consciousness and the brain (view before the seminar)
    - "Consciousness and the Brain: John Searle" (2013) 15 min video ([https://youtu.be/j_OPQgPIdKg](https://youtu.be/j_OPQgPIdKg))
  - Philosophy of mind (read before the seminar)
  - Classification of aphasia
  - Current issues

- Third meeting: **Word Recognition, Sentence Processing, and Apraxia of Speech**
  - Word recognition
  - Sentence processing
  - Apraxia
    ➢ "Definitions and Descriptions of Childhood Apraxia of Speech (AOS)" by Mayo Clinic (2015)  
      4 min video (https://youtu.be/KMkgSwHPDt0)

- Fourth meeting: **Aphasia and Bilingualism**
  - **BACKGROUND**

- Documentary
  - "I Speak Identity" (2016) 26 min video (https://youtu.be/qq72I-t204c)

- Fifth meeting: **Visual Art and Aphasia**
  - Art Therapy
  - Disability and art education
    - Disability Arts Online (website) (https://disabilityarts.online/)

**Other Literature**

Websites

- Bilingualism (Linguistic Society of America)
  https://www.linguisticsociety.org/resource/faq-what-bilingualism
- American Art Therapy Association
  https://arttherapy.org/
- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
  https://www.asha.org/
- UT-Dallas Communication Technology Center
  https://ctech.utdallas.edu/projects-overview/real-time-visual-feedback-for-retraining-tongue-movements-for-speech/

Films

- Documentaries
  - *My Beautiful Broken Brain* (2014)
  - *Aphasia Or (It Fell Upon My Mind)* (2018)
  - *I Speak Identity* (2016)

- Drama
  - *Persona* (1966)