Main theme: Predictors of success in foreign language learning

The course has an insight into intricacies of individual variation in second language acquisition. It focuses on various factors related to biology, learners' affect, cognition, and first language background. All these factors have been proved to correlate highly with learners' foreign language success.

The course elucidates the role of age of onset related to critical period hypothesis which may determine FL success, particularly in pronunciation. An insight will be also given into learner’s affective and social factors such as motivation and attitude, willingness to communicate, attributions and locus of control, self-efficacy beliefs, self-esteem and related self-concept, autonomy, coping competence, anxiety and empathy. Finally the role of language aptitude, the use of strategies and linguistic repertoire will be discussed.

Aims:
practical and theoretical preparation to BA thesis writing in the fields of

- Second language acquisition
- TEFL methodology
- Psychology related to L2 teaching

Detailed coverage:

1. The role of age in successful FL learning.
   (the critical period versus sensitive period hypotheses, the younger=the better in the long run, the older=the faster, the effect of age on various language aspects)

2. Affective and social factors.
   (motivation and attitude, willingness to communicate, attributions and locus of control, self-efficacy beliefs, self-esteem and related self-concept, autonomy, coping competence, anxiety, empathy)

3. Language aptitude.
   (ability vs aptitude vs intelligence; MLAT and PLAB tests; multiple intelligences)

4. Learner strategies.
   (various typologies by O'Malley (1985), Rubin (1987) and Oxford (1990), Stern (1992); self-regulated learning)

5. Language repertoire
   (language distance theory, positive and negative transfer, cross-linguistic interference, language identity of multilinguals)

Course type: seminar and conversational class
Examples of research issues investigated in BA thesis:

- **L2 learners' language attainments in various age groups + implications for FL teachers** (e.g. young learners, adolescent learners versus adult learners)
  Examples of BA paper topics
  - "Foreign language active and passive vocabulary acquisition by kindergarten children and middle school youngsters"
  - "Inductive and deductive grammar teaching in adolescent and adult learner groups"
  - "FL pronunciation learning by pre-puberty and post-puberty groups"

- **L2 learners' affective factors and their impact on attainment in various language aspects and skills + implications for FL teachers** (e.g. analysis of personality factors or motivation and their impact on grammar learning or speaking)
  Examples of BA paper topics
  - "Motivational profiles of foreign language learners"
  - "Enhancing motivation by FL teachers in various age groups"
  - "Anxiety and its effect on speaking in L2"
  - "Implications of the attribution theory for foreign language teachers"
  - "Willingness to communicate of L2 learners in various age groups"
  - "L2 learners' attitudes towards learning various English pronunciation models"

- **L2 learners' cognitive predispositions for L2 learning + implications for FL teachers** (e.g. contribution of language aptitude, various intelligence types, and learner strategies to L2 success)
  Examples of BA paper topics
  - "Predicting L2 achievements by language learning aptitude tests"
  - "Gardner's multiple intelligences and FL learning"
  - "Metacognitive strategies and L2 grammar learning"
  - "Mnemonics (memory) techniques and L2 vocabulary learning by adolescent learners"
  - "Communication strategies used by advanced learners of English"

- **Learners' linguistic repertoire (e.g. L1 or L2) and its impact on learning successive languages (L3, L4 etc.)**
  Examples of BA paper topics
  - "Lexical, grammar and pronunciation errors of students learning L2 German and L3 English"
  - "Cross-linguistic interference in Polish students of L2 English and L3 Russian"
  - "Language identity of multilingual speakers of Polish, English, Chinese and Korean"
Bibliography:

1. The role of age in successful FL learning.

2. Affective and social factors.

3. Language aptitude.
4. Learner strategies.


5. Linguistic repertoire
