



LOUISIANA TECH
UNIVERSITY®

College of Liberal Arts
School of Communication
Department of Communication Disorders

Dear Dr. Reis,

Thank you so much for the nomination. I had always thought that I would spend my career as a speech-language pathologist serving in private practice and outpatient rehabilitation. However, life takes many unexpected turns and here I am teaching at my alma mater! I truly love my undergraduate students and, although I never planned on becoming an instructor, it has greatly enriched my life. I have a great love for the field of Speech-Language Pathology and one of my goals is to instill in my students the same passion for our field.

I teach one undergraduate speech pathology course per quarter and serve as a clinical instructor to the first-year students in our graduate program in Speech-Language Pathology. I have taught the same courses for the last fourteen years. I teach 2 sections per quarter of Clinical Practicum and I teach the following courses in our undergraduate curriculum:

SPCH 270 Introduction to Language Development (3 hours)

Enrollment in Fall 2021: 56

Retention Rate: 45

Student Evaluation: 3.9 Instructor rating

Student Comments: “Cheryl Leachman is the teacher to be. She is kind, fair, and always willing to help out her students. Her tests are fair and she is always willing to listen to her students if they need some additional help with topics. There is nothing that I would change.”

“Challenging class but I know it will prepare me for grad school. Thank you, I look forward to being in your future classes.”

SPCH 418 Language Disorders (3 hours)

Enrollment in Winter 2021-22: 33

Retention Rate: 33

Student Evaluation: 3.9 Instructor rating

Student Comments: “Mrs. Leachman is an incredible professor. This will be my third and final quarter to have her, and I will be more than sad once this quarter ends. She is a light even when it can be stressful

and difficult to see the good. She makes herself available to us for advice, help with her class, and so much more. I am thankful for all she has done for me in aiding me through my speech path journey, and I will remember all she has taught me once I get into grad school (God willing!)”

“Mrs. Leachman is a wonderful professor! I enjoyed this class immensely. She gave lots of examples and made the material easy to understand. The only thing I would change is having the dates of exams and projects posted on Moodle. She told us the dates in class but they would often change and I never had anything to refer to to check the dates which was a little stressful.”

SPCH 311 Introduction to Neuroscience (3 hours)

Enrollment Spring, 2022: 44

Retention Rate: 40

Student Evaluations: Spring, 2021 (2022 not completed): 4.0 Instructor rating

Student Comments: (Spring 2021): “I loved this class with Mrs. Leachman! Neuroscience is so amazing and complex but Mrs. Leachman divided it into smaller chunks that we could understand better. She was always willing to explain something again if we were confused and she truly cares about her students. This was one of my favorite classes by far!!”

“Mrs. Leachman brings a level of passion to this course that is contagious. We all had to work very hard which will result in all of us internalizing the subject in a way that really helped us to learn and understand and not just memorize facts. “

Additional student comments from the last 5 years:

I have no complaints about this teacher! She is an all-around excellent teacher who communicates the material in an engaging and easy to understand manner. I feel as though I've learned so much from her and gotten a lot out of the class!

Mrs. Leachman is my absolute favorite teacher. She teaches well, challenges us, and motivates us to be our best.

Love Mrs. Leachman!!! Shows great interest in Neuroscience and is an amazing teacher

This being my first Leachman class, I was terrified. But I have learned so much. Although the tests are very hard and unlike anything I have ever taken in my life, this class as taught me a lot.

Professor Leachman always had such positive energy about the material that was gone over in class. I loved her because if you struggled with any of the material, she would take the time after class to answer any questions you had. She was always there to help. I look forward to taking more of Mrs. Leachman's classes.

Mrs. Leachman is an excellent instructor. She is passionate about us knowing the information for our careers. The tests and projects are all relevant and beneficial to students. I feel confident that this class has benefited me in my pursuit of my degree.

Best professor, best class! Although a difficult class, I have learned how to properly study and succeed

Love, love, LOVE her! Such a great teacher who is really passionate about what she does. She loves all her students and always has a smile on her face

Love Mrs. Leachman!! She explains things so well and is always willing to help in any way possible. Excellent teacher.

Love this instructor and the class. It was so interesting and all the projects helped further my knowledge.

This teacher has the reputation of being a very hard test giver and impossible to pass, so I went into this class super scared. Mrs. Leachman was a very good teacher, and her tests were nowhere near as difficult as I expected. If you are willing to work in the class, then it's a fairly easy class.

I have really enjoyed taking your classes. Your tests have taught me how to study well and I feel like they have prepared me for grad school. I did enjoy the speech analysis project. I thought that it was a fun way to gain some experience with language sampling as well as see another clinician do therapy.

I loved this class. The professor truly cares for her students and she shows it. She is always willing to help and she truly wants us to succeed. I have gained so much knowledge from this class.

Professor Leachman is a wonderful professor. She makes sure to go over the content until we have a clear understanding about it. She makes learning so much fun and very interesting. I have really enjoyed being in her class this quarter and I'm looking forward to taking her again next quarter. I would say she is the best professor that I've ever had.

This is my second class that I've had with Mrs. Leachman. Every class that I have had with her, I have thoroughly enjoyed. She is one of the best professors that I've ever had and really makes learning the material fun. All of the projects that she had us do were a great way to take what we were learning in the class and transfer it to a hands on learning experience. All the exams and projects were appropriate to the course and to our field. I'm excited to have another class with her next quarter.

Mrs. Leachman is the absolute best teacher that I've ever had. This is my third class that I've taken with her and every class I have thoroughly enjoyed. She is the best at organizing her outlines in a way that makes learning the material easy to learn and follow. She is always good at adapting to uncertain changes that happen and rolling with the punches. Since this class was put online, she has continued to offer her great teaching skills in this alternative environment. She has embraced it and the quality of her teaching is equal to the in person atmosphere. This class has really hard subject matter but she does a great job of reiterating what is important to know overall and explaining different in depth. It is a lot of content to go over, and I imagine it would be easier in class but given the current circumstances, she is doing a great job. She always makes learning the information interesting and shows interest in the content she is teaching.

She is the best professor there is. She genuinely cares about her students and their grades. She is there any time we need her and we can always reach out to her for support or advice. I would take every single class with her as the professor if I could. I hate that this is my last class with her that the quarter ended up being online. This is my third class with Mrs. Leachman and I always look forward to seeing her, she truly knows how to turn a bad day into a good one.

Hands down the best professor I have had at Tech. This course was in my opinion one of the easier courses that Mrs. Leachman teaches. I always enjoy going to her classes, even on zoom, because I know she is going to want to be with us and allow us to learn. I am devastated this is my last Leachman course, because she always makes my day better - as a professor and just as a woman of God.

My favorite teacher!! Transitioned very smoothly from in class to online and still made the class fun!

Mrs. Leachman, thank you. In all my time in this major, you and your classes have honestly been the only classes in the Speech Dept. that have made me feel welcome, excited about the coursework, and that I'm

actually learning something. You stimulate excitement about the material, and you go out of your way to make the classroom experience personal, even on ZOOM, and I appreciate that more than I can express in a course evaluation. You present difficult material in a way that is easy to follow, then further expand upon it, which really helps student success. There's never been a moment in this or any of your classes that you've felt unapproachable or negative, and that's reflected in my success in your classes vs others; I actually learn in your classes. The whole dept. should be taking pages from your book, because you have mastered exactly what to do for student success. Thanks again :)

Personal Statement

I believe that my responsibility as an instructor at Louisiana Tech is to shape future professionals in the field of Speech-Language Pathology. I feel that it is my responsibility to provide my students with a strong foundation of knowledge and understanding of the content in the subject areas that I teach. It has also always been my belief that these students are paying for an education and deserve instructors who are committed to excellence. Every student, no matter their race, personality, gender or position in life, deserves to be treated fairly. The grade they receive should be the grade they earn. However, when additional help is truly needed, help should be given. In many cases, the struggling student may just need a listening ear and some additional instruction. However, they must also be held accountable to do their "best". They need to understand that their "best" may not always be an "A", but if they have worked hard to learn and understand, they have been successful. As I stated earlier, I have taught for fourteen years. In the last five years, I have seen a shift in the type of students I teach. They are often more concerned about grades and less concerned about learning. I continue to try to teach that if they will put their energy into studying to learn the concepts, the good grades will follow. I also try to communicate unconditional acceptance of them as individuals. I want them to understand that their value as people is not determined by a grade.

I try to reach both the auditory and the visual learner through my teaching, relating as many stories and examples from my clinical practice as possible. Since our undergraduates do not have the opportunity to participate in intervention with clients from our speech and hearing clinic, the stories and examples help them better understand course content. I also believe that, from the time they first walk into my class; professionalism and collegiality should not only be modeled, but also expected. I will always be truthful with students, even when the truth is difficult to hear, because they must learn that hard work and the pursuit of excellence is vital to our profession and to our society.

Innovations in Teaching

My teaching style is lecture in combination with videos, TED talks, in-class projects, and reading assignments. I also assign projects to be completed outside of class that provide application of information taught during lectures. In the Fall quarter, 2022, I will be implementing a program called *Packback*, which is a program designed to increase student engagement, critical thinking skills and the student's ability to ask thought-provoking questions concerning assigned topics. It is a discussion forum format in which the students are given a curiosity score when they respond to question prompts. It is also designed to improve their ability to formulate organized, well-written responses by giving feedback concerning grammatical construction.

I have observed that in the last five years, my students' desire to be fully engaged in class discussions has decreased as well as their ability to formulate well organized, cohesive responses to exam discussion questions. I am hoping to stimulate thought concerning topics previously presented during class and improve their writing abilities using this program.

Professional Memberships and Service

I am a member of the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA), through which I maintain a Certification of Clinical Competency. I maintain my licensure through the Louisiana Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology.

I am currently serving as chairman of the Social and Awards Committee in the Department of Communication Disorders. I organize the annual graduate school open house for undergraduate students who are applying to our graduate program in Speech-Language Pathology and organize nominations for various departmental awards. I am also in charge of our annual Pinning Ceremony for our students who have successfully completed our graduate program.

I also serve as the faculty advisor for the Tech chapter of the National Student Speech, Language, Hearing Association (NSSLHA). This is our professional service organization which participates in various community and Tech events. This organization gives our undergraduate students exposure to our field through attending meetings with guest speakers and organizing our annual May picnic for the patrons of the Louisiana Tech Speech and Hearing Center.

In the last five years, I have also served as chair of the Retention and Recruitment committee and have served on the Graduate Faculty Committee, and the Undergraduate Self-study Committee.

I am also involved in the Ruston community through my service at First Baptist Ruston.

Cheryl Leachman, M.A., CCC-SLP
Instructor
Department of Communication Disorders