**Outlines** *(by Prof. Don Snow, Language and Culture Center, Duke Kunshan University)*

**Why write an outline?**

* Helps you plan a paper – allows you to organize your ideas before you write.
* Gives you a roadmap to follow when you write – especially longer papers.
* Can also be a good way to find the main ideas in a text you are studying.

**What does an outline look like?** Here is a short sample….

1. Dual process views of thinking - Many psychologists take a “dual process” view of thinking – think that there are two basic ways we think.
   1. System 1 = “fast thinking”
      1. It is quite automatic.
         1. Kahneman 2001:20 21: “System 1 operates automatically and quickly, with little or no effort and no sense of voluntary control.”
         2. Wilson 2002:6 “The mind operates most efficiently by relegating a good deal of high-level sophisticated thinking to the unconscious, just as a modern jumbo jetliner is able to fly on automatic pilot with little or no input from the human, ‘conscious’ pilot.”
      2. It is usually fairly accurate.
         1. This is because it draws on past experience.
         2. Wilson 2002:31 “Quite often, the adaptive unconscious does a reasonably accurate job of interpreting other people’s behavior.”
      3. But is can also cause problems in intercultural communication…

**What are the various levels for?**

1. (A main section of your paper.)
   1. (A main point in the section.)
      1. (A sub-point explaining or supporting the main point it is under.)
         1. (Details, examples, etc.)

**Tips on making outlines?**

* Use points, not just topics.
  + A point is usually topic + what you want to say about it.
  + A point is usually just a phrase or a sentence, not several sentences.
* Put points of the same kind/importance at the same level.
* Everything under a point should relate directly to that point.
  + Each point listed under a certain section should relate to that section.
  + Each sub-point under a main point should support that point. And so forth.
* At each level, usually only write a sentence or a phrase – not a whole paragraph.
  + Write enough that someone else could easily follow your train of thought by reading the outline, but not so much that your main ideas are hard to find
  + Sometimes you might want to include longer quotations.

**How do I make an outline on the computer (Word)?**

* On the Toolbar, look for “Multilevel List.”
* Choose an option that looks (more or less) like the outline above.
* To move to higher or lower levels, use the “Decrease Indent” or “Increase Indent” buttons on the Toolbar (right next to Multilevel List).