LINGUISTICS (LING)

LING 103a / NELC 103a, Language Contact in the Ancient World  Chelsea Sanker
What were people using in our earliest written records? How were they written? What were people talking about in these texts? This course examines the languages of the ancient Near East and other civilizations that they interacted with, from Greece to Egypt. Language contact is reflected both in ancient people’s discussion of languages and use of translations, as well as in loanwords and other influences of languages on each other. Based on the written records, we also have information about other languages that were never written down, through names and other borrowed words. From the earliest tokens tracking trade commodities to epic poetry, these written records give us insights into the lives of people in the ancient world: The complaints of scribes in training, correspondences between kings, and dedications to gods.  

LING 104a, Language: Introduction to Linguistics  Claire Bowern
This is a course about language as a window into the human mind and language as glue in human society. Nature, nurture, or both? Linguistics is a science that addresses this puzzle for human language. Language is one of the most complex of human behaviors, but it comes to us without effort. Language is common to all societies and is typically acquired without explicit instruction. Human languages vary within highly specific parameters. The conventions of speech communities exhibit variation and change over time within the confines of universal grammar, part of our biological endowment. The properties of universal grammar are discovered through the careful study of the structures of individual languages and comparison across languages. This course introduces analytical methods that are used to understand this fundamental aspect of human knowledge. In this introductory course students learn about the principles that underlie all human languages, and what makes language special. We study language sounds, how words are formed, how humans compute meaning, as well as language in society, language change, and linguistic diversity.  

LING 112b, Historical Linguistics  Chelsea Sanker
Introduction to language change and language history. Types of change that a language undergoes over time: sound change, analogy, syntactic and semantic change, borrowing. Techniques for recovering earlier linguistic stages: philology, internal reconstruction, the comparative method. The role of language contact in language change. Evidence from language in prehistory.  

* LING 115a / SKRT 110a, Introductory Sanskrit I  Aleksandar Uskokov
An introduction to Sanskrit language and grammar. Focus on learning to read and translate basic Sanskrit sentences in Devanagari script. No prior background in Sanskrit assumed.  

LING 116b / CGSC 216b / PSYC 116b, Cognitive Science of Language  Robert Frank
The study of language from the perspective of cognitive science. Exploration of mental structures that underlie the human ability to learn and process language, drawing on studies of normal and atypical language development and processing, brain imaging, neuropsychology, and computational modeling. Innate linguistic structure vs. determination by experience and culture; the relation between linguistic and nonlinguistic cognition in the domains of decision making, social cognition, and musical cognition; the degree to which language shapes perceptions of color, number, space, and gender.  

LING 117a / ER&M 117a, Language in America
This course examines the linguistic landscape of the USA. Covering Indigenous, immigrant, and colonial languages, with a focus on contemporary issues of language and politics, race and ethnicity, discrimination, and reclamation. Language variation, including varieties of English (regional varieties, African American Language), and ideologies around language use (such as ‘English only’ movements).  

LING 125b / SKRT 130b, Introductory Sanskrit II  Aleksandar Uskokov
Continuation of SKRT 110. Focus on the basics of Sanskrit grammar; readings from classical Sanskrit texts written in Devanagari script. After SKRT 110.  

LING 138a / SKRT 130a, Intermediate Sanskrit I  Aleksandar Uskokov
The first half of a two-term sequence aimed at helping students develop the skills necessary to read texts written in Sanskrit. Readings include selections from the Hitopadesa, Kathasaritasagara, Mahabharata, and Bhagavadgita. After SKRT 120 or equivalent.  

LING 148b / SKRT 140b, Intermediate Sanskrit II  Aleksandar Uskokov
Continuation of SKRT 130, focusing on Sanskrit literature from the kavya genre. Readings include selections from the Jatakamala of Aryasura and the opening verses of Kalidasa’s Kumarasambhava. After SKRT 130 or equivalent.  

* LING 150a / ENGL 150a, Old English  Emily Thornbury
An introduction to the language, literature, and culture of earliest England. A selection of prose and verse, including riddles, heroic poetry, meditations on loss, a dream vision, and excerpts from Beowulf, which are read in the original Old English.  

* LING 164b / GMAN 164b, The History of the German Language  Theresa Schenker
Introduction to important historical and cultural developments in the German language through exemplary literary and cultural texts and objects. Students gain insight into early development of German language from Old High German to Middle High German and to Early New and New High German. Major literary works from each epoch are examined from the perspective of their use of language. Students also explore cultural and historical contexts which led to linguistic changes. Prerequisite: successful completion of L4 German.
LING 165b / HEBR 165b / JDST 405b / MMES 162b, Languages in Dialogue: Hebrew and Arabic  
Dina Roginsky
Hebrew and Arabic are closely related as sister Semitic languages. They have a great degree of grammatical, morphological, and lexical similarity. Historically, Hebrew and Arabic have been in cultural contact, especially in medieval Spain, the Middle East, and North Africa – as evidenced by the Judeo-Arabic languages. In modern Israel, Arabic is the native tongue of about 20% of its population, yet lack of communication exists today between Hebrew speakers and Arabic speakers for mainly political reasons. This L5 advanced Hebrew class explores cultural and linguistic contacts between the two languages and relationships between the communities, including both Jewish and non-Jewish Arabic speakers and Hebrew speakers. Additionally, students benefit from regular meetings with a parallel L5 Arabic class which discusses similar topics. The shared meetings enable Hebrew learners and Arabic learners to participate together in one class, to promote social interaction based on mutual respect and to focus on cultural and linguistic aspects of the material. L4 Hebrew or equivalent (placement test).  L5 RP

LING 217a / EDST 237a / PSYC 317a, Language and Mind  
Maria Pinango
The structure of linguistic knowledge and how it is used during communication. The principles that guide the acquisition of this system by children learning their first language, by children learning language in unusual circumstances (heritage speakers, sign languages) and adults learning a second language, bilingual speakers. The processing of language in real-time. Psychological traits that impact language learning and language use. SO RP

LING 220b / PSYC 318b, General Phonetics
Investigation of possible ways to describe the speech sounds of human languages. Acoustics and physiology of speech; computer synthesis of speech; practical exercises in producing and transcribing sounds. SO

LING 227b / PSYC 327b, Language and Computation I  
Robert Frank
Design and analysis of computational models of language. Topics include finite state tools, computational morphology and phonology, grammar and parsing, lexical semantics, and the use of linguistic models in applied problems. Prerequisite: prior programming experience or permission of instructor. QB, SO

* LING 232b, Phonology I
Why do languages sound distinct from one another? Partly it is because different languages use different sets of sounds (in spoken languages) or signs (in signed languages) from one another. But it is also because those sounds and signs have different distributional patterns in each language. Phonology is the study of the systematic organization and patterning of sounds and signs. Students learn to describe the production of sounds and signs (articulatory phonetics), discuss restrictions on sound and sign distribution (morphemic alternation, phonotactics), and develop a model of the phonological grammar in terms of rules and representations. Throughout the course, we utilize datasets taken from a variety of the world’s languages. SO

* LING 234a, Quantitative Linguistics  
Chelsea Sanker
This course introduces statistical methods in linguistics, which are an increasingly integral part of linguistic research. The course provides students with the skills necessary to organize, analyze, and visualize linguistic data using R, and explains the concepts underlying these methods, which set a foundation that positions students to also identify and apply new quantitative methods, beyond the ones covered in this course, in their future projects. Course concepts are framed around existing linguistic research, to help students design future research projects and critically evaluate academic literature. Assignments and in-class activities involve a combination of hands-on practice with quantitative tools and discussion of analyses used in published academic work. The course also include brief overviews of linguistic topics as a foundation for discussing the statistical methods used to investigate them. QB, SO

* LING 241b, Field Methods  
Chelsea Sanker
Principles of phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics applied to the collection and interpretation of novel linguistic data. Data are collected and analyzed by the class as a group, working directly with a speaker of a relatively undocumented language. Open to majors and graduate students in Linguistics, and to others with permission of instructor. Students should have taken LING 232 or LING 220 and one other linguistics class. SO

LING 253a, Syntax I  
Raffaella Zanuttini
If you knew all the words of a language, would you be able to speak that language? No, because you’d still need to know how to put the words together to form all and only the grammatical sentences of that language. This course focuses on the principles of our mental grammar that determine how words are put together to form sentences. Some of these principles are shared by all languages, some differ from language to language. The interplay of the principles that are shared and those that are distinct allows us to understand how languages can be very similar and yet also very different at the same time. This course is mainly an introduction to syntactic theory: it introduces the questions that the field asks, the methodology it employs, some of the main generalizations that have been drawn and results that have been achieved. Secondarily, this course is also an introduction to scientific theorizing: what it means to construct a scientific theory, how to test it, and how to choose among competing theories. SO

LING 254b, Syntax II  
Jim Wood
This course continues the development of the “principles and parameters” approach to grammatical theory in Government-Binding theory and the Minimalist Program. We begin with a brief review of the architecture of syntactic theory, move on to an extended exploration of the mechanisms of dependency formation in syntax (including displacement, agreement, control, scope and anaphora), and conclude with a discussion of the nature of syntactic representation (constituency in double object constructions, the mapping between structure and thematic relations, the role of functional categories). Throughout, a major goal of the course is to engage in
foundational issues by reading primary literature in syntax and applying theoretical concepts to novel data. Prerequisite: LING 253.

LING 263a, Semantics I  Veneeta Dayal
Introduction to truth-conditional compositional semantics. Set theory, first- and higher-order logic, and the lambda calculus as they relate to the study of natural language meaning. Some attention to analyzing the meanings of tense/aspect markers, adverbs, and modals.

LING 264b, Semantics II  Veneeta Dayal
The model-theoretic approach to semantics and its treatment of core linguistic phenomena. Topics include quantification; tense, aspect, and modality; context and interpretation; and the semantics-pragmatics interface. Prerequisite: LING 263 or permission of instructor.

LING 271a / PHIL 271a, Philosophy of Language  Zoltan Szabo
An introduction to contemporary philosophy of language, organized around four broad topics: meaning, reference, context, and communication. Introduction to the use of logical notation.

LING 280a, Morphology  Jim Wood
The theory of word structure within a formal grammar. Relation to other areas of grammar (syntax, phonology); basic units of word structure; types of morphology (inflection, derivation, compounding). Prerequisites: LING 232 and 253, or permission of instructor.

LING 300a / CGSC 300a / LING 700a / PSYC 309 / PSYC 332a / PSYC 632a, The Cognitive Science of Sign Languages  Maria Pinango and Muye Zhang
Natural sign languages like American Sign Language have all the structure and complexity of spoken languages. They are learned and processed like spoken languages, and activate neural structures that maximally overlap with those activated by spoken languages. These findings have not only had important implications for the sociopolitical status of Deaf people, as a native, American minority community but also have caused linguists and psychologists to re-evaluate their most fundamental theories of language representation and processing in the mind and brain. The course introduces you to the analysis of sign languages at different levels of linguistic structure and related aspects of cognition in the visual modality. The primary goal is to encourage you to think about what sign languages can and must inform your linguistic theories (linguistics), models of language and cognition (psychology), and technological applications of language processing (computer science/artificial intelligence). We also consider the ways in which signing communities/Deaf culture interact with the hearing world often as marginalized minority groups and reflect upon access to language and information as a basic human right. Some background in linguistic structure, cognitive science, any signed language, or permission of the instructor is preferred.

LING 326b / LING 726b, Language Change Practicum  Veneeta Dayal and Joshua Phillips
Advanced work in language change focusing on practical application of methods in historical linguistics. The class gives students practice in research methods related to studying language change. Exact topics vary from year to year but could include phylogenetic analysis, methods in language and ecology, and historical reconstruction and language reclamation. An emphasis is placed on collaborative work which may result in academic publications. Prerequisite: LING 212 or equivalent or permission of instructor.

LING 341a, Phonology at the Interfaces: Contrast Dispersion
This course explores how languages of the world structure contrasts in sound systems through a property known as contrast dispersion. We analyze contrast dispersion from a variety of different perspectives (for example, phonetic, phonological, diachronic, etc.). Students explore different ways the contrast dispersion has been defined over time, alternative theoretical approaches to contrast dispersion, and how scholars have formally modeled phenomena involving contrast dispersion.

LING 349b, Topics in Phonology: The Phonetics-Phonology Interface  Veneeta Dayal and Christopher Geissler
The relationship between phonology, as the mental representation of speech, and phonetics, as the physical substance of speech. Universal and language-particular phonetics; phonetic knowledge as grammatical knowledge; phonetic detail in phonological representation and computation; unified vs. modular conceptions of the phonetics-phonology divide; the shaping of phonological systems by phonetic pressures; the shaping of phonetic patterning by phonological structure.

LING 370b / PHIL 445b, Implicature and Pragmatic Theory  Laurence Horn
This seminar explores theoretical and experimental approaches to conversational and conventional implicature. We examine the role that pragmatic inference plays in the determination of what is said and of truth-conditional content in neo-Gricean pragmatics and relevance theory as well as considering arguments for and against the grammatical view of scalar implicature. Our investigations draw on evidence from linguistic diagnostics, corpora, and a range of experimental studies on the acquisition, processing, and patterning of scalar implicature, negative strengthening, and exhaustivity in focus constructions. Finally, we review current work on the effects of discourse context, politeness considerations, and lexical semantics in constraining when and how pragmatic inferences are drawn. Prerequisite: At least one course in semantics, pragmatics, or philosophy of language; or permission of instructor.

LING 378b, The Syntax of Speech Participants  Raffaella Zanuttini
This course focuses on grammatical elements that make salient the role of speaker and addressee: markers of politeness; pronouns that express the familiar and polite distinction; vocatives; as well as “presentatives,” including sentences whose function is to bring something to the attention of the addressee. On the empirical side, we discover, describe, and compare elements that convey information about
the addressee, the speaker, or the speaker-addressee relation. On the theoretical side, we ask which aspects of the information that they convey should be encoded in the syntax, if any, and how it should be encoded. Prerequisite: LING 253, or permission of instructor.

* LING 396a / LING 796a, Semantic Investigations in an Unfamiliar Language  Veneeta Dayal
This course introduces students to semantic fieldwork. It chooses a language that is likely not known to any student in the class and has no substantive semantic literature. Students are introduced to a phenomenon in the language on which there is some syntactic literature, either in that language or in one or more related language. This provides a starting point for students to articulate questions to investigate that are primarily semantic nature. Working with a native speaker consultant, students elicit data that answer these initial questions but very likely lead to further questions to investigate. To keep the elicitation focused, these investigations are restricted to topics related to the primary phenomenon discussed, while allowing some margin for individual interests. In addition to the syntactic and semantic literature on the chosen topic or topics, students also read material on fieldwork methodologies for linguistics generally as well as those specifically for semantics. Students work in small groups to fulfill part of the requirements. Prerequisites: LING 253, LING 263 or permission of the instructor

* LING 490a / PSYC 372a, Research Methods in Linguistics  Raffaella Zanuttini
Development of skills in linguistics research, writing, and presentation. Choosing a research area, identifying good research questions, developing hypotheses, and presenting ideas clearly and effectively, both orally and in writing; methodological issues; the balance between building on existing literature and making a novel contribution. Prepares for the writing of the senior essay.

* LING 491b, The Senior Essay  Jim Wood
Research and writing of the senior essay under the guidance of a faculty adviser. Students present research related to their essays in a weekly colloquium. Prerequisite: LING 490.