Linguistics (LING)

* LING 033a / ENGL 033a, Words, Words, Words: The Structure and History of English Words  Peter Grund

Meggings. Perpendicular. Up. Ain’t. Eerily. Bae. The. These are all words in the English language, but, like all words, they have different meanings, functions, and social purposes; indeed, the meaning and function may be different for the same word depending on the context in which we use it (whether spoken or written). In this course, we explore the wonderful world of words. We look at how we create new words (and why), how we change the meaning of words, and how words have been lost (and revived) over time. As we do so, we look at debates over words and their meanings now (such as the feeling by some that ain’t is not a word at all) and historically (such as the distaste for subpeditals for ‘shoes’ in the sixteenth century), and how words can be manipulated to insult, hurt, and discriminate against others. We look at a wide range of texts by well-known authors (such as Shakespeare) as well as anonymous online bloggers, and we make use of online tools like the Google Ngram viewer and the Corpus of Historical American English to see how words change over time. At the end of the course, I hope you see how we make sophisticated use of words and how studying them opens up new ways for you to understand why other people use words the way they do and how you can use words for various purposes in your own speech and writing. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program.  HU

* LING 106b, Illusions of Language  Staff

Introduction to linguistics, with special emphasis on sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics. Study of grammatical illusions: expressions the parser mistakenly accepts as grammatical despite making little sense and grammatical sentences which the parser has difficulty processing. Emphasis also on illusions and misconceptions about language, such as the belief that women speak more than men, that “vocal fry” can harm your voice, and that double negation is illogical.  SO

* LING 107b / ER&M 207b, Linguistic Diversity & Endangerment  Josh Phillips

“How many languages are there in the world?” — what does this question even mean? What would a satisfying answer look like? This class comprises a geographical and historical survey of the world’s languages and attends to how languages can differ from one another. According to UNESCO, more than half of world languages (virtually all of which are spoken by indigenous communities) will have gone extinct by the end of the century. We interrogate notions like language endangerment, shift and death, and we consider the threats that these pose to global linguistic diversity. There is a striking correlation between the geographic distribution of linguistic and biological diversity, although proportionally, far more languages are endangered than biological species; the question of how (and why? and whether?) to respond to that situation is a matter of serious import for the 21st Century. This course surveys the various ways in which the world’s linguistic diversity and language ecologies can be assessed — and discusses the serious threats to that diversity, why this might be a matter of concern, and the principle of linguistic human rights. Students have the opportunity to investigate a minority language in some depth and report on its status with respect to the range of issues discussed in class.
LING 109b / ENGL 149b, History of the English Language  Peter Grund
The evolution of English from its beginnings nearly 1500 years ago to the language of Beowulf, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Jane Austen, Melville, Twain, Langston Hughes, Bernie Sanders, Maya Angelou, and Cardi B. An overview of the 'Englishes' that populate our globe, including a look at the ways that technology affects language.

LING 110a, Language: Introduction to Linguistics  Jason Shaw
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.

LING 112b, Historical Linguistics  Claire Bowern
Introduction to language change and language history. How do people use language, and how does that lead to language change 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 (doing archaeology with language).

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 119a, How to Create a Language: Constructed Language and Natural Language
Staff
This course explores how languages get invented, drawing inspiration both from well-known constructed/invented languages like Klingon, Dothraki, and Esperanto, as well as from natural languages. Students learn about the primary linguistic aspects
of natural language—Phonetics, Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, and Semantics—and learn how those aspects of grammar are used in various constructed languages. Students, working in small groups, create and describe a new language (or at least a fragment of a new language) over the course of the semester, using the principles learned in class.

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, Kathasaritsagara, Mahabharata, and Bhagavadgita. After SKRT 120 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 200a, Experimentation in Linguistics  Maria Pinango
Principles and techniques of experimental design and research in linguistics. Linguistic theory as the basis for framing experimental questions. The development of theoretically informed hypotheses, notions of control and confounds, human subject research, statistical analysis, data reporting, and dissemination. Prerequisite: LING 110, 117, 220, CGSC 110, or PSYC 110, or permission of instructor.

* LING 211b, Grammatical Diversity in U.S. English  Raffaella Zanuttini
Language as a system of mental rules, governing the sound, form, and meaning system. The (impossible) distinction between language and dialect. The scientific study of standard and non-standard varieties. Social attitudes toward prestige and other varieties; linguistic prejudice. Focus on morpho-syntactic variation in North-American English: alternative passives (“The car needs washed”), personal datives (“I need me a new printer”), negative inversion (“Don’t nobody want to ride the bus”), "drama SO" (“I am SO not going to study tonight”).

* LING 212a, Linguistic Change  Claire Bowern
How languages change, how we study change, and how language relates to other areas of society. This seminar is taught through readings chosen by instructor and students, on topics of interest. Prerequisite: LING 112 or equivalent.

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.

LING 220a / PSYC 318a, Phonetics I  Jason Shaw
Each spoken language composes words using a relatively small number of speech sounds, a subset of the much larger set of possible human speech sounds. This course introduces tools to describe the complete set of speech sounds found in the world’s spoken languages. It covers the articulatory organs involved in speech production and the acoustic structure of the resulting sounds. Students learn how to transcribe sounds using the International Phonetic Alphabet, including different varieties of English and
languages around the world. The course also introduces sociophonetics, how variation in sound patterns can convey social meaning within a community, speech perception, and sound change.

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.  QR, SO

LING 231b / PSYC 331b, Neurolinguistics  Maria Pinango
The study of language as a cognitive neuroscience. The interaction between linguistic theory and neurological evidence from brain damage, degenerative diseases (e.g., Alzheimer’s disease), mental illness (e.g., schizophrenia), neuroimaging, and neurophysiology. The connection of language as a neurocognitive system to other systems such as memory and music. At least one class that introduces students to linguistic theory and linguistic argumentation from at least one perspective, including any of the following: (1) LING 217 Language and Mind, (2) LING 110 Intro to linguistics, (3) LING 253 Syntax 1, (4) LING 112 Historical Linguistics, (5) LING 232 Phonology 1, (6) LING 220 General Phonetics, or (7) Instructor permission.  SC, SO

* LING 232b, Phonology I  Natalie Weber
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 235a, Phonology II  Natalie Weber
Topics in the architecture of a theory of sound structure. Motivations for replacing a system of ordered rules with a system of ranked constraints. Optimality theory: universals, violability, constraint types and their interactions. Interaction of phonology and morphology, as well as the relationship of phonological theory to language acquisition and learnability. Opacity, lexical phonology, and serial versions of optimality theory. Prerequisite: LING 232 or permission of instructor.  SO, RP

LING 239b / CGSC 239b / PSYC 239b, Phonetics II: Speech Production and Perception  Jason Shaw
This course introduces theoretical tools for explaining physical aspects of speech, including speech articulation, acoustics, audition, and perception. Acoustic properties of speech sounds are derived from first principles, following acoustic theories of speech production. The course covers articulatory kinematics alongside contemporary theories of motor coordination and speech planning. Audition and speech perception are introduced in the context of signal processing and statistical tools for mapping the continuous phonetic signal to phonological representations. These topics are pursued in the context of speech examples from a wide range of natural languages, preparing
students to engage with primary literature in the field of phonetics. Prerequisites: LING 110, 116, 217, or 220. QR, SO

* LING 241b, Field Methods  Natalie Weber
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. Discussion of ethics, linguistic diversity, and endangerment, 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.

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.

LING 254b, Syntax II  Suzana Fong
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 261a, Current Trends in Syntax: Agree  Suzana Fong
Syntactic features like gender, number, and person can be expressed in more than one node in a syntactic structure. One example is subject–verb agreement (for example, Sabbı had/*have bought a car), where the fact that the subject is 3rd person singular is registered on the verb. In contemporary grammatical theory, the operation agreement phenomena like this is attributed to is called Agree. Beyond agreement, Agree is taken to be an operation that establishes a dependency between different points of a syntactic representation at a distance—that is, Agree can connect non-adjacent elements. This course is an investigation of this fundamental operation. We address questions such as the following: How far away can the elements connected via the operation Agree be? What are the structural conditions that must be met in order for Agree to apply? What is the motivation of this operation? Why would the faculty of language have such an operation? What are the morphological reflexes of Agree? How can languages
be organized in a typology, based on their agreement patterns? Examining Agree
also allows us to delve into the rich set of phenomena that underpin this operation.
Prerequisite: LING 253 equivalent experience.

**LING 263a, Semantics I**  Veneta 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**  Staff
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 280a, Morphology**  Suzana Fong
What is a word? Do the things we put spaces around when we write correspond to
anything in our mental grammars? How does morphology relate to phonology, and to
other areas of grammar, such as syntax and semantics? To what extent do the principles
governing the structures and forms of words need to be boxed off from other areas
of grammar, and to what extent are they symptomatic of deeper principles which
hold of the language faculty as a whole? This course aims to answer these and other
questions by examining morphological phenomena from across the world's languages,
including English and languages which are (at least superficially) very different from it
Prerequisites: LING 232 (Phonology I) and 253 (Syntax I), or permission of instructor.

**LING 328b, Laboratory Phonology**  Jason Shaw
Experimentation has emerged as an important methodology for studying phonological
knowledge, the mental representation of sound patterns in language. This seminar
style course discusses current approaches to analyzing sound patterns of diverse
languages using experimental data. We read seminal and recent papers developing
methods for relating phonological form, including syllable structure, phonotactics,
alternations, stress, and intonation, to its expression in articulatory and acoustic
phonetics. Prerequisite: LING 235 or LING 220, or LING 238.

**LING 333a, Bridges between Formal Semantics and Historical Linguistics**  Elitzur
Bar-Asher
The course seeks to bring together two sub-disciplines within linguistics: historical
linguistics and formal semantics. Both of these sub-disciplines have evolved from
distant intellectual fields: the first comes from the philological world, while the
second has its origins in the world of mathematical logic. Recently, there has been
a rapprochement between these fields dealing mostly with the study of changes of
meaning, grammaticalization and reanalysis. This course aims to examine the research
paradigms that attempt to integrate them and explore new methodologies for building
bridges between them. Prerequisite: Any introductory linguistics class.

**LING 343a, Topics in Phonology: Models of Phonological Variation**  Natalie Weber
Exploration of variable phonological phenomena and how they are best modeled, both
within and across lexical items. Topics include gradient phonotactic knowledge and
the nature of phonological grammar as well as the larger cognitive system in which it is situated. LING 235 (Phonological Theory) or permission of instructor.  

* LING 350a, Topics in Language Documentation: Technology  Claire Bowern and Patrick Hall  

Using technology to support documentation for low-resource languages. Overview of linguistic diversity; techniques for language documentation; metadata; practical exercises in using javascript to create materials for analysis. Permission of instructor is required.

* LING 375b / CGSC 375b / PSYC 375b, Linguistic Meaning and Conceptual Structure  

The meaning of a word or sentence is something in the human mind that has specific properties: it can be expressed (written/signed/spoken forms); it can be combined with other meanings; its expression is not language dependent; it connects with the world; it serves as a vehicle for inference; and it is hidden from awareness. The course explores these properties in some detail and, in the process, provides the students with technical vocabulary and analytical tools to further investigate them. The course is thus intended for those students interested in undertaking a research project on the structure of meaning. the nature of lexico-conceptual structure, that is, the structure of concepts which we refer to as “word meanings”, and how they may be combined through linguistic and non-linguistic means. Its ultimate objective is to bridge models of conceptual structure and models of linguistic semantic composition, identify their respective strengths and weaknesses and explore some of the fundamental questions that any theory of linguistic meaning composition must answer. Evidence discussed will emerge from naturalistic, introspectional, and experimental methodologies. Prerequisites: LING 110, CGSC 110, LING 217, or LING 263.

* LING 376b / 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 383b / CGSC 383, Causative Constructions  Elitzur Bar-Asher  

Causation stands at the heart of all sciences, and as such, philosophers, linguists, and cognitive scientists explore the exact nature of this concept as they seek to understand how causal structures are represented in the human cognitive systems. This course aims to understand what causative constructions are, what they assert, what they presupposed and to what extent they differ one from the other. In addition, it explores how the semantics of these linguistic expressions are related to the way we model our causal knowledge of the world. In this context we explore the uniqueness of the linguistic inquiry about causation and how it corresponds with studies on causation in
philosophy and in cognitive sciences. Prerequisite: Any linguistics class or instructor permission.  

* LING 392a / LING 792a, From Morpho-Syntax to Meaning: Definiteness, Indefiniteness, Genericity  Veneeta Dayal
This course explores how individual languages encode the notions of definiteness, indefiniteness and genericity, and whether it is possible to predict such meanings when overt morpho-syntactic cues are absent. Languages with and without definite/indefinite articles provide critical test cases. Students read primary semantic literature on each of these three topics to get a solid grounding in the theoretical issues surrounding them. They also evaluate how empirical discoveries from different languages have shaped our understanding of the connection between morpho-syntax and semantics. The broader question considered here is the possibility of a restrictive theory of cross-linguistic variation in the interpretation of nominals. Prerequisite: LING 263 or permission of instructor.  

* LING 394b / LING 794b, Asserting, Asking, Answering  Staff
This course introduces students to some of the current debates in the literature on questions. It articulates the relationship between declarative/interrogative structures and the speech acts of asserting and asking. It also probes the status of an assertion as an answer to a question. Some of the main approaches to the semantics of questions are introduced, with special attention on linguistic phenomena. These include pair-list answers, quantificational variability effects, scope marking, alternative questions and polar question particles. The left periphery of interrogative clauses is explored by studying the behavior of interrogatives under different embedding predicates, and by locating the points at which direct question intonation and pragmatic bias in questioning can enter the derivation. Prerequisite: LING 263 or permission of instructor.  

* LING 490a, 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 491a or b, The Senior Essay  Staff
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.