Linguistics

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Linguistics is the scientific study of language. The major in Linguistics offers a program of study leading toward an understanding of phonological, grammatical, and semantic structure and of various approaches to descriptive, experimental, and historical linguistics. Majors may concentrate on theoretical, experimental, or computational linguistics, on various aspects of comparative grammar, or on a particular family of languages. Interested students should consult the director of undergraduate studies (DUS).

COURSES FOR NONMAJORS AND MAJORS

Students with no previous background in linguistics are encouraged to approach the field by taking a 100-level course.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

The major requires twelve term courses in linguistics and related areas, distributed as follows:

1. Breadth requirement (four courses). All majors must take a course in each of the core areas of phonology (LING 232) and syntax (LING 253). In addition, at least one course must be taken in any two of the six remaining core areas of linguistics: phonetics, morphology, semantics/pragmatics, computational linguistics, language and mind/brain, and historical linguistics.

2. Depth requirement (two courses). In one of the eight core areas of linguistics, students must take two additional courses beyond the introductory level.

3. Electives (four courses). Four additional courses relating to linguistics are required, at least one of which must be at the 200 level or above. Electives may be chosen from courses offered by the Linguistics department or, with approval of the DUS, from related courses in programs such as Anthropology, Classics, Cognitive Science, Computer Science, English, Philosophy, Psychology, or foreign languages.

4. Research requirement (one course). LING 490, Research Methods in Linguistics, is required and is usually taken in the fall term of the senior year.

SENIOR REQUIREMENT

Senior requirement (one course). Students attend a research colloquium and write a senior essay in LING 491 during the spring term of the senior year.

ADVISING

Combined B.A./M.A. degree program Exceptionally able and well-prepared students may complete a course of study leading to the simultaneous award of the B.A. and M.A. degrees after eight terms of enrollment. See Academic Regulations, section K, Special Arrangements, "Simultaneous Award of the Bachelor's and Master's Degrees." Interested students should consult the director of undergraduate studies prior to the sixth term of enrollment for specific requirements in Linguistics.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

Prerequisites None
Number of courses 12 term courses (incl senior req)
Specific courses required LING 232, 253, 490
Distribution of courses 1 course each in 2 addtl core areas, as specified; 2 addtl courses beyond intro level in 1 core area; 4 electives, at least 1 at the 200 level or above
Substitution permitted Electives from related programs with DUS approval
Senior requirement LING 491

FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS

Professors Claire Bowern, Veneeta Dayal, Robert Frank, Laurence Horn (Emeritus), †Frank Keil, †Joshua Knobe, †Jason Stanley, †Zoltán Szabó, Petronella Van Deusen-Scholl (Adjunct), Raffaella Zanuttini (Chair)
Associate Professors Maria Piñango, Kenneth Pugh (Adjunct)
Assistant Professors Jason Shaw, Natalie Weber, Jim Wood
Lector Michael Barrett
Lecturer Chelsea Sanker

†A joint appointment with primary affiliation in another department.

Introductory Courses

Courses in this group do not require previous study of linguistics.
LING 110a, Language: Introduction to Linguistics  Jason Shaw
The goals and methods of linguistics. Basic concepts in phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. Techniques of linguistic analysis and construction of linguistic models. Trends in modern linguistics. The relation of linguistics to psychology, logic, and other disciplines. SO

LING 112b, Historical Linguistics  Staff
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. HU

* 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. L1 1½ Course cr

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. SO

LING 125b / SKRT 120b, 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. L2 1½ Course cr

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. L3

LING 146b / PSYC 320b, Language, Sex, and Gender  Natalie Weber and Claire Bowern
Sex-based asymmetries in language structure and language use. Role of language in encoding, reflecting, or reinforcing social attitudes and behavior. The "he/man" lexicon: sex-marking, reform, and resistance. Gender and sexual diversity as linguistic variables. Genderlects: differences (real and perceived) between male and female speech, conversational styles, and linguistic communities. SO RP

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. L4

* LING 150a / ENGL 150a, Old English  Alexandra Reider
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. HU

American Sign Language Courses

ASL 110a, American Sign Language I  Staff
An introduction to American Sign Language (ASL), with emphasis on vocabulary, ASL grammar, Deaf Culture and Conversational skills. Use of visual material (DVD), communicative activities, grammar drills, classifiers and Deaf Culture study. ASL 120 is not required to earn credit for ASL 110. L1 1½ Course cr

ASL 120b, American Sign Language II  Staff
A continuation to American Sign Language (ASL) I, with emphasis on ASL grammar, expressive and receptive skills in storytelling and dialogues. Use of visual materials (DVD), grammar drills, proper use of non-manual markers and body language. Emphasis on character development, role shifting and story cohesion. Prerequisite: ASL 110. L2 1½ Course cr

LANGUAGES CAN BE VERY SIMILAR AND YET ALSO VERY DIFFERENT AT THE SAME TIME. THIS COURSE IS MAINLY AN INTRODUCTION TO SYNTACTIC THEORY: IT PAYS SPECIAL ATTENTION TO PRINCIPLES THAT ARE SHARED ACROSS ALL LANGUAGES, AS WELL AS THOSE THAT ARE DISTINCTIVE OF INDIVIDUAL LANGUAGES. THE INTERPLAY OF THE PRINCIPLES THAT ARE SHARED AND THOSE THAT ARE DISTINCT ALLOWS US TO UNDERSTAND HOW 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.

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 THE LIMITATIONS OF OUR UNDERSTANDING.
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
Recent developments in the principles and parameters approach to syntactic theory. In-depth exploration of theoretical and empirical issues in long-distance dependencies (island effects, dependency types, movement vs. binding), the character of syntactic structure (constituency, thematic mapping, functional categories), and the architecture of grammatical derivations (logical form, operations for structure building, anaphora). Prerequisite: LING 253. SO

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. QR, SO

* LING 266b, Cognitive Foundations of Meaning Change Maria Pinango
Linguistic, cognitive, and communicative structure explored through phenomena involving systematic semantic change. Why evolution in the meanings of forms follows what seem to be constrained trajectorial paths. Are such semantic change derivable from the organizational properties of the human cognitive system or the dynamics of rational communication? Prerequisite or corequisite: One from LING 112, 231, 263, 275, or 361 or permission of instructor. SO

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

LING 275b, Pragmatics Laurence Horn
Speakers often mean things they don’t say, but how does a hearer figure out what the speaker meant? Which sentences are designed to change the world rather than just to represent it? How are sentences used to mean different things in different contexts? Pragmatics explores the relations between what is said and what is meant, focusing on how speech acts and the principles of “street logic”—presuppositions and implicatures—help speakers and hearers shape the landscape of a conversation. No formal prerequisites, but some familiarity with linguistics or philosophy of language will help on some of the readings. SO RP

Advanced Courses and Seminars

* LING 372a, Meaning, Concepts, and Words Maria Pinango
A cognitive approach to the structure of meaning from the perspective of the language system. The brain’s finite collection of stored concepts, which are combined and recombined via predetermined principles. The system of associating combinations of concepts with combinations of words and sentences to produce an unlimited number of novel thoughts. Prerequisite: at least one course in linguistics, psychology, or cognitive science. SO

* LING 380b, Topics in Computational Linguistics: Neural Network Models of Linguistic Structure Robert Frank
An introduction to the computational methods associated with “deep learning” (neural network architectures, learning algorithms, network analysis). The application of such methods to the learning of linguistic patterns in the domains of syntax, phonology, and semantics. Exploration of hybrid architectures that incorporate linguistic representation into neural network learning. Prerequisites: Python programming, basic calculus and linear algebra, introduction to linguistic theory (LING 106, 110, 116, 217 or equivalent). QR, SO

* LING 381a / LING 379 / LING 781a, Argument Structure and Morphology Jim Wood
The intersection of argument structure and morphology. We study the ways that different argument structure configurations are reflected in the morphological shape of verbs (passives, causatives, reflexives, etc.), and how argument structure interacts with derivation, especially nouns and adjectives formed from verbs. Prerequisite: LING 253 or permission of the instructor. WR, SO

Research Courses and Senior Essay

* 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. WR, SO

* 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.

Related Courses

ANTH 205a / ANTH 368, Language, Culture, and Identity J. Joseph Errington
Introduction to the role of language in the constitution of gendered, class, ethnic, and national identities. Ethnographic and linguistic case studies are combined with theoretical and comparative approaches. Enrollment limited to 40. (Formerly ANTH 120) SO
* ANTH 309a, Language and Culture  Paul Kockelman
The relations between language, culture, and cognition. What meaning is and why it matters. Readings in recent and classic works by anthropologists, linguists, psychologists, and philosophers.  SO

* ANTH 413a, Language, Culture, and Ideology  J. Joseph Errington
Review of influential anthropological theories of culture, with reference to theories of language that inspired or informed them. American and European structuralism; cognitivist and interpretivist approaches to cultural description; the work of Bakhtin, Bourdieu, and various critical theorists.  SO  RP

* CHLD 128b / EDST 128b / PSYC 128b, Language, Literacy, and Play  Nancy Close and Carla Horwitz
The course focuses on the complicated role play has in the development of language and literacy skills among preschool and kindergarten-aged children. It examines how teachers integrate language, literacy, and play in a developmentally appropriate early childhood education curriculum. Topics include social-emotional, cross-cultural, cognitive, and communicative aspects of play.  WR, SO  RP

CPSC 472a, Intelligent Robotics  Brian Scassellati
Introduction to the construction of intelligent, autonomous systems. Sensory-motor coordination and task-based perception. Implementation techniques for behavior selection and arbitration, including behavior-based design, evolutionary design, dynamical systems, and hybrid deliberative-reactive systems. Situated learning and adaptive behavior. After CPSC 201 and 202 or equivalents. May not be taken after CPSC 473.  QR

CPSC 477b, Natural Language Processing  Dragomir Radev
Linguistic, mathematical, and computational fundamentals of natural language processing (NLP). Topics include part of speech tagging, Hidden Markov models, syntax and parsing, lexical semantics, compositional semantics, machine translation, text classification, discourse, and dialogue processing. Additional topics such as sentiment analysis, text generation, and deep learning for NLP. Prerequisites: CPSC 202 and CPSC 223, or permission of instructor.  QR

LATN 110a, Beginning Latin: The Elements of Latin Grammar  Staff
Introduction to Latin. Emphasis on morphology and syntax within a structured program of readings and exercises. Prepares for LATN 120. No prior knowledge of Latin assumed. Preregistration, which is required, takes place at the Academic Fair. See the Calendar for the Opening Days or the departmental Web site for details about preregistration.  L1  RP  1½ Course cr

* LATN 390b, Latin Syntax and Stylistics  Joseph Solodow
A systematic review of syntax and an introduction to Latin style. Selections from Latin prose authors are read and analyzed, and students compose short pieces of Latin prose. For students with some experience reading Latin literature who desire a better foundation in forms, syntax, idiom, and style.  L5, HU

PHIL 115a, First-Order Logic  Kenneth Winkler
An introduction to formal logic. Study of the formal deductive systems and semantics for both propositional and predicate logic. Some discussion of metatheory.  QR

PHIL 267b, Mathematical Logic  Sun-Joo Shin
An introduction to the metatheory of first-order logic, up to and including the completeness theorem for the first-order calculus. Introduction to the basic concepts of set theory. Prerequisite: PHIL 115 or permission of instructor.  QR

* PHIL 427b, Computability and Logic  Sun-Joo Shin
A technical exposition of Gödel’s first and second incompleteness theorems and of some of their consequences in proof theory and model theory, such as Löb’s theorem, Tarski’s undefinability of truth, provability logic, and nonstandard models of arithmetic. Prerequisite: PHIL 267 or permission of instructor.  QR, HU