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. No more than two foreign language courses can count toward the major without specific DUS approval.

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.

Credit/D/Fail Courses taken Credit/D/Fail, Pass/Fail, or any scale other than the standard letter-grade scale, may not be counted toward the requirements of the major without specific DUS approval.

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 L, Special Academic Arrangements, “Simultaneous Award of the Bachelor’s and Master’s Degrees.” Interested students should consult the DUS 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

The scientific study of language is fundamental to the understanding of the human mind. The Department of Linguistics offers several courses open to students with no previous training in the field. These courses provide a general introduction to the subject matter and technical methods of linguistics, both for students who do not plan to major in Linguistics and for prospective majors:

• LING 110 Language: Introduction to Linguistics introduces the goals and methods of linguistics, emphasizing the development of analytic techniques for various types of linguistic data.
• LING 112 Historical Linguistics provides a general introduction to the ways in which languages change over time.
• LING 116 Cognitive Science of Language explores the study of language in the context of cognitive science and the relationship between linguistic and nonlinguistic cognition.
• LING 217 Language and Mind studies knowledge of language as a component of the structure of the mind, including the nature of mental grammar and its neural implementation.

The department also offers more specialized introductions to the field, including:
• LING 101 Introduction to English Words
• LING 146 Language and Gender

By the end of sophomore year, prospective majors should have completed one introductory linguistics course. Ideally, they will also have begun to explore the core areas of the field through one or more 200-level courses in phonetics, phonology, syntax, or semantics.

The study of language builds on a range of disciplines that Linguistics majors are encouraged to explore. Courses in anthropology, biology, computer science, mathematics, philosophy, and psychology can inform and contribute to a student’s major program.

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), Jason Shaw

Assistant Professors  Natalie Weber, Jim Wood

Lector  Julia Silvestri

Lecturers  Roslyn Burns, Chelsea Sanker

†A joint appointment with primary affiliation in another department.

Introductory Courses American Sign Language Courses Intermediate Courses Advanced Courses and Seminars Research Courses and Senior Essay