

LINGUISTICS

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 M.A., Ph.D.

Chair

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FIELDS OF STUDY

The Department of Linguistics embraces an integrative approach to the study of language, based on the premise that an understanding of the human language faculty arises only through the combination of insights from the development of explicit formal theories with careful descriptive and experimental work. Members of the department offer courses and conduct research in which theoretical inquiry proceeds in partnership with historical and comparative studies, fieldwork, experimental work, cognitive neuroscience, and computational and mathematical modeling. Faculty expertise includes all of the major domains of linguistics (phonetics, phonology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics) and spans a wide range of languages.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PH.D. DEGREE

Coursework

The conception of linguistics embraced by the Yale Ph.D. program requires that students receive training that is both deep in its coverage of areas of linguistic inquiry and broad in the range of methodological approaches. The course work requirements are designed to accomplish these complementary goals. This course work includes a set of courses designed to expose students to core ideas, together with courses equipping students with a range of methodologies in linguistic research.

During their first two terms, students must take LING 519, Perspectives on Grammar. This course is taken SAT/UNSAT. A minimum of thirteen other courses are required: four foundational courses, three methodology courses, three advanced seminars, and three linguistics elective classes. No single course can simultaneously satisfy a requirement in two distinct areas. During the initial two years of course work, students must receive at least three grades of H (= Honors). Two or more grades below HP (= High Pass) during the initial two-year period constitute grounds for dismissal from

the Ph.D. program. As per graduate school general regulations, grades of F cannot be counted toward degree requirements.

Foundational Courses This requirement ensures that students achieve breadth in several linguistic subfields. Students take at least one sufficiently advanced course in four or more subfields of linguistics. The following courses satisfy this requirement:

LING 612	Linguistic Change	1
LING 631	Neurolinguistics	1
LING 635	Phonology II	1
LING 639	Phonetics II: Speech Production and Perception	1
LING 654	Syntax II	1
LING 664	Semantics II	1
LING 680	Morphology	1

Students decide on their courses, in consultation with the director of graduate studies (DGS) and other faculty, when they arrive on campus. Other sufficiently advanced courses may also satisfy the requirement, subject to DGS approval.

Methodology Courses For the methodology requirement, students must take three relevant courses. The following courses, which are offered regularly by the department, qualify, but other courses may as well, to be determined in consultation with the adviser and DGS:

LING 600	Experimentation in Linguistics	1
LING 619	The Evolution of Language and Culture	1
LING 624	Mathematics of Language	1
LING 627	Language and Computation I	1
LING 631	Neurolinguistics	1
LING 634	Quantitative Linguistics	1
LING 636	Articulatory Phonology	1
LING 641	Field Methods	1
LING 796	Semantic Investigations in an Unfamiliar Language	1
An advanced course in statistics such as the following may qualify:		
PSYC 518	Multivariate Statistics	1
S&DS 538	Probability and Statistics	1
S&DS 563	Multivariate Statistical Methods for the Social Sciences	1
S&DS 661	Data Analysis	1

One of the methodology courses must be taken during the first year of the program, and two must be completed by the end of the second year. Courses cannot simultaneously satisfy the foundational and methodology requirements.

Seminar Courses Graduate students are active participants in department reading groups and seminars. Students should participate in three advanced seminars in which they read the original literature of the field and write a research paper. With permission of their adviser and the DGS, students may enroll in the appropriate 790s-numbered

LING course and count active participation in a department reading group, including the submission of a final research paper, as satisfying this requirement.

Linguistics Electives Students must take three more linguistics courses that are at least 600 level.

Research

The primary focus of a Ph.D. program is independent research. In the course of our Ph.D. program, students carry out cutting-edge linguistic research, culminating in the completion of a dissertation. To help students in the transition from “consuming” to also “producing” linguistic research, there are a number of structures and requirements in place.

Research Adviser and First-Year Directed Readings By the end of the first term of the program, students find a department faculty member who acts as their research adviser. This choice should be made on the basis of compatibility of research interests and discussions between the student, faculty member, and DGS. Starting from the spring term of the first year, students will, with the help of their adviser, define a topic of research interest, meeting regularly (minimally once every three weeks) and carrying out a series of readings on this topic. Students should keep a research journal, describing their readings and how they fit in with work in the area, and chronicling the development of their thinking about the research topic. It is the faculty’s expectation that this exploration will form the foundation for the research reported in the student’s first qualifying paper (on which see below). Note however that the initial choice of research adviser is not binding: students who want to change their choice of topic or adviser for whatever reason may do so. It is the student’s responsibility to find a suitable adviser, and students are expected to have a faculty adviser at all times during their enrollment in the program. Some students have two faculty co-advisers.

Portfolio At the conclusion of the first year of the program, students submit to the faculty a portfolio of two research papers, in two distinct subfields (such as Phonetics, Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Semantics, Pragmatics, Historical Linguistics, Neurolinguistics, Computational Linguistics). These papers should demonstrate a student’s mastery of the material in these fields to the level covered in the foundational courses in the area, as well as the ability to identify a significant research question and argue for a possible solution. In short, such papers should be at the level of an excellent term paper, representative of a student’s best work during the first year of course work. The faculty do not expect students to write papers expressly for the portfolio. Rather, the portfolio will typically consist of term papers from courses taken during the first year in the program. The deadline for the submission of these papers is May 10 each year.

Annotated Bibliography/Research Plan On the basis of the research journal begun during the first year in the program, students will prepare an annotated bibliography and research plan (ABRP) for their first qualifying paper. The ABRP, which should be approximately twenty pages in length, should lay out the question that the student wants to explore, motivating its importance through a presentation and synthesis of relevant past literature on the topic. The deadline for submission of the ABRP is September 10.

Qualifying Papers Once the ABRP has been completed, the student will proceed to work on the qualifying papers (QPs). The goal of the QPs is to develop a student's ability to conduct independent research in linguistics at the level of current scholarship in two different areas of linguistics. The faculty expect a QP to report on the results of a substantial project, which are written up in a manner consistent with the standards of the field, and to be eventually published in an academic journal, working papers, or conference proceedings. Students are strongly encouraged to identify a target journal early in the project.

The process of writing the first QP is broken into a number of smaller steps with specific deadlines for each (all during the second year of the program).

1. Students discuss their preliminary results in an appropriate venue (lab meeting, reading group, seminar, etc.) by no later than the end of the fall term.
2. Also by the end of the fall term, the student will send a request for a QP reader to the DGS. This request must include a title and brief summary of the project, and may also request specific faculty members to be involved. On the basis of research area and faculty availability, the DGS will identify a faculty member other than the adviser to serve as a QP reader. This reader will be involved in the ultimate evaluation of the QP once it is completed. Because it is useful to get a range of feedback on one's work, we encourage students to make the best use of their QP reader by meeting with them and keeping them up to date on the progress of the project.
3. Students must submit a first draft of their QP to their adviser and reader no later than February 1.
4. Students present their work to the department at the yearly "QPFest," shortly before spring recess. This takes the form of a twenty-minute conference talk to members of the department.
5. Students must submit the final version of the paper to their adviser and reader by March 31. Toward the end of the spring term of the second year, the student should begin to explore possible areas and advisers for the second QP, and must have identified an area and adviser by September 1 of the third year. Students follow the same steps and deadlines listed above for the second QP, this time during the third year.

The second QP should be in a different area of linguistics, with a different adviser, from the first QP. It is particularly important that students make satisfactory progress toward the first QP and complete all work by the relevant deadlines. Failure to do so may result in being asked to leave the program.

Prospectus No later than the beginning of the sixth term (that is, the spring term of the third year), students choose a dissertation topic and dissertation director. By the beginning of the fourth year, students will present a dissertation prospectus to the entire faculty. The prospectus should lay out clearly the student's proposed dissertation topic. It should motivate the importance of the topic, present the core idea of the proposed work together with its promise and viability, and demonstrate how this work fits into past research in the area. The prospectus should also identify a dissertation committee. The committee must include at least three faculty members (including the adviser), two of whom must be ladder faculty in the Linguistics department. The

prospectus document should be about fifteen pages in length. After it is submitted, the prospectus is defended orally in front of the faculty. Upon successful completion of the prospectus defense, students advance to Ph.D. candidacy.

Dissertation By the end of the seventh term, students must complete a chapter of the dissertation, together with a detailed outline of the dissertation and comprehensive bibliography. When the dissertation committee approves the chapter and dissertation outline, students are eligible for a University Dissertation Fellowship, which will support them in their fifth year of graduate study. Once advanced to candidacy, the student will meet with the entire dissertation committee minimally once each term (but with frequency decided by the committee), to evaluate progress toward the dissertation. During this meeting, the committee will complete the committee meeting form, will provide a copy to the student, and will retain one for the department's records.

Students are expected to complete their dissertations by the end of the sixth year. At least one month prior to the dissertation filing date, the completed dissertation must be orally defended. This defense will typically involve a public presentation of the main results of the dissertation and oral examination by the members of the dissertation committee. Committee members must be given the completed dissertation no less than two weeks prior to the date of the defense.

Language Requirement

Students are expected to exhibit some breadth in their knowledge of the languages of the world beyond those most commonly studied and those most similar in structure to the student's first language. LING 641, Field Methods, fulfills this requirement; alternatively, with the permission of the DGS, the student may instead take an appropriate language structure course, or one or more courses characterized as L3 or higher at Yale or the equivalent elsewhere. This requirement must be completed before the prospectus defense, when the student advances to Ph.D. candidacy.

Teaching Fellow/Research Assistant Requirements

The faculty regard teaching experience as an integral part of the graduate training program in Linguistics. All students serve as teaching fellows for a minimum of two terms, beginning in the first term of the third year. In addition, students must complete two additional terms of teaching assistantship. These may be either as a teaching fellow, or through participation in externally supported, supervised research as a research fellow. Research assistantships may be provided by the Linguistics faculty and by various Yale and Yale-affiliated units. Before accepting a research assistantship in fulfillment of this requirement, students must receive approval from the DGS. To be approved, a research assistantship must meet the following criteria:

1. It must be supervised by a Linguistics department faculty member or a faculty member from an affiliated unit, such as Haskins Laboratories or the Yale School of Medicine.
2. It must provide research experience that complements the student's academic plan of study and is related to the student's dissertation research plans.
3. It must provide at least ten hours of experience per week.

If an approved research assistantship is accepted that does not provide a stipend equal to the standard departmental stipend, a university fellowship will be provided to augment the stipend so as to bring it up to the departmental standard.

MASTER'S DEGREE

M.A. Students who withdraw from the Ph.D. program may be eligible to receive the M.A. degree if they have met the requirements. For the M.A. degree, students must successfully complete the coursework, examinations, and work samples required by the end of the second year of graduate study (see above).

Program materials are available online at <http://ling.yale.edu>.