

An interdepartmental program

Language and Linguistics

Courses of Study:
Minor
Major (BA)

Objectives

The major and minor in language and linguistics are designed to offer students multiple perspectives on the study of language: as a universal cognitive faculty, as an interactive mechanism for human development and for constructing social identities, as a spoken and written medium for cultural expression, and as an object and means of philosophical reflection. All these perspectives require training in the formal properties of language, including phonology, morphology, semantics, syntax, and pragmatics. Courses on “generative grammar” attempt to describe formally the nature of a speaker’s knowledge of his or her native language and to place this knowledge in a psychological and biological framework. Other courses in the program explore the role of the study of language in many scientific, social, and humanistic disciplines, such as cognitive science and artificial intelligence, historical philology and epigraphy, literary theory, neuroscience, philosophy of language and logic, psychology, semiotic and linguistic anthropology, and sociolinguistics.

How to Become a Major or a Minor

In order to get the flavor of the field of linguistics, the best way to start is to take LING 100a (Introduction to Linguistics), which deals with the major concepts of the field and the technical tools used to articulate these concepts. The course also introduces students to the feel of doing research on language, through the use of numerous problem sets concerning the organization of a variety of languages.

Students wishing to major or minor in language and linguistics should arrange to meet with the undergraduate advising head to discuss the planning of a program that meets their interests.

Committee

James Pustejovsky, Chair and Undergraduate Advising Head
(Computer Science)

Lotus Goldberg
(Language and Linguistics)

Sophia A. Malamud
(Anthropology; Language and Linguistics)

Janet McIntosh (on leave 2008–2009)
(Anthropology)

Leonard C. Mueller
(Classical Studies)

Richard J. Parmentier (on leave fall 2008)
(Anthropology)

Nianwen Xue
(Computer Science)

Affiliated Faculty

Alan Berger
(Philosophy)

Harry Mairson
(Computer Science)

Jerry Samet
(Philosophy)

Javier Urcid
(Anthropology)

Requirements for the Minor

A. Five semester courses are required:

1. LING 100a and 120b.
2. LING 110a, LING 130a, or LING 140b.
3. Two other courses from the LING courses numbered higher than LING 98 and the elective courses listed below. A student may count no more than one elective course from another single department toward the fulfillment of the minor in language and linguistics.

B. No course offered toward the fulfillment of the requirements for the minor may be taken on a pass/fail basis.

C. Students may petition the language and linguistics faculty committee for changes in the above program.

Requirements for the Major

A. Nine courses are required of all candidates:

1. LING 100a, 110a, 120b, and either LING 130a or 140b.
2. Four additional courses from the LING courses numbered higher than LING 98 and the elective courses listed below. A student may count no more than three elective courses from another single department toward the fulfillment of the major in language and linguistics.
3. One advanced course in a natural language, to be chosen from the following list (or by consent of the undergraduate advising head): CHIN 105a, CHIN 105b, FREN 105a, FREN 106b, GER 103a, GER 104a, HBRW 141a, HBRW 161b, ITAL 105a, JAPN 105a, RUS 105a, RUS 106b, SPAN 105a, SPAN 106b.

B. Honors will be awarded on successful completion of a senior thesis (LING 99d) in addition to the above course requirements. A GPA of 3.50 or higher in language and linguistics courses is normally required. Students must receive approval of a formal thesis proposal (from a department faculty member in consultation with the undergraduate advising head) before beginning work on the thesis.

C. A grade of C or better is necessary for all courses offered toward a major in linguistics. No courses offered toward the fulfillment of the requirements for the major may be taken on a pass/fail basis.

D. Students may petition the language and linguistics faculty committee for changes in the above program.

Students interested in computational linguistics are encouraged to consider the BA/MA or the MA in this field. For details about the computational linguistics program see the Department of Computer Science in an earlier section of this *Bulletin*.

Courses of Instruction

(1–99) Primarily for Undergraduate Students

LING 8b Structure of the English Language [hum ss]

Open to first-year students.

A nontechnical introduction to the structure of English words and sentences. Classical roots of English vocabulary: word analysis, base forms, and rules of allomorphy. Basic concepts of grammar: categories (noun, adjective, adverb, etc.), functions (subject, object, modifier, etc.), phrases and clauses of various types. Consists of three class hours and one one-hour recitation per week. Usually offered every year.

Ms. Goldberg

LING 98a Readings in Linguistics

Independent reading and research under the direction of a faculty supervisor. When appropriate, a faculty member may organize a small group of students into a senior seminar. Usually offered every year.
Staff

LING 98b Readings in Linguistics

See LING 98a for course description. Usually offered every year.
Staff

LING 99d Senior Research

Involves the student in an independent research project under the supervision of a staff member. A student whose GPA in linguistics is 3.50 or better may petition at the end of junior year for permission to enter this course. The student's findings are to be presented in writing and defended orally before a committee of staff members. Usually offered every year.
Staff

(100–199) For Both Undergraduate and Graduate Students

LING 100a Introduction to Linguistics

[ss]

Open to first-year students.

A general introduction to linguistic theory and the principles of linguistic analysis. Students will construct detailed analyses of data from English and other languages in the areas of syntax, semantics, phonetics, and phonology and examine their implications for a theory of language as it is encoded in the human mind. Usually offered every year.
Ms. Malamud

LING 110a Phonological Theory

[ss]

Prerequisite: LING 100a.

An introduction to generative phonology, the theory of natural language sound systems. Includes discussion of articulatory phonetics, distinctive feature theory, the concept of a "natural class," morphology and the nature of morphophonemics, and universal properties of the rules that relate morphophonemic and phonetic representations. Usually offered every second year.
Staff

LING 112b Historical Linguistics

[ss]

Prerequisite: LING 100a or permission of the instructor.

Explores how and why language changes. Methods of linguistic reconstruction and the "comparative method" are introduced and explored. Features a hands-on approach, challenging students to apply principles to examples from a wide variety of languages. Usually offered every third year.
Staff

LING 120b Syntactic Theory

[ss]

Prerequisite: LING 100a. LING 8b recommended.

Extends the syntactic framework developed in the introductory course through the study of such problems as the complement system, the lexicon, and constraints, with emphasis on their relevance to universal grammar. Usually offered every year.
Staff

LING 125b Universal Grammar

[ss]

Prerequisite: LING 100a or permission of the instructor.

Advanced topics in the theory of language typology and universal grammar. May be repeated for credit with permission of instructor. Usually offered every second year.

Ms. Goldberg

LING 128a Investigations in an Unfamiliar Language

[ss]

Prerequisite: ANTH 61b or LING 100a. May not be repeated for credit by students who have taken ANTH 125b in previous semesters.

Using a native speaker of an unfamiliar language (such as Turkish or Amharic) as a source of data, the class will investigate the structure of the language and compare it with the structure of English and other familiar languages. May be repeated for credit. Usually offered every second year.
Staff

LING 130a Formal Semantics: Truth, Meaning, and Language

[hum ss]

Prerequisite: LING 100a or permission of the instructor. LING 8b or LING 120b recommended.

Explores the semantic structure of language in terms of the current linguistic theory of model-theoretic semantics. Topics include the nature of word meanings, categorization, compositionality, and plurals and mass terms. Usually offered every year.

Ms. Malamud

LING 140a Architecture of Conversation: Discourse and Pragmatics

[oc ss]

Prerequisite: LING 100a or permission of the instructor.

Assuming a theory of sentence-level linguistic competence, what phenomena are still to be accounted for in the explication of language knowledge? The class explores topics in language use in context, including anaphora, deixis, implicature, speech acts, information packaging, and pragmatics of dialogue. Usually offered every year.

Ms. Malamud

LING 160b Mathematical Methods in Linguistics

[sn]

An introduction to fundamental mathematical concepts needed for advance work in linguistics and computational linguistics. Topics include: set theory, theory of relations, fundamentals of logic, formal systems, lambda calculus, formal language theory, theory of automata, basics of probability and statistics, game theory, and decision theory. Usually offered every year.

Staff

LING 190b Topics in Cognitive Science: Corpus Methods for Linguists

[ss]

Prerequisites: LING 100a or COSI 11a or permission of the instructors. Course may be repeated for credit with permission of the instructor(s).

Advances in technology have opened up new ways for linguists to collect and analyze linguistic data. Using computers, extremely large bodies of text ("corpora") can be collected and analyzed at a level of detail out of reach to previous generations. For both linguists and computer scientists, the development of the World Wide Web and other natural language resources have heightened the importance of techniques for dealing with very large texts. This course introduces the skills necessary for computer-aided text manipulation, through a combination of lectures, demonstrations, and hands-on exercises. The course is aimed at both linguistics and computer science students, combining techniques and analytical skills from both disciplines. Usually offered every year.

Ms. Colomer and Ms. Goldberg

LING 197a Language Acquisition and Development

[oc ss]

Prerequisite: LING 100a or permission of the instructor.

The central problem of language acquisition is to explain what makes this formidable task possible. Theories of language acquisition are studied, and conclusions are based on recent research in the development of syntax, semantics, and phonology. The overall goal is to arrive at a coherent picture of the language learning process. Usually offered every third year.

Staff

LING 199a Directed Research in Linguistics

[ss]

Usually offered every year.

Staff

LING 199b Directed Research in Linguistics

[ss]

Usually offered every year.

Staff

Elective Courses

The following courses are approved for the program. Not all are given in any one year. Please consult the *Schedule of Classes* each semester.

ANTH 61b

Language in American Life

ANTH 126b

Symbol, Meaning, and Reality: Explorations in Cultural Semiotics

ANTH 139b

Language, Ethnicity, and Nationalism

ANTH 153a

Writing Systems and Scribal Traditions

ANTH 186b

Linguistic Anthropology

COSI 21b

Structure and Interpretation of Computer Programs

COSI 30a

Introduction to the Theory of Computation

COSI 101a

Fundamentals of Artificial Intelligence

COSI 114b

Topics in Computational Linguistics

ENG 11a

Introduction to Literary Method

ENG 151b

Theater/Theory: Investigating Performance

ENG 171a

History of Literary Criticism

HBRW 167b

The Revival of Modern Hebrew

NEJS 104b

Ezra, Daniel, and Early Aramaic Texts

NPSY 22b

Introduction to Cognitive Neuroscience

NPSY 199a

Human Neuropsychology

PHIL 6a

Introduction to Symbolic Logic

PHIL 36b

Mind, Meaning, and Language

PHIL 37a

Philosophy of Language

PHIL 39b

Philosophy of Mind

PHIL 137a

Nature or Nurture? The Innateness Controversy

PHIL 139b

Topics in Logic

PHIL 140a

Logic and Language

PHIL 141b

Topics in Philosophy and Cognitive Science

PHIL 145b

Topics in the Philosophy of Language