

Linguistics

Department of Linguistics

College of Arts and Sciences
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Overview

Linguistics is the scientific study of the function and structure of language, and is concerned with language as a general aspect of human knowledge and behavior. The department offers three major tracks—Applied Linguistics; Language, Society, and Communication; and Language and Cognition. Two honors programs are also available. In addition, the department offers a joint major and a minor.

The Department of Linguistics offers courses in the following languages: American Sign Language, Arabic, Chinese, German, Greek (Modern), Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Russian, and Ukrainian.

About our Degrees

The Applied Linguistics track focuses on the teaching of English as a second language, bilingual education, and foreign language teaching; the track features a teaching internship. The B.A. can be a terminal degree, or can prepare the student to enter M.A. programs in Education and certification programs in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). Majors in this track receive a thorough grounding in the structure of English as well as surveying many other languages; they become knowledgeable about the function of language in society; and they receive practical teaching experience.

The Language, Society, and Communication track prepares students for careers in the media, public relations, business, editing, and industry. Majors explore the central role that language plays in society, social interaction, and communication. Required courses focus on basic issues of the structure and use of language. Electives focus on specific social and cultural contexts in America and other countries, and on methods for studying the use and interpretation of language in distinctive social contexts.

The Language and Cognition track prepares students for careers and advanced training in linguistics, cognitive science, language education, child development, and adult language disorders. It is designed for students interested in exploring the interface between language structure and use and other human cognitive processes. Courses focus on the acquisition of language, language production and comprehension, the construction and conveyance of meaning, and the representation of language in the brain.

Honors Tracks

The honors program involves a more intensive examination of current issues in linguistics, and requires an original honors thesis.

The Language Structure and Theory honors track prepares students for graduate study in linguistics, cognitive science, or the structure of particular languages. Majors become proficient at all levels of linguistic analysis, working with a wide range of languages, and gain an overview of theoretical issues.

The Language and Cognition honors track prepares students for graduate study in linguistics, cognitive science, or psychology of language. Majors are thoroughly immersed in issues of language structure, processing, acquisition, and representation, and gain an overview of current theoretical issues in these areas.

Acceptance Criteria

Minimum GPA of 2.0 overall.
Minimum GPA of 2.5 in [LIN 205](#) and [LIN 207](#).

Acceptance Information

Students are required to apply to the director of undergraduate studies for acceptance into the major. Students may apply to the major at any time, and are encouraged to discuss their academic plans with the director as early as possible. Students who have not completed the prerequisite courses may be accepted into the major on a provisional basis, pending successful completion of [LIN 205](#) and [LIN 207](#).

Degree Requirements

Linguistics

Please see [Degrees and Policies](#).

About our Courses

The Linguistics department offers a broad spectrum of courses, from large introductory survey courses such as [LIN 106](#) Languages of the World and [LIN 200](#) Language in Pluralistic America; through intermediate-level courses (designed for both majors and non-majors) such as [LIN 275](#) Languages and Cultures of Native North America, [LIN 320](#) Language and the Brain, and [LIN 355](#) Child Language Development; to advanced courses for majors on specialized topics such as [LIN 405](#) Bilingualism, [LIN 431](#) Phonetics, [LIN 415](#) Syntax 1, and [LIN 425](#) Typology and Universals.

The typical class size for:

Freshman/introductory courses is: 40-100

Sophomore/intermediate courses is: 30-100

Upper level/advanced courses is: 20-40

In the Department of Linguistics, what do teaching assistants (TA's) do?

They either are instructors, or they assist instructors.

Suggested Introductory Courses

- [LIN 104](#) Writing Systems
- [LIN 106](#) Languages of the World
- [LIN 108](#) The Roots of English
- [LIN 200](#) Language in Pluralistic America
- [LIN 205](#) Introduction to Linguistic Analysis
- [LIN 207](#) Language, Society and the Individual

About our Faculty

Extracurricular Activities

Undergraduate Linguistics Association; for more information, call (716) 645-2177.

See the [UB Student Association](#).

Practical Experience and Special Academic Opportunities

The Linguistics department offers a teaching internship, where interns are placed in the Buffalo public schools as teacher's aides or tutors; venues include Spanish-English bilingual schools, urban elementary schools, and international schools. Interns can also work with Literacy Volunteers, or as ESL tutors in the Linguistics department.

Honors, Awards, and Scholarships

Each year the department presents the Wolfgang Wölck Award to a graduating senior with outstanding academic accomplishments and service to the department.

Career Information and Further Study

Students completing a B.A. in Linguistics most often continue in graduate programs, either in linguistics, teaching English as a second language, or cognitive science. Our students have also gone on to law school, and medical school, and have done graduate work in library sciences. Students who have not pursued graduate work have found employment teaching English in countries such as France, Thailand, Korea, Japan, and China; our students have also been employed in the fields of publishing, literacy development, marketing, public service organizations, and language technology. Specifically, careers open to students with linguistics degrees include:

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- Acoustics technology
- Computational linguistics
- Editing
- Educational policy
- English as a second language instruction
- Foreign service
- Journalism
- Language teaching
- Law
- Linguistics
- Multicultural services
- Speech synthesis
- Translation and interpretation

Degree Options

The **Applied Linguistics** Track prepares students for careers in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), bilingual education, and language education; the program includes electives in education and a teaching internship. The BA can be a terminal degree, or can qualify the student for MA programs in applied linguistics/TESOL. Majors receive a thorough grounding in the structure of English and its function in American society, as well as practical teaching experience.

The **Language, Society, and Communication** Track prepares students for careers in the media, public relations, business, and industry. Majors explore the central role that language plays in society, social interaction, and communication. Required courses focus on basic issues of the structure and use of language. Electives focus on specific social and cultural contexts cross-linguistically, and on methods for studying the use of language in distinctive social contexts.

The **Language and Cognition** Track prepares students for careers and advanced training in linguistics, cognitive science, language education, child development, and adult language disorders. It is designed for students interested in exploring the interface between language structure and use and other human cognitive processes. Courses focus on the acquisition of language, language production and comprehension, the construction and conveyance of meaning, and the representation of language in the brain. Students may take this track as either an honors or non-honors program.

The honors programs prepare students for graduate study in linguistics, cognitive science, and fields related to cognitive science, such as psychology. Majors become proficient at all levels of linguistic analysis, and gain an overview of theoretical issues. The honors programs involve a more intensive examination of current theoretical issues in linguistics.

The special major in language and linguistics combines the study of a specific language with a deeper understanding of how language functions. The program is flexible and practical, and provides an excellent opportunity to develop students' research interests and professional plans by working directly with a faculty member of the student's choice. Students who choose this option may prepare for careers in TESOL, translation, or advanced language research.

Note: For specific information about this special major, contact the director of undergraduate studies.

Related major: Cognitive Science (see Social Sciences Interdisciplinary).

Honors Programs

The Department of Linguistics offers two honors programs - one in Language, Structure, and Theory, and one in Language and Cognition.

Language Structure and Theory: Required courses are [LIN 205](#), [LIN 207](#), [LIN 415](#), [LIN 432](#), and [LIN 497](#) Honors Thesis (3-6 credit hours), and two or three additional upper-division courses in theoretical linguistics (24 credit hours total). Electives from department courses; may apply one course with approved linguistic content from another department (12 credit hours).

Language and Cognition: [LIN 205](#), [LIN 207](#), [LIN 415](#), and [LIN 432](#); two of [LIN 320](#), [LIN 342](#), [LIN 355](#), [LIN 417](#), [LIN 455](#); two of [LIN 356](#), [LIN 413](#), [LIN 421](#), [LIN 438](#); [LIN 497](#) Honors Thesis (3 credit hours) (27 credit hours total). Electives from department courses, and one course with language and cognition content from another department (9 credit hours).

Degrees Offered

Undergraduate: BA, Minor

Concentrations: Applied Linguistics; Language, Society, and Communication; Language and Cognition

Graduate: MA, PhD

Concentrations (MA): General Linguistics, Germanic Linguistics, Sociolinguistics and Contact Linguistics

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Links to Further Information About this Program

- [Undergraduate Catalog](#)
- [Undergraduate Admissions](#)
- [Graduate Admissions](#)
- [Department of Linguistics](#)
- [College of Arts and Sciences](#)

Linguistics - B.A.

Concentration in Applied Linguistics

Acceptance Criteria

Minimum GPA of 2.0 overall.

Minimum GPA of 2.5 in the prerequisite courses.

Advising Notes

Students are required to apply to the director of undergraduate studies for acceptance into the major. Students may apply to the major at any time, and are encouraged to discuss their academic plans with the director as early as possible. Students who have not completed the prerequisite courses may be accepted into the major on a provisional basis, pending successful completion of [LIN 205](#) and [LIN 207](#).

Prerequisite Courses

[LIN 205](#) Introduction to Linguistic Analysis

[LIN 207](#) Language, Society, and the Individual

Required Courses

[LIN 301](#) Structure of English: The Sound System

[LIN 302](#) Structure of English: Grammar and Lexicon

One of the following: [LIN 315](#) Language in Its Social Setting, [LIN 355](#) Child Language Development, or [LIN 356](#) An Introduction to Contemporary Theories of Metaphor

One of the following: [LIN 405](#) Bilingualism and Language Contact, [LIN 421](#) Linguistic Anthropology, or [LIN 493](#) Sociolinguistics

[LIN 496](#) Internship (6 credits)

Four LIN electives (may apply one course with approved linguistic content from another department)

Summary

Total required credit hours for the major: 36

See [Baccalaureate Degree Requirements](#) for general education and remaining university requirements.

Recommended Sequence of Program Requirements

FIRST YEAR

Fall or Spring [LIN 205](#), [LIN 207](#)

SECOND YEAR

Fall or Spring [LIN 301](#), [LIN 302](#); one of the following: [LIN 315](#), [LIN 355](#), [LIN 356](#)

THIRD YEAR

Fall Two LIN elective courses

Spring [LIN 405](#), [LIN 421](#) or [LIN 493](#)

FOURTH YEAR

Fall One 300/400-level LIN elective course

Spring One 300/400-level LIN elective course

Fall and Spring [LIN 496](#)

Concentration in Language and Cognition (L&C)

Acceptance Criteria

Minimum GPA of 2.0 overall.

Minimum GPA of 2.5 in the prerequisite courses.

Advising Notes

Students are required to apply to the director of undergraduate studies for acceptance into the major. Students may apply to the major at any time, and are encouraged to discuss their academic plans with the director as early as possible. Students who have not completed the

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prerequisite courses may be accepted into the major on a provisional basis, pending successful completion of [LIN 205](#) and [LIN 207](#).

Prerequisite Courses

[LIN 205](#) Introduction to Linguistic Analysis

[LIN 207](#) Language, Society, and the Individual

Required Courses

[LIN 301](#) Structure of English: The Sound System

[LIN 302](#) Structure of English: Grammar and Lexicon

Two of the following: [LIN 320](#) Language and the Brain, [LIN 355](#) Child Language Development, [LIN 342](#) Introduction to Cognitive Science, [LIN 417](#) Psycholinguistics, [LIN 455](#) Language Acquisition

Two of the following: [LIN 356](#) An Introduction to Contemporary Theories of Metaphor, [LIN 413](#) Language and Cognition, [LIN 421](#) Linguistic Anthropology, [LIN 438](#) Semantics

Three LIN electives and one course with approved language and cognition content from another department.

Summary

Total required credit hours for the major: 36

See [Baccalaureate Degree Requirements](#) for general education and remaining university requirements.

Recommended Sequence of Program Requirements

FIRST YEAR

Fall or Spring [LIN 205](#), [LIN 207](#)

SECOND YEAR

Fall or Spring [LIN 301](#), [LIN 302](#), one L&C required course

THIRD YEAR

Fall Two L&C required courses (or one L&C course from Linguistics and one course with language and cognition content from another department)

Spring Two L&C required courses (or one L&C course from Linguistics and one course with language and cognition content from another department)

FOURTH YEAR

Fall Two LIN electives, or one elective and one L&C required course

Spring One LIN elective course

Concentration in Language, Society, and Communication

Acceptance Criteria

Minimum GPA of 2.0 overall.

Minimum GPA of 2.5 in the prerequisite courses.

Advising Notes

Students are required to apply to the director of undergraduate studies for acceptance into the major. Students may apply to the major at any time, and are encouraged to discuss their academic plans with the director as early as possible. Students who have not completed the prerequisite courses may be accepted into the major on a provisional basis, pending successful completion of [LIN 205](#) and [LIN 207](#).

Prerequisite Courses

[LIN 205](#) Introduction to Linguistic Analysis

[LIN 207](#) Language, Society, and the Individual

Required Courses

[LIN 301](#) Structure of English: The Sound System

[LIN 302](#) Structure of English: Grammar and Lexicon

Four additional LIN courses with sociolinguistics, communication, or cultural content

Four LIN electives (may apply one course with approved linguistic content from another department)

Summary

Total required credit hours for the major: 36

See [Baccalaureate Degree Requirements](#) for general education and remaining university requirements.

Recommended Sequence of Program Requirements

FIRST YEAR

Fall or Spring [LIN 205](#), [LIN 207](#)

SECOND YEAR

Fall or Spring [LIN 301](#), [LIN 302](#), one LIN required course

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THIRD YEAR

Fall Two LIN required/elective courses (one may be from another department)

Spring Two LIN required/elective courses

FOURTH YEAR

Fall Two 300/400-level LIN elective courses

Spring One 300/400-level LIN elective course

Linguistics - Minor

Acceptance Criteria

Minimum GPA of 2.0 overall.

Minimum GPA of 2.5 in the prerequisite courses.

Prerequisite Courses

[LIN 205](#) Introduction to Linguistic Analysis

[LIN 207](#) Language, Society, and the Individual

Required Courses

[LIN 301](#) Structure of English: Grammar and Lexicon

[LIN 302](#) Structure of English: The Sound System

Two additional linguistics courses

Summary

Total required credit hours for the minor: 18

LIN 104: Writing Systems

Credits: 3

Type: LEC

Surveys the ways in which natural languages have been, and are today, represented graphically throughout the world. We examine several types of systems (ideographic, logographic, syllabic, and alphabetic) and examine the linguistic principles that underlie each of these systems.

LIN 106: Languages of the World

Credits: 3

Type: LEC

Overview of the world's languages: what languages there are, what they are like, how they are similar, and how they are different.

LIN 108: Roots of English

Credits: 3

Type: LEC

Word roots in English, their history and development, meanings and combinations, usage and variations. Borrowings into and from English. English as a world language.

LIN 198: Freshman Seminar

Credits: 3

Type: SEM

Varies each semester depending on instructor.

LIN 200: Language in Pluralistic America

Credits: 3

Type: LEC/REC

Language variation by ethnicity, race, class, gender, and religion in American society. (A cognate equivalent to [UGC 211](#) American Pluralism.)

LIN 205: Introduction to Linguistic Analysis

Credits: 3

Semester(s): Fall, Spring

Type: LEC

Introduces the structure of language (phonetics, phonology, morphology, semantics, and syntax), looking at a broad variety of languages; approaches to linguistic analysis and theory.

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LIN 207: Language, Society, and the Individual

Credits: 3
Semester(s): Fall, Spring
Type: LEC

Introduces the functions of language in social groups; the acquisition of language; the relationships among language, thought, and culture; bilingualism and second language teaching.

LIN 275: Languages and Cultures of Native North America

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Expression of meaning and linguistic concepts in a number of native languages of North America.

LIN 301: Structure of English: the Sound System

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Sound structure of English, including the articulation of sounds, phonological patterns and alternations, and dialects.

LIN 302: Structure of English: Grammar and Lexicon

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Syntax and morphology of English, including lexical and grammatical categories, basic clause structure, and complex sentences.

LIN 311: Variation in English

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Introduction to major regional dialects and contact varieties of English speaking world and to many dimensions of social variation in British and North American English. Hands-on activities and projects will help familiarize students with the theories and methods of dialectology and variations sociolinguistics.

LIN 315: Language in Its Social Setting

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Analyzes the social basis of conversational interaction on two levels: the linguistic structures of dialogue and the cultural models underlying interaction.

LIN 320: Language and the Brain

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Localization and lateralization of language in the brain; aphasia, dyslexia, and other neurolinguistic disorders; developmental neurolinguistics.

LIN 342: Introduction to Cognitive Science

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

An interdisciplinary approach to the understanding of knowledge and mind, guided by principles of formal systems and computation. Concepts and approaches from psychology, philosophy, artificial intelligence, linguistics, and neuroscience.

LIN 345: Natural Language and the Computer

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Natural language applications such as search engines, and speech recognition play an increasingly important role in society. It seems like a very simple process, and yet it is very difficult. This class addresses the problems faced by computers in dealing with human language.

LIN 355: Child Language Development

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Acquisition of the structure and function of a child's native language. Relationships among the development of language, cognition, biology, and social interaction.

LIN 356: An Introduction to Contemporary Theories of Metaphor

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

General overview of the analysis of metaphors and analogy from a linguistic and cognitive perspective.

LIN 402: Phonology Practicum

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Analyzing the sound systems of diverse languages.

LIN 404: Discourse-Pragmatics

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Use of language in communicative acts (e.g., speech acts, conversational principles, text structure, discourse-governed grammatical alternations, topic, focus, and theme).

LIN 405: Bilingualism and Language Contact

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Linguistic, psychological, educational, and sociocultural

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characteristics of bilingualism, multilingualism, and language contact.

LIN 406: Meaning Communication

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Focuses on social and referential aspects of human communication.

LIN 410: Morphology

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Structure of words; different theoretical approaches to the analysis of morphemes, words, and idioms.

LIN 413: Language and Cognition

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Examines classificatory phenomena in lexical and grammatical structure from a cross-linguistic perspective, focusing on African, European, East Asian, and Native American languages.

LIN 414: History of the English Language

Credits: 3
Type: SEM

Introduces the linguistic and cultural development of the English language from its beginnings to the present.

LIN 415: Syntax I

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Fundamentals of syntactic analysis, applied to data from a wide range of languages. Briefly introduces syntactic theory.

LIN 417: Psycholinguistics

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Psycholinguistic processes involved in producing and comprehending language, including speech sounds, meaning, lexicon, syntax, discourse, and literacy.

LIN 421: Linguistic Anthropology

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Relationship between language and culture cross-culturally from the point of view of linguistic anthropology. Relies on primary readings, looking both at descriptive studies of particular languages and cultures, and theoretical issues, specifically the Linguistic Relativity

Hypothesis.

LIN 425: Typology and Universals

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Ways in which languages are similar to and different from each other, including morphological categories, word order, case marking, and grammatical relations.

LIN 426: Comparative Syntactic Theories

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

The objective of the proposed course is to offer a survey of important modern (i.e. post-1950) approaches to syntactic theory. Theoretical models to be covered include various transformationalist approaches, Head-drive Phrase Structure Grammar, Lexical Functional Grammar, Role and Reference Grammar, and typological and functional approaches. The leading ideas of each theoretical framework will be presented, and the frameworks will be compared and contrasted with each other, both in terms of the overall models they adopt and in how they use linguistic data to support their models.

LIN 431: Phonetics

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Fundamental aspects of phonetics: articulation, aerodynamics, acoustics, suprasegmentals, phonetic features, sound change, and universals; focus on cross-linguistic analysis.

LIN 432: Phonology I

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Thorough grounding in phonological analysis, using data from a wide variety of languages. Briefly introduces phonological theory.

LIN 433: Phonology II

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Current developments in phonological theory, including derivational and non-derivational approaches.

LIN 434: Syntax 2

Credits: 3
Pre-requisites: LIN 415LEC
Type: LEC

Introduces contemporary syntactic theory, including generative and non-generative approaches.

LIN 437: The Syntax of Romance

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Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Introduces the syntactic structure of Romance languages, what makes them similar (and distinct from other Indo-European language families, e.g. Germanic languages like English) and how they differ from each other. Languages covered include Catalan, French, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian, and Spanish

LIN 438: Semantics

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Introduces basic concepts and methods in the analysis of natural language meaning.

LIN 439: Historical Linguistics

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Language change, the divergence and convergence of dialects and languages in time and space, and linguistic reconstruction.

LIN 443: Semantics II

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Introduces the description of the meaning of sentences; focuses on how the meaning of sentences is built from the meaning of individual words.

LIN 448: Formal Semantics

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Surveys formal approaches to the study of meaning.

LIN 452: Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

The goal of the proposed course is to offer a solid introduction to Head-driven Phrase Structure Grammar (HPSG), a formal theory of grammar which allows for detailed accounts of phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. The course addresses the historical background and the mathematical foundations, but it focuses on linguistic analysis and on critical assessment of course research.

LIN 455: Language Acquisition

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Surveys the child's linguistic development, primarily in phonology, morpho-syntax, semantics, and discourse; current controversies in acquisition theory.

LIN 465: Introduction to Dialectology

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Dialect in its diachronic and synchronic manifestations; social and regional variation; languages in contact; linguistic fieldwork.

LIN 467: Computational Linguistics

Credits: 3
Type: LEC/REC

Introduces the field of computational linguistics, which is concerned with the understanding and use of language by computers.

LIN 481: Cognitive Foundations of Language

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Explores the meanings of grammatical elements across languages in order to understand the fundamental conceptual structure of language in general.

LIN 493: Sociolinguistics

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Language structure and development in social contexts of speech communities; processes of linguistic change; linguistic behavior as an index of social status; problems of language or dialect minorities.

LIN 494: Senior Seminar

Credits: 3
Type: SEM

Advanced seminar on various topics.

LIN 496: Internship

Credits: 2-6
Type: TUT

The content of this course is variable and therefore it is repeatable for credit. The [University Grade Repeat Policy](#) does not apply.

Language teaching experience either in a UB department (Linguistics, a language department, English Language Institute, etc.), in the Buffalo public schools, or at a public service agency (International Institute of Buffalo, Herman Badillo Institute, Literacy Volunteers, etc.). Open to majors and non-majors. Apply to director of undergraduate studies.

LIN 497: Honors Thesis

Credits: 3-6
Type: TUT

The content of this course is variable and therefore it is repeatable for credit. The [University Grade Repeat Policy](#) does not apply.

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Guidance in, and supervision of, the preparation of a research essay required to complete a degree with honors. Apply to director of undergraduate studies.

LIN 499: Independent Study

Credits: 1-12

Type: TUT

The content of this course is variable and therefore it is repeatable for credit. The [University Grade Repeat Policy](#) does not apply.

Apply to director of undergraduate studies.