

LINGUISTICS

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In any discussion of linguistics, in popular or academic contexts, the first question is always, what is linguistics, after all? This is remarkable. Language informs most of our mental and cultural activity, and linguistics is the just study of language.

Linguistics, especially since the 1960s, has become a highly multifarious, and even sprawling, field of inquiry. This requires that a major acquaint students with a number of subfields, all of which are crucial to understanding what modern linguistic analysis is about, and foster interdisciplinary inquiry as well. To wit, the person with a basic foundation in what constitutes linguistic study in our times (including realistic training for graduate study if desired) understands:

- the basics of grammatical analysis in terms of sounds and sentence structure
- how languages change over time
- the mechanics of how languages express meaning and implication
- the details and nuances of how language is used in social space
- the ways and extent to which the world's 7000 languages differ from one another
- the relationship between language and cognition writ large

Study Abroad

Undergraduates have engaged in unique travel and research projects, including sign language in Nicaragua; language attitudes in Kyrgyzstan; colloquial Arabic in Cairo; summer internship at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Biology; and study abroad in Spain, England, India, Hungary, and Ireland.

Graduate Study

Columbia's linguists have distinguished themselves with awards and plans after graduation, such as Fulbright Fellowships to France, Georgia, and Turkey; and graduate study of linguistics or psychology at Harvard, Stanford, UCSD, Northwestern, New York University, and SUNY Buffalo. Linguistics is also a natural background for the law, and our students have entered such law schools as Georgetown and Columbia.

There is no graduate program in linguistics at Columbia. Students interested in pursuing graduate study in linguistics in New York should investigate CUNY Graduate Center, New York University, or Teachers College (applied linguistics).

Affiliated Faculty

May Ahmar (Arabic; MESAAS)
 Akeel Bilgrami (Philosophy)
 Guadalupe Ruiz Fajardo (Latin American and Iberian Cultures)
 Aaron Fox (Music)
 Melissa Fusco (Philosophy)
 Haim Gaifman (Philosophy)
 Boris Gasparov (Slavic Languages)
 E. Mara Green, (Anthropology, Barnard)
 Julia Hirschberg (Computer Science)
 Ana Paula Huback (Latin American and Iberian Studies)
 Meredith Landman (Slavic Languages)
 Karen Lewis (Philosophy, Barnard)

Lening Liu (Chinese; East Asian Languages and Cultures)
 Reyes Llopis-Garcia (Latin American and Iberian Cultures)
 David Lurie (Japanese; East Asian Languages and Cultures)
 Kathleen McKeown (Computer Science)
 John McWhorter (American Studies)
 Yuan-Yuan Meng (Chinese; East Asian Languages and Cultures)
 Michele Miozzo (Psychology)
 Fumiko Nazikian (Japanese; East Asian Languages and Cultures)
 Youssef Nouhi (Arabic; MESAAS)
 Christopher Peacocke (Philosophy)
 John Phan (East Asian Languages and Cultures)
 Robert Remez (Psychology, Barnard)
 Francisco Rosales-Varo (Latin American and Iberian Studies)
 Carol Rounds (Hungarian; Italian)
 José Plácido Ruiz-Campillo (Latin American and Iberian Studies)
 Richard Sacks (English and Comparative Literature)
 Ann Senghas (Psychology, Barnard)
 Mariame Sy (Wolof; Pulaar; MESAAS)
 Herbert Terrace (Psychology)
 Alan Timberlake (Slavic Languages)
 Zhirong Wang (Chinese; East Asian Languages and Cultures)

Major in Linguistics

The complete major requirement – totaling 38 points – is the following:

- LING UN3101 INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTICS (3pts.)
- LING GU4376 PHONETICS # PHONOLOGY (3pts.)
- LING GU4903 SYNTAX (3pts.)
- One course from four out of five themes (12 pts. total):

a) Language in time
 Content: Historical linguistics, as in how grammars transform over time (such as the development of Modern from Old English) in terms of sounds, structures, and meaning

LING GU4108 LANGUAGE HISTORY
 ENGL GU4901 HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE
 CHNS GU4019 HISTORY OF CHINESE LANGUAGE

b) Language in context
 Content: How language varies in structure and usage according to sociological factors such as gender, class, race, power and culture

LING GU4800 LANGUAGE # SOCIETY
 LING UN3102 Endangered Languages in the Global City: Lang, Culture, and Migration in Contemporary NYC
 ANTH UN1009 INTRO TO LANGUAGE # CULTURE
 ANTH GR6067 Language and Its Limits (graduate seminar open to undergraduates)
 AMST UN3931 Topics in American Studies (Languages of America)
 AMST UN3931 Topics in American Studies (Language Contact)
 SPAN GU4010 LANGUAGE CROSSING IN LATINX CARIBBEAN CULTURAL PRODUCTION
 SPAN BC3382 SOCIOLING ASPECTS U.S.SPANISH (taught in Spanish)
 PORT GU4033 Language # Queer Brazil (ENG)

c) Language diversity
 Content: How languages differ from one another and in which ways; especially valuable in this module are a) Field Methods, eliciting the vocabulary and structure of a lesser documented language by

questioning a native speaker, in the fashion of professional linguists, b) courses focusing on the structure of individual languages

LING GU4120 LANG DOCUMENTATION/FIELD MTHDS
LING GU4171 LANGUAGES OF AFRICA
HNGR UN3343 Descriptive Grammar Hungarian

d) Language and meaning

Content: semantics, philosophy of language, cognitive linguistics, natural language processing

LING GU4190 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS
PHIL UN2685 INTRO TO PHIL OF LANGUAGE
SPAN GU4011 CONVERSATION IN SPANISH:PRACTICE AND ANA
SPAN GR5450 A COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS ACCOUNT OF LANGUAGE
SPAN GU4030 Spanish Pragmatics (taught in Spanish)

e) Psychology and biology of language

Content: psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, language genesis. This is especially important given the burgeoning research on the actual structural representation of language in the brain, as well as increasingly influential proposals that ground language in larger thought processes (as opposed to the Chomskyan proposal that language is, to a considerable extent, generated via exclusive cognitive mechanisms).

LING UN3103 Language, Brain and Mind
PSYC BC3164 PERCEPTION AND LANGUAGE
PSYC GU4232 Production and Perception of Language
PSYC BC3369 Language Development
PSYC GU4242 Evolution of Language (seminar) (graduate seminar open to undergraduates)
PSYC GU4244 LANGUAGE AND MIND
PSYC GU4272 Advanced Seminar in Language Development
PSYC GU4470 PSYCH # NEUROPSYCH OF LANGUAGE

4. One elective course (3 pts.) from either a) one of the themes, or b) a linguistics-related course from another department subject to approval from the program. This option will allow students to either sample more widely or specialize somewhat in a subarea of linguistics that has come to interest them.

5. Senior thesis (two semesters, 3 pts. per semester)

6. Language requirement: Two semesters of an intermediate-level language sequence (8 points). The language taken can be an ancient language (e.g., Latin, Ancient Greek, Sanskrit) or a modern one but should neither belong to one of the major groups of modern European languages (Germanic, Romance) nor be the student's native or semi-native language. In addition, the language cannot also be used to satisfy the core language requirement.

Special Concentration in Linguistics

The special concentration in linguistics is not sufficient for graduation in and of itself. It must be taken in conjunction with a major or a full concentration in another discipline.

Please note: the requirements for the special concentration in Linguistics were modified in the Fall 2019 semester. Students who entered Columbia before the Fall 2019 semester have the option of following the new or the old requirements. If you have any questions, please contact the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

For the new requirements, students must take 23 points in the linguistics program as specified below.

For the old requirements, students must take 18 points; the requirements are specified below, with the exception that the language requirement is one language course at the intermediate level (4pts.), separate from the core curriculum foreign language requirement.

The requirements for the special concentration (23 points) are as follows:

1. Three core courses in linguistics chosen from:

LING UN3101 INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTICS
LING UN3102 Endangered Languages in the Global City: Lang, Culture, and Migration in Contemporary NYC
LING UN3103 Language, Brain and Mind
HNGR UN3343 Descriptive Grammar Hungarian
LING GU4108 LANGUAGE HISTORY
LING GU4120 LANG DOCUMENTATION/FIELD MTHDS
LING GU4171 LANGUAGES OF AFRICA
LING GU4190 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS
LING GU4376 PHONETICS # PHONOLOGY
LING GU4800 LANGUAGE # SOCIETY
LING GU4903 SYNTAX

2. Two additional courses from either a) the core linguistics courses, or b) a linguistics-related course from another department subject to approval from the program. Courses previously approved include those listed below:

Anthropology:

ANTH UN1009 INTRO TO LANGUAGE # CULTURE
ANTH GU4042 Agent, Person, Subject, Self
ANTH GR6067 Language and Its Limits
ANTH GR6125 Language, Culture, and Power

Chinese:

CHNS GU4019 HISTORY OF CHINESE LANGUAGE

Computer Science:

COMS W1012 Computational Linguistics
COMS W4705 Natural Language Processing
COMS W4995 Topics in Computer Science (with approval)
COMS E6998 Topics in Computer Science (with approval)

Comparative Literature & Society:

CPLS GU4111 World Philology

French:

FREN BC3011 History of the French Language

Philosophy:

PHIL UN2685 INTRO TO PHIL OF LANGUAGE
PHIL UN3411 SYMBOLIC LOGIC
PHIL UN3685 PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE
PHIL GU4490 LANGUAGE AND MIND

Psychology:

PSYC UN2215 Cognition and the Brain
PSYC UN2440: Language and the Brain
PSYC UN2450 BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE
PSYC BC3164 PERCEPTION AND LANGUAGE
PSYC UN3265 Auditory Perception (Seminar)
PSYC BC3369 Language Development
PSYC GU4232 Production and Perception of Language

PSYC GU4272 Advanced Seminar in Language Development

Spanish:

SPAN BC3382 SOCIOLING ASPECTS U.S.SPANISH

SPAN GU4010 LANGUAGE CROSSING IN LATINX CARIBBEAN CULTURAL PRODUCTION

SPAN GU4011 CONVERSATION IN SPANISH:PRACTICE AND ANA

SPAN GU4030 Spanish Pragmatics

SPAN GR5450 A COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS ACCOUNT OF LANGUAGE

Sociology:

SOCI GU4030 Sociology of Language

3. Language requirement: Two semesters of an intermediate-level language sequence (8 points). The language taken can be an ancient language (e.g., Latin, Ancient Greek, Sanskrit) or a modern one but should neither belong to one of the major groups of modern European languages (Germanic, Romance) nor be the student's native or semi-native language. In addition, the language cannot also be used to satisfy the core language requirement.

Linguistics

LING UN3101 INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTICS. 3.00 points.

An introduction to the study of language from a scientific perspective. The course is divided into three units: language as a system (sounds, morphology, syntax, and semantics), language in context (in space, time, and community), and language of the individual (psycholinguistics, errors, aphasia, neurology of language, and acquisition). Workload: lecture, weekly homework, and final examination

Fall 2024: LING UN3101

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
LING 3101	001/11717	M W 11:40am - 12:55pm Room TBA	William Foley	3.00	192/300

LING UN3102 Endangered Languages in the Global City: Lang, Culture, and Migration in Contemporary NYC. 3.00 points.

CC/GS/SEAS: Partial Fulfillment of Global Core Requirement

Of the world's estimated 7,000 languages – representing migrations and historical developments thousands of years old – the majority are primarily oral, little documented, and increasingly endangered under the onslaught of global languages like English. This course will take the unprecedented, paradoxical linguistic capital of New York City as a lens for examining how immigrants form communities in a new land, how those communities are integrated into the wider society, and how they grapple with linguistic and cultural change. Drawing on sociolinguistics, anthropology, and history, the course will focus on texts from and encounters with members of three of the city's fastest-growing but least-studied communities (Indigenous Americans, Himalayans, Central Asians) before closing with a series of classes exploring broader questions around mapping, education, policy, the role of linguists, revitalization and the future of language and mobility

Spring 2024: LING UN3102

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
LING 3102	001/20735	M W 1:10pm - 2:25pm 5ab Kraft Center	Ross Perlin	3.00	59/60

Fall 2024: LING UN3102

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
LING 3102	001/13831	T Th 4:10pm - 5:25pm Room TBA	Ross Perlin	3.00	60/60

LING UN3103 Language, Brain and Mind. 3.00 points.

The ability to speak distinguishes humans from all other animals, including our closest relatives, the chimpanzees. Why is this so? What makes this possible? This course seeks to answer these questions. We will look at the neurological and psychological foundations of the human faculty of language. How did our brains change to allow language to evolve? Where in our brains are the components of language found? Are our minds specialized for learning language or is it part of our general cognitive abilities to learn? How are words and sentences produced and their meanings recognized? The structure of languages around the world varies greatly; does this have psychological effects for their speakers?

Fall 2024: LING UN3103

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
LING 3103	001/11718	M W 2:40pm - 3:55pm Room TBA	William Foley	3.00	45/80

LING UN3997 Supervised Individual Research. 2-4 points.

Fall 2024: LING UN3997

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
LING 3997	001/14449		William Foley	2-4	1/5

LING UN3998 Supervised Individual Research. 2-4 points.

Supervised Individual Research

LING GU4108 LANGUAGE HISTORY. 3.00 points.

Prerequisites: LING UN3101

Prerequisites: LING UN3101 Language, like all components of culture, is structured and conventional, yet can nevertheless change over time. This course examines how language changes, firstly as a self-contained system that changes organically and autonomously, and secondly as contextualized habits that change in time, in space, and in communities. Workload: readings # discussion, weekly problems, and final examination

Spring 2024: LING GU4108

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
LING 4108	001/14820	T Th 1:10pm - 2:25pm 333 Uris Hall	William Foley	3.00	28/40

LING GU4120 LANG DOCUMENTATION/FIELD MTHDS. 3.00 points.

Prerequisites: LING UN3101

Prerequisites: LING UN3101 In light of the predicted loss of up to 90% of the world languages by the end of this century, it has become urgent that linguists take a more active role in documenting and conserving endangered languages. In this course, we will learn the essential skills and technology of language documentation through work with speakers of an endangered language

LING GU4171 LANGUAGES OF AFRICA. 3.00 points.

The African continent is home not to simply a collection of similar "African dialects," but to at least 1000 distinct languages that belong to five language families, none of them any more closely related than English and its relatives are to Japanese. This includes the Semitic languages that emerged in the Middle East and are now most commonly associated with Arabic and Hebrew, the famous "click" languages of Southern Africa whose origins are still shrouded by mystery, and in the case of Malagasy on Madagascar, the Austronesian family of Southeast Asia and Oceania - the language traces to speakers who travelled over the ocean from Borneo to Africa. This course will examine languages in all of these families, with a focus on how they demonstrate a wide array of linguistic processes and how they interact with social history, anthropology, and geography.

LING GU4172 The Structure of Cambodian. 3 points.

Like every other language, Cambodian is totally unique in some respects (these are of interest only to the language learner), and a representative human language in others (these are of interest to all students of language). Thus, for example, like every written language, Cambodian will exhibit diglossia: the grammar and the vocabulary of the written language will differ from that of the spoken language. It is also a member of a language family, known as Austroasiatic, whose members are spoken from NE India through Malaysia, Myanmar, and Indochina. In addition, Cambodian is a structural representative of a given type of language spoken throughout mainland Southeast Asia. That is, in many respects, the structure of Cambodian is similar to those of Lao, Thai, Vietnamese, as well as Hmong. In the "Far West" of SE Asia, are spoken other languages, among them Burmese, Mon, and Karen, which are still similar, but less so. All of these languages are isolating, monosyllabic languages. Of the languages just listed, only Vietnamese and Mon are genetically related to Cambodian. Finally, in its orthography and lexicon, Cambodian has borrowed so extensively from Indic languages, that all literate speakers have a considerable background in practical etymology, and recognize borrowings from, say, Pali, as English speakers generally do not recognize borrowings from Norman French or Latin or Greek. Since the Indic languages belong to Indoeuropean, some unexpected words in Cambodian (e.g. *niam*, *smaeu*) will turn out to have English cognates (like *name*, *same*).

Your goal in this course is not to acquire a speaking knowledge of Khmer. (For that you would need a pedagogical grammar, a native-speaker instructor, and hours and hours of practice in the lab and in the classroom.) It is rather to understand from a linguist's point of view what it is that makes this language a typical language of this part of the world. We will be working through a reference grammar of the language together. You are each also going to 'adopt' another mainland SE Asian language for purposes of comparison, to experience for yourself what it means for a language to be a member of a linguistic alliance or Sprachbund. You may select your own 'pet' language, and your assignment will then be to 'master' this language in the same way that you have 'mastered' Khmer.

LING GU4190 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS. 3.00 points.

Prerequisites: LING UN3101

Prerequisites: LING UN3101 How discourse works; how language is used: oral vs. written modes of language; the structure of discourse; speech acts and speech genres; the expression of power; authenticity; and solidarity in discourse, dialogicity, pragmatics, and mimesis

LING GU4206 ADV GRAMMAR AND GRAMMARS. 3.00 points.

Prerequisites: LING UN3101 *LING W3101*.

An investigation of the possible types of grammatical phenomena (argument structure, tense/aspect/mood, relative clauses, classifiers, and deixis). This typological approach is enriched by the reading of actual grammars of languages from Asia, Africa, Australia, and the Americas in which grammatical descriptions are read with an eye to important notional concepts of grammar: reference and categorization, case and role of arguments with predicates (ergativity), tense/aspect/mood. Discussion of meaning is combined with attention to expression (that is, morphology), which yanks our attention towards language change (grammaticalization)

LING GU4376 PHONETICS # PHONOLOGY. 3.00 points.

Prerequisites: LING UN3101

Prerequisites: LING UN3101 An investigation of the sounds of human language, from the perspective of phonetics (articulation and acoustics, including computer-aided acoustic analysis) and phonology (the distribution and function of sounds in individual languages)

Fall 2024: LING GU4376

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
LING 4376	001/11715	T Th 11:40am - 12:55pm Room TBA	Meredith Landman	3.00	38/60

LING GU4800 LANGUAGE # SOCIETY. 3.00 points.

How language structure and usage varies according to societal factors such as social history and socioeconomic factors, illustrated with study modules on language contact, language standardization and literacy, quantitative sociolinguistic theory, language allegiance, language, and power

Spring 2024: LING GU4800

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
LING 4800	001/14825	T Th 11:40am - 12:55pm 413 Kent Hall	John McWhorter	3.00	53/71

LING GU4903 SYNTAX. 3.00 points.

Prerequisites: LING UN3101

Prerequisites: LING UN3101 Syntax - the combination of words - has been at the center of the Chomskyan revolution in Linguistics. This is a technical course which examines modern formal theories of syntax, focusing on later versions of generative syntax (Government and Binding) with secondary attention to alternative models (HPSG, Categorical Grammar)

Fall 2024: LING GU4903

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
LING 4903	001/11716	T Th 2:40pm - 3:55pm Room TBA	Meredith Landman	3.00	18/30