

Due to COVID-19, our department is offering a mix of in-person, blended and online courses for Fall 2020

LINGUISTICS
Fall 2020

Language (Online)

LING-UA 1-001

Professor Juliet Stanton

T/R 12:30PM - 1:45PM

Satisfies Introductory course requirement and the Societies and Social Science component of the College Core Curriculum

Recitations (Online)

This course is an introductory survey of the field of linguistics—the scientific study of language. During the semester, we will look at questions like the following: Is speaking an instinctual or a learned behavior? Why do children acquire language so much faster and easier than adults, and what are the stages of acquisition? What do the native speakers of a language know about the language's word structure, sentence structure, sentence meaning, and pronunciation? How is language processed in the brain? How and why did language evolve into such a complex system? How is language affected by social class and race? The course will approach these questions from a scientific perspective, incorporating methodologies from mathematics and logic, as well as the social sciences (such as psychology and sociology). It will provide you with the necessary background to continue your studies in linguistics at a more advanced level if you choose to. It satisfies the Introductory Course requirement for Linguistics majors and is a prerequisite for some of the other courses. Language is a CORE exemptor for CAS students; it satisfies the Societies and Social Sciences course requirement.

Language & Mind (Online)

LING-UA 3-001/PSYCH-UA 27-001

Profs Ailís Cournane & Brian McElree

M/W 12:30PM - 1:45PM

Satisfies Introductory course requirement

Recitations (Blended)

This course deals with what our knowledge of language can tell us about the nature of the mind, and vice versa. It is offered jointly by Psychology and Linguistics, presenting methodology and results from both fields. It is well known that language is a social phenomenon; this course will focus on some aspects of language that make its study more like a natural science. We discuss the structure of sentences (syntax), words (morphology), and sound shape (phonetics, phonology), and ask how these are acquired, mentally represented, and processed by humans.

Introduction to Semantics (Blended)

LING-UA 4-001

Professor Chris Barker

T/R 12:30PM – 1:45PM

PREREQUISITE: LING-UA 1 OR LING-UA 2 OR LING-UA 3 OR LING-UA 13

Recitation (Blended)

Satisfies Semantics requirement

This course is an introduction to the study of meaning, more specifically, the meaning of expressions and sentences in natural languages like English. What sort of things could meanings be? How do the meanings of words differ from the meanings of larger phrases? What is the role of context in enriching the meaning conveyed by a sentence? What is the difference between what is explicitly said versus what is merely implied? What is the difference between literal meaning and metaphorical meaning? The approach will be formal and scientific, using the methods of theoretical linguistics. Our main goal will be to propose explicit and precise hypotheses about how the meanings of phrases are determined by the meanings of the words that they contain, and to test these hypotheses by comparing the predictions that they make with what various phrases actually mean.

Patterns in Language (Online Asynchronous)

LING-UA 6-001

Professor Lucas Champollion

Recitations (Online)

Satisfies the Quantitative Reasoning component of the College Core Curriculum

If a computer can beat humans at Jeopardy!, does it follow that machines can think? Is it possible to predict the spread of the flu based on patterns in Google searches? Did Shakespeare really write that sonnet? Scientists use patterns in language to answer these questions, using the same concepts that underlie such everyday applications as search engines, automatic translators, speech recognition, spell-checkers, and auto-correction tools. We examine these applications, focusing on the technological and linguistic ideas behind them and gaining practical hands-on experience and insight into how they work. No programming experience is required; students only need curiosity about language and some everyday experience with computers.

For more information and a syllabus, please see <https://nyu.edu/projects/champollion/patterns/>.

Sound and Language (Online Asynchronous)

LING-UA 11-001

Professor Maria Gouskova

Recitations (Online)

Satisfies Phonetics requirement

This course offers an introduction to the sounds of the world's languages, how they are produced and how they are organized as basic units of linguistic representation. Topics include basic phonetic and phonological theory, the description and analysis of speech sounds, the anatomy, physiology, and acoustical properties of speech sounds, elements of speech perception, and the properties of connected speech. Students develop skills to distinguish and produce the sounds of human languages and to transcribe them using the International Phonetic Alphabet.

Grammatical Analysis (Online)

LING-UA 13-001

Professor Gary Thoms

T/R 9:30AM – 10:45AM

PREREQUISITE: LING-UA 1 OR LING-UA2 OR LING-UA3 OR Permission of the Instructor

Satisfies Syntax requirement

Recitation (Online)

What determines the sequencing of words in a given language? How can we explain word order variation within and across languages? Are there universal syntactic properties common to the grammar of all languages? This course presents the motivation for the modern generative approach to the scientific study of language and systematically develops a model that will account for the most basic syntactic constructions of natural language. Skills in scientific argumentation and reasoning are developed primarily through an analysis of English, but occasionally of other languages as well.

Language and Society (Blended)

LING-UA 15-001

Professor Gregory Guy

T/R 12:30PM – 1:45PM

Satisfies the Societies and Social Science component of the College Core Curriculum

Recitations (In-person)

Language is the medium of social interaction; speakers use language to construct their identities and manage social relationships, and their usage reflects and reveals the social organization of their communities. This course examines sources of diversity within and between speech communities: patterns of language change, the emergence of different dialects and languages, the social differentiation of language by class, gender, ethnicity and age. Linguistic conformity is examined in terms of social norms, institutions, and power dynamics. Individual linguistic diversity is explored in terms of language acquisition and personal networks, stylistic variation, and accommodation to social settings and interlocutors. We also consider language at the macro-social level: official languages, language policy and planning, multilingualism and language contact, language in education. Students conduct original research on language in use.

Bilingualism (Online)

LING-UA 18-001

Professor Zvezdana Vrzic

M/W 4:55PM - 6:10PM

Most people in the world today grow up speaking multiple languages. In this class, students will be introduced to a variety of linguistic and social issues that are raised by the phenomenon of multilingualism. Among other topics, we will read about and discuss different multilingual communities to discover the ways in which people use multiple languages in their daily lives; policies that exist in societies with multilingual populations; differences in growing up learning one and two or more native languages; changes that happen in a language as it comes under the influence of another language; reasons why people in traditionally bilingual communities can shift away from using one of their languages. We will also investigate what the study of these and other phenomena tied to multilingualism can tell us more generally about language and about community and identity.

African American Vernacular English (Online)

LING-UA 23-001 / SCA-UA 799-001

Professor Renée Blake

T/R 2:00PM – 3:15PM

Introduces the language behavior of African Americans. Discusses African American Vernacular English in terms of its linguistic and cultural distinctiveness, both intrasystemically and in comparison with other dialects of American English. Relates the English vernacular spoken by African Americans in urban settings to creole languages spoken on the South Carolina Sea Islands (Gullah), in the Caribbean, and in West Africa. Also approaches the subject from the perspective of the history of the expressive uses of African American Vernacular English (e.g., in signifyin' and rappin') and the educational, attitudinal, and social implications connected with the language.

The Syntax/Semantics Interface Cross-Linguistically (In-person)

LING-UA 37-001

Professor Anna Szabolcsi

M/W 2:00PM – 3:15PM

PREREQUISITE: LING-UA 13, OR Permission of the Instructor. LING-UA 4 is recommended but not required.

In many languages of the world, the topic and the focus of the sentence, the scope relations among quantifiers and negation, and the role of the speaker and addressee are made transparent by word order and various suffixes on the verb. They are integral parts of the grammar. We study data from languages from Hungarian to Kathmandu Newari from the perspective of theoretical linguistics and ask what they tell us about how the syntax/semantics interface works in universal grammar.

Romance Syntax (In-person)

LING-UA 42-001

Professor Richard Kayne

M/W 12:30PM – 1:45PM

PREREQUISITE: LING-UA 13

This course is an introduction to comparative syntax, using Romance languages as subject matter, especially French, Italian, and Spanish, but also Catalan, Portuguese and various Romance dialects. Specific areas of syntax to be studied will include null subjects, possessives, subject clitics, object clitics and auxiliary selection.

Neural Bases of Language (In-person)

LING-UA 43-001/PSYCH-UA 300-001

Professor Liina Pyllkanen

T/R 11:00AM – 12:15PM

PREREQUISITE: PSYCH-UA 25, PSYCH-UA 29, LING-UA 1, LING-UA 2 OR LING-UA 28 OR Permission of the Instructor

Recitation (In-person)

What are the brain bases of our ability to speak and understand language? Are some parts of the brain dedicated to language? What is it like to lose language? This course provides a state-of-the-art survey of the cognitive neuroscience of language, a rapidly developing multidisciplinary field in the intersection of Linguistics, Psycholinguistics and Neuroscience. Lectures cover all aspects of language processing in the healthy brain from early sensory perception to higher level semantic interpretation as well as a range of neurological and developmental language disorders, including aphasias, dyslexia and genetic language impairment. Functional neuroimaging techniques will be introduced.

Field Methods (In-person)

LING-UA 44-001/LING-GA 44-001 Professors Gillian Gallagher & Chris Collins M/W 9:30AM - 10:45AM

PREREQUISITE: LING-UA 12 OR LING-UA 13 OR Permission of the Instructor

Field Methods is a hands-on approach to learning linguistics. Every year, a different language is chosen to investigate. Students interview a native speaker of an unfamiliar language, usually a nonlinguist, to study all aspects of the language's grammar: phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. They learn to evaluate and organize real, non-idealized linguistic data and to formulate generalizations, which then serve as the basis for a research paper. This course is a unique opportunity to obtain a rich set of data on a new topic of theoretical interest in any field of linguistics.