

LINGUISTICS Spring 2020

Language

LING-UA 1-001

Professor Gary Thoms

M/W, 11:00AM – 12:15PM

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

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

LING-UA 1-005

Professor Chris Barker

T/R, 12:30PM – 1:45PM

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Introduction to Psycholinguistics

LING-UA 5-001

Professor Brian McElree

M/W, 2:00PM - 3:15PM

Psycholinguistics aims to understand the mental representations and processes that enable comprehension and production of written and spoken language. This course examines behavioral research and computational models of core components of language use, including speech perception, lexical representations and access, and grammatical and semantic processing.

Phonological Analysis**LING-UA 12-001****Professor Juliet Stanton****T/R, 9:30AM – 10:45AM****PREREQUISITE: LING-UA 11 OR Permission of the Instructor****Satisfies Phonology requirement**

Phonology is the study of how speech sounds pattern and contrast. How do we know that 'gdin' is not a possible English word but 'krin' is? What does it take to recognize a foreign accent? How can sound systems of languages differ, what do all languages have in common, and what are the sorts of patterns not found in any human language? To answer these questions, we will focus on such concepts as sound classes, features, phonemes, allophones, and syllable structure, and we will look at the role these concepts play in the most common phonological processes in the world's languages. The course will also include a basic introduction to the phonology of stress, tone, and intonation. Analytical skills will be honed by solving phonological problems based on data from English and many other languages.

Grammatical Analysis**LING-UA 13-001****Professor Stephanie Harves****T/R, 12:30PM – 1:45PM****PREREQUISITE: LING-UA 1 OR LING-UA 2 OR LING-UA 3 OR Permission of the Instructor****Satisfies Syntax requirement**

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 by analyzing problems in the syntax of English and a number of other languages.

Advanced Semantics**LING-UA 19-001****Professor Anna Szabolcsi****M/W, 3:30PM – 4:45PM****PREREQUISITE: LING-UA 4 OR Permission of the Instructor**

This course prepares students for graduate-level coursework in semantics and the syntax-semantics interface, and generally aims to build interest and confidence in formal semantics. It starts with building a solid foundation in propositional and predicate logic, elements of the lambda calculus, and intensionality. It shows how those tools are useful in accounting for long-distance meaning relationships, quantification, and information structure, and branches out into dynamic and inquisitive semantics. Students are encouraged to write a short term paper.

Sex, Gender, and Language**LING-UA 21-001 / SCA-UA 712-002****Professor Louise Vasvari****M/W, 4:55PM – 6:10PM**

This course will examine gender from a multidisciplinary perspective and in particular as a sociolinguistic variable in speech behavior. We will discuss how gendered linguistic practices – intersecting with race and class-linked language – both reflect and shape our identity. We will also review the variability in the linguistic expression of gender in various languages and cultures around the world, as well as within the single national context of the United States. We will also discuss the constructionist argument that anatomy need not be linguistic destiny and that language may be used to perform social identities that do not match the individual's biological characteristics. In this context, we will consider the limits and possibilities of gender self-[re]construction through language, including [re]naming strategies, and pronoun use, and coming-out stories. We will also consider the efficacy of language reform to reduce gender stereotyping and discrimination.

Morphology

LING-UA 29-001

Professor Maria Gouskova

T/R, 11:00PM – 12:15PM

PREREQUISITE: LING-UA 1 or LING- UA 3

This course introduces linguistic morphology. We will study the rules for composing words and sentences from the smallest units of linguistic combination -- the "morphemes." Why can the same message be expressed in one word in some languages but requires an entire sentence in others? Why do the shapes of prefixes, suffixes and roots change depending on their semantic and phonological context? What rules do different languages use for forming new words?

Field Methods

LING-UA 44-001/LING-GA 44-001

Professor Gillian Gallagher

T/R, 9:30AM – 10:45AM

PREREQUISITE: LING-UA 12, 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, 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.

Machine Learning for Language Understanding

LING-UA 52-001

Professor Sam Bowman

T/R, 2:00PM – 3:15PM

PREREQUISITE: at least one course with a substantial Python programming component, such as Introduction to Computer Programming (No Prior Experience) (CSCI-UA 2) or Introduction to Computer Programming (Limited Prior Experience) (CSCI-UA 3), or an advanced CSCI-UA or other programming course; Calculus I (MATH-UA 121) or higher, or equivalent; and background in probability theory, e.g. Theory of Probability (MATH-UA 233); or permission of the instructor.

Building computational models that can understand human language has long been a goal for researchers in computational linguistics and in the area of artificial intelligence called natural language processing. Many of the biggest successes in research toward this goal have relied on machine learning: a family of methods that allow computers to learn to reproduce some human behavior by example, rather than by explicit programming. This course covers widely-used machine learning methods for language understanding—with a special focus on machine learning methods based on artificial neural networks—and culminates in a substantial final project in which students write an original research paper in AI or computational linguistics. If you take this class, you'll be exposed only to a fraction of the many approaches that researchers have used to teach language to computers. However, you'll get training and practice with all the research skills that you'll need to explore the field further on your own. This includes not only the skills to design and build computational models, but also to design experiments to test those models, to write and present your results, and to read and evaluate results from the scientific literature.

First Language Acquisition

LING-UA 59-001

Professor Ailis Cournane

M/W, 12:30PM – 1:45PM

This course offers an overview of the field of first language acquisition. How does one develop from a pre-linguistic newborn infant to a mature language-user with a complex grammatical system (or systems)? What are the relative roles of inborn cognitive abilities and input (i.e., the language data the child hears or sees in their environment) in determining the properties and time course of language development? First language development is a multifaceted, robust phenomenon in our species that proceeds over many years of early life and provides an ultra-rich testing ground for psychological and linguistic theories. We will focus on linguistic development from birth through to early school age,

looking at monolingual, bilingual, and atypical (e.g., Autism, Specific Language Impairment) populations. In the first half of the course we will focus on development in individual linguistic domains: phonology, vocabulary, morphosyntax, semantics, and pragmatics. In the latter half of the course, we will probe deeper into theoretical approaches to language acquisition, with a focus on primary literature and active debates in the field. We will also further explore the complex learning circumstances of certain populations, like children growing up bilingual and children presenting with atypical development, continually asking what evidence the diversity of learning situations brings to bear on the theoretical debates.

Language Variation and Change over the Lifespan

LING-UA 102

Professor Laurel MacKenzie

W, 9:30AM – 12:15PM

PREREQUISITE: LING-UA 1 OR Permission of the Instructor

In this seminar, we'll study the acquisition and development of sociolinguistic variation over the lifespan. Questions we'll investigate include: When and how do children pick up on the socially-meaningful variation used by the adults in their community? What is the role of adolescents in advancing language change? Can we change the way we speak in middle age and beyond? What happens when speakers of different dialects come into contact with one another? Students will carry out their own longitudinal study of a linguistic variable of interest in the speech of a politician, celebrity, or other public figure for whom longitudinal recordings are freely available, and connect their findings to topics discussed in the course. To this end, students will learn basic techniques for the collection and analysis of sociolinguistic data.