

LINGUISTICS

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Linguistics is the systematic study of human language. Linguistics studies how language works: how it is produced and processed in the mind, how it develops in children, how it is used in society, and how it changes over time. Linguistics also looks at the structures of the thousands of spoken and signed languages used throughout the world. The undergraduate major in Linguistics introduces students to many of the key areas of linguistics and offers a program of study leading toward an understanding of phonological, grammatical, and semantic structure and various approaches to descriptive, experimental, computational, and historical linguistics. Majors take a flexible combination of courses across subfields of linguistics and go into depth in one or more areas. Students learn about the many ways that language interfaces with questions in the social sciences, humanities, and sciences, and they often take complementary coursework in other departments or programs. All students write a senior essay and many make use of their linguistics work in future careers. Interested students should consult the director of undergraduate studies (DUS).

COURSES FOR NONMAJORS AND MAJORS

Students with no previous background in linguistics are encouraged to approach the field by taking a 1000-level course. All 1000-level courses are accessible to students with no prior background.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

See [Links](#) to the attributes indicating courses approved for the Linguistics major requirements.

The major requires twelve term courses in linguistics and related areas, distributed as follows:

1. Breadth requirement (five courses). To provide exposure to a broad range of linguistic subfields, all majors must take four of the following ten courses: LING 1179, LING 2120, LING 2200, LING 2270, LING 2320, LING 2530, LING 2630, LING 2750, LING 2790, and LING 3610. In addition, students must take one additional course to complete the breadth requirement. This course can be either one of the ten listed above or a course that covers several linguistic subfields, such as Introduction to Linguistics (LING 1100) or Cognitive Science of Language (LING 1160). Courses outside of the lists above can be substituted with approval of the DUS.
2. Depth requirement (two courses). In one of the eight areas of linguistics (historical, computational, phonetics, phonology, syntax, semantics, morphology, language and mind/brain), students must take two courses beyond the introductory level.
3. Electives (three courses). Three additional courses relating to linguistics are required, at least one of which must be at the 2000 level or above. Electives may be chosen from courses offered by the Linguistics department or, with approval of the DUS, from related courses in programs such as Anthropology, Classics, Cognitive Science, Computer Science, English, Philosophy, Psychology, or foreign languages.

No more than two foreign language courses may count toward the major without specific DUS approval.

4. Senior research requirement (one course). LING 4900, Research Methods in Linguistics, is required and is typically taken in the fall term for those students graduating in the spring. Students graduating in the fall may take it in the fall term of their junior year. This course prepares students for the senior essay.

Credit/D/Fail No courses taken Credit/D/Fail, Pass/Fail, or any scale other than the standard letter-grade scale, may be applied toward the requirements of the major without specific DUS approval.

Outside credit Courses taken at another institution or during an approved summer or term-time study abroad program may count toward the major requirements with DUS approval.

SENIOR REQUIREMENT

Senior requirement (one course). Students attend a research colloquium and write a senior essay in LING 4910 during the final spring term of the senior year.

ADVISING

Simultaneous B.A./M.A. degree program Exceptional students may be able to structure their undergraduate programs to become eligible for a simultaneous master's degree in selected graduate programs. Students must successfully complete relevant graduate course requirements and earn qualitative grades of Honors, High Pass, or Pass. At least two grades of Honors are required, and all grades must average High Pass in order to fulfill requirements for the master's degree.

Interested students should consult with both the DUS and DGS prior to submitting the online application, which is due no later than the last day of classes in their fifth term of enrollment in Yale College. Students should also review the GSAS Degree-Granting Departments and Programs page and select the relevant program for specific requirements and application information.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Prerequisites None

Number of courses 12 term courses (incl senior req)

Specific courses required LING 4900

Distribution of courses 5 courses in distinct areas of linguistics (breadth req), as specified; 2 addtl courses beyond intro level in 1 area (depth req); 3 electives, at least 1 at the 2000 level or above

Substitution permitted Electives from related programs with DUS approval

Senior requirement LING 4910