

## School of Arts and Sciences

## LINGUISTICS

[www.linguistics.pitt.edu](http://www.linguistics.pitt.edu)

Linguistics is concerned with the study of language as a core property of human cognition and interaction. It is a broad field that straddles the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. Major areas of study in linguistics include the following fields:

- Applied linguistics: second-language learning theory, literacy, bilingual education
- Theoretical linguistics: development of psychologically plausible models of language sound systems, word structure, sentence and discourse structure, and meaning
- Historical and comparative linguistics: study of language history, both language change and relationships among languages
- Descriptive-anthropological linguistics: documentation and analysis of languages, especially little-known languages through field work
- Psycholinguistics: research on such topics as sentence processing, problems in reading, and how children acquire their first language
- Sociolinguistics: study of language use and socially controlled variation in form, conversation and narrative discourse, social trends reflected in language use, and political aspects of language use
- Computational linguistics: natural language generation, knowledge representation and artificial intelligence, recognition of systems

Many, but certainly not all, people come to linguistics through a love of languages. However, love of languages itself is not sufficient to ensure success and happiness as a linguistics major. The student must also enjoy analytical thought, as linguists employ analytical tools in the study of human languages. Students considering a major in linguistics should take the introductory linguistics course at their earliest opportunity to help gauge whether the major is right for them. The linguistics major gives students a solid foundation in the central areas of linguistic theory and analysis. The structure of human language (its sounds, word structures, and syntax) is the focus of the linguistics courses required for the major. In addition, the major's language requirement is designed to make sure students acquire a perspective on linguistic structures besides those of their native language and at least some exposure to one language that is structurally very unlike English.

#### Major Requirements

Students must complete at least 27 credits in the Department of Linguistics, including the following courses:

- Linguistics 1000 (formerly 1950) Introduction to Linguistics
- Linguistics 1578 Phonetics and Phonemics
- Linguistics 1579 Phonology
- Linguistics 1773 Morphology
- Linguistics 1777 Syntactic Theory
- Linguistics 1860 Historical Linguistics OR Linguistics 1682 Introduction to Semantics  
OR Linguistics 1267 (Aspects of Sociolinguistics)
- Linguistics 1930 Introduction to Applied Linguistics—Capstone course

A student may petition to have a given requirement waived if an equivalent course was completed elsewhere before as a departmental major.



### **Other requirements and rules for linguistics majors are as follows:**

- Knowledge of any foreign language equivalent to one year of college-level study is required. The student's knowledge of the language may be evaluated if first year college-level courses are not taken.
- Majors must have at least a 2.00 quality point average (QPA) in linguistics courses.
- No more than six credits may be taken on the S/N basis.
- Credit by examination is not available.
- Courses for the W-requirement and for the A&S-required 12-credit related area are chosen in consultation with the departmental advisor. Besides language and foreign literature departments, the most appropriate related areas are anthropology, communication, computer science, English, history and philosophy of science, psychology, philosophy, sociology, and theater arts.
- Linguistics 0080 Aspects of Language and Linguistics 0101–0964 Uncommonly Taught Languages do not count toward the major.
- In addition to the language requirement described above, the student must take one more term of language study in some language that is not Romance (including Latin), Germanic, Baltic, Slavic, or Greek. (Note: Courses offered by the English Language Institute for students who are learning or improving their English language skills do not count toward the linguistics major.)

### **Undergraduate Minor in Linguistics**

An undergraduate minor in linguistics would be particularly useful for students majoring in English, foreign languages, philosophy, anthropology, psychology, sociology, communications, speech science, neuroscience, computer science, and information science, as well as for students with an interest in teaching English as a second language, going to law school, or otherwise choosing a profession in which language plays a crucial part.

The minor consists of 15 credits and comprises the following courses:

1. Linguistics 1000 (formerly 1950) Introduction to Linguistics
2. Linguistics 1578 Phonetics and Phonemics
3. Linguistics 1777 Syntactic Theory
4. Two electives, chosen from the linguistics courses at the 1000 level (e.g. Phonology, Morphology, Historical Linguistics, Aspects of Sociolinguistics, Introduction to Applied Linguistics)

### **The Job Market for Graduates with a BA in Linguistics**

As with most other humanities majors, there are few jobs that come directly from a BA in linguistics. However, linguistics majors with a desire to travel outside the United States do have one advantage over majors in other fields: once beyond the borders, they are likely to find jobs in applied linguistics (teaching English as a second language). Moreover, many graduate programs, e.g. law, speech and health science, and psychology look favorably on an undergraduate major in linguistics.

Because of the importance of automatic information-processing technology, the field of computational linguistics is a rapidly growing job market with many job opportunities. Undergraduate training in linguistics, computer science, and psychology provides good preparation in this field; students interested in this area should arrange to major in one of these departments and to take supplementary courses in the others.

### **Graduate Programs for Which Linguistics Students Are Qualified**

The study of linguistics provides an excellent foundation for students wanting to do graduate work in a number of areas:

Theoretical and applied linguistics

Psychology, particularly psycholinguistics or cognitive science

Computational linguistics and language technology

Many foreign language programs, given an appropriate language training

Programs in education, especially those with an emphasis on bilingual and/or international education, or teaching English as a second language

Special education, such as working with autistic children, or speech pathology

Law school

**For more information about the linguistics major, contact:**  
University of Pittsburgh  
Department of Linguistics  
Shelome Gooden  
2816 Cathedral of Learning  
Pittsburgh, PA 15260  
412-624-5922  
E-mail: [lingadv@pitt.edu](mailto:lingadv@pitt.edu)  
[www.linguistics.pitt.edu](http://www.linguistics.pitt.edu)

**For more information on other majors, contact:**  
University of Pittsburgh  
Office of Admissions and Financial Aid  
Alumni Hall, 4227 Fifth Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15260-6601  
412-624-PITT  
E-mail: [oafa@pitt.edu](mailto:oafa@pitt.edu)  
[www.oafa.pitt.edu](http://www.oafa.pitt.edu)

## Special Programs and Opportunities

### Language Learning Resource Center (Language Lab)

Located in the Cathedral of Learning, the Language Lab provides excellent opportunities for language practice. In the Audio Lab you can engage in second and/or foreign language practice either using audiocassettes or interactively with a tutor. You can use videocassettes to perfect your sign language. Also, a range of software is available in the Mac Classroom including Systeme-D, Speech Works, and Hypersign, and support for Polish, Swedish, and Russian classes. The center also has a sound-recording studio that not only enables the Language Lab to record up-to-date language courses, but also allows you to make high-quality audio recordings.

### The English Language Institute (ELI)

ELI was established in 1964 and is the foremost institute of English for speakers of other languages. It offers intensive courses in English, and most of them emphasize English for academic purposes. The program consists of intermediate and advanced courses in reading, writing, listening, speaking, and grammar. In addition, it is also a center for training teachers in this field, and the majority of students who earn the TESOL certificate receive practical training through this institute. ELI is a useful source of data for papers and theses on second language acquisition as well.

### The Language Acquisition Institute (LAI)

LAI offers instruction in uncommonly taught languages. The languages taught at any time depend on the availability of native-speaking tutors, materials, and funds. In a typical term, about 15 languages will be offered. The most popular course is American Sign Language; however, other courses that have been recently taught are Arabic, Dutch, Finnish, Modern Greek, Hindi, Hungarian, Indonesian, Irish Gaelic, Korean, Farsi, Quechua, Swahili, Swedish, Tagalog, Thai, Turkish, and Vietnamese.

### University Honors College (UHC)

UHC offers many resources for talented, active students—unique courses, special degrees, opportunities to perform independent research or teach, supplemental advising, and a social and academic community of similarly motivated students. UHC courses offer a more in-depth treatment of the material covered in a nonhonors course. Students work more problems, write more, read more, and discuss topics in greater depth. Although UHC does not have a formal membership and does invite all students to participate in honors courses, there are certain qualifications that students must meet to be eligible to take UHC courses. Entering freshmen are automatically considered for UHC participation on the basis of their admissions applications. A minimum QPA of 3.25 is required for current Pitt students.

### Study Abroad

Studying abroad is an exciting way to add an international perspective to your undergraduate education and strengthen your credentials as a graduate. Since only about 8 percent of American students have studied abroad, this experience distinguishes you when you enter the job market or pursue graduate study. The experience allows you to broaden your personal experience and gain an appreciation of other cultures while earning credits toward your degree. Scholarships are available and financial aid is applicable.

Some study abroad programs of particular interest to linguistics majors are:

#### University of Newcastle, Newcastle, Australia

This study abroad program will take you to Newcastle, Australia, a traditional Australian city located on the coastline and only two hours from Sydney. You will be close to numerous outdoor activities, such as surfing, sailing, hang-gliding, bushwalking, and golf, as well as experiences like theater, restaurants, art galleries, and pubs. For your mind, the university offers a full curriculum of courses in English, which you can participate in for one semester or one full academic year. Some examples of classes are classical civilization, anthropology, linguistics, film studies, and philosophy.

**University of Ghana, Ghana, Africa**

During this program, you will spend the fall, spring, or both in the heart of a developing African nation. The University of Ghana is a self-contained community with about 6,000 students. It offers courses like Twi language, Ghanaian and African studies, literature, music, theater arts, religion, history, political science, law, economics, natural sciences, and math. You will also have the opportunity to participate in sports, other clubs, and volunteer organizations. You will also go on numerous field trips to sites of historical and cultural importance, like the Ashanti museum in Kumasi, the colonial forts and castles at Elmina, the Abuni botanical garden, and rural Ghanaian villages.