

DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS

Introduction

Courses in the department are offered for the general student and for those who wish to receive the bachelor of arts with a major in linguistics. Courses in linguistics are intended to open up systematic perspectives on the nature of human language by means of detailed studies of language structure, language change and language acquisition, the sound system of language, and the syntactic/semantic system of language. The major is designed to provide a fundamental understanding of modern linguistics for the student seeking a general education in the liberal arts as well as for the student preparing for graduate study.

Advising

All majors and minors have a primary academic advisor from the Academic Advising Program (<https://advising.unc.edu/>). Students are strongly encouraged to meet regularly with their advisor and review their Tar Heel Tracker each semester. The department's director of undergraduate studies works with current and prospective majors and minors by appointment. Departmental academic advising is particularly important for those majors who are considering going on to graduate school or who are considering the dual B.A.–M.A. program.

Graduate School and Career Opportunities

The Department of Linguistics offers an M.A. program with opportunities for specialization in a number of subareas, and to obtain a certificate in computational linguistics. Detailed information is available from the department website (<https://linguistics.unc.edu/>). Additionally, more than 100 colleges and universities offer linguistics programs, including several dozen that are considered major doctoral programs nationally. Faculty members are pleased to advise students regarding programs best suited to their needs and interests.

In general, the linguistics major is good preparation for a number of career paths because it develops problem solving, the ability to find patterns in complicated data, and writing and argumentation skills. Law and journalism schools and other professional schools are becoming increasingly aware that students with a major in linguistics have strengths in these important areas. Companies in the tech industry often hire linguists to solve problems relating to the development of software for speech-to-text, text-to-speech, and natural language processing and generation. United States citizens with a background in linguistics also may find jobs with United States government agencies.

Some students choose to continue specializing in linguistics teaching or research. For this, they typically need to obtain a graduate degree in linguistics. Other possible careers for linguistics majors that have a close connection to language and linguistics include language teaching, speech pathology/speech and hearing science, language and information technologies (including speech synthesis and recognition, text-content analysis, and machine translation), information and library science, or editing and publishing; some careers in these areas may require a graduate degree.

Major

- Linguistics Major, B.A. (<https://catalog.unc.edu/undergraduate/programs-study/linguistics-major-ba/>)

Minor

- Linguistics Minor (<https://catalog.unc.edu/undergraduate/programs-study/linguistics-minor/>)

Graduate Programs

- M.A. in Linguistics (<https://catalog.unc.edu/graduate/schools-departments/linguistics/>)
- M.A. in Linguistics–Ph.D. in Romance Languages and Literatures (Hispanic Linguistics) (<https://catalog.unc.edu/graduate/schools-departments/linguistics/>)
- Graduate Certificate in Computational Linguistics (<https://linguistics.unc.edu/graduate-program/computational-linguistics-certificate/>)

Courses

- Linguistics (LING) (<https://catalog.unc.edu/courses/ling/>)

Professors

Misha Becker, David Mora-Marín, Elliott Moreton, Jennifer Smith.

Associate Professors

Brian Hsu, Katya Pertsova, J. Michael Terry.

Assistant Professors

Daoxin Li, Jamilläh Rodriguez, Jessica Vélez-Avilés.

Adjunct Faculty

Becky Butler (Carolina Asia Center), Masako Hirotoni (Carleton University), Jim Michnowicz (NCSU), Jeff Mielke (NCSU), Jeff Reaser (NCSU), Erik Thomas (NCSU).

Linguists and Language Scholars in Other Departments

Jennifer Arnold (Psychology and Neuroscience), Mohit Bansal (Computer Science), Uffe Bergeton (Asian Studies), Lucia Binotti (Romance Studies), Laura Demsey (Romance Studies), Bruno Estigarribia (Romance Studies), Peter C. Gordon (Psychology and Neuroscience), Lamar Graham (Romance Studies), Thomas Hofweber (Philosophy), Joseph Lam (Religious Studies), Jim Pryor (Philosophy), Martha Ruiz-Garcia (Romance Studies), Patricia E. Sawin (American Studies), Khalid Shahu (Asian Studies), Sophia Strietholt (Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures).

Professors Emeriti

Nina Furry, Randall Hendrick, Wendan Li, H. Craig Melchert, Paul Roberge.

Contact Information

Linguistics

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Chair

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