Department of Linguistics

Chair
• Lenore Grenoble

Professors
• Diane Brentari
• Susan Gal, Anthropology
• Anastasia Giannakidou
• John Goldsmith
• Lenore Grenoble
• Chris Kennedy
• Jason Merchant
• Salikoko Mufwene
• Michael Silverstein, Anthropology
• Alan Yu

Associate Professors
• Karlos Arregi - Director of Graduate Studies
• Amy Dahlstrom
• Itamar Francez
• Jason Riggle
• Ming Xiang

Assistant Professors
• Allyson Ettinger

Provost’s Postdoctoral Scholars
• Natalia Bermudez
• Monica Do
• Sharese King
• Erik Zyman

Instructor
• Andrew Murphy

Humanities Teaching Fellows
• Patrick Muñoz
• Adam Singerman

Instructional Professors
• Stefanos Katsikas
• Fidèle Mpiranya
• David Reinhart

Emeritus Faculty
• Howard I. Aronson, Linguistics and Slavic Languages & Literatures
• Bill Darden, Linguistics and Slavic Languages & Literatures
• Victor Friedman, Linguistics
• Jerrold Sadock, Linguistics

Since 1926, the Department of Linguistics at the University of Chicago has been at the center of the development of the field, counting among its faculty linguists of the first rank such as Sapir and Bloomfield. It is theory-oriented with a deep empirical interest in languages. One of its outstanding characteristics is its commitment to a wide range of approaches to the study of language. Interdisciplinary, interdepartmental study is encouraged, and students regularly work with faculty in several other departments. Students are expected to become active researchers as soon as possible after their arrival here. Many students come with strong undergraduate training in linguistics, or with a Master’s degree; others come with strong training in fields such
as philosophy, mathematics, or a particular language or language group. The faculty are involved in synchronic and diachronic research on languages from around the world. These varied interests are reflected in the topics of the dissertations that have been written in the Department.

PROGRAM

The graduate program in linguistics, which culminates in a PhD degree, is intended to be completed in six years. The University of Chicago operates on the quarter system. Graduate students normally register for three courses per quarter, for three quarters per year. Students generally take three to four years of coursework.

In the first two years, students take eight foundational (https://linguistics.uchicago.edu/graduate/degree-requirements/#course) courses (https://linguistics-test.uchicago.edu/graduate/degree-requirements/#course) selected from a range of available options. Six of these eight classes must be completed during the student's first year in the program.

In addition to these foundational courses, students must also take a methods course and three additional graduate-level courses in linguistics.

In the second and third years, students continue taking courses and write two qualifying papers (https://linguistics.uchicago.edu/node/72/#papers) under faculty supervision. In addition to these major landmarks, students are required to satisfy a non-Indo European language requirement (https://linguistics.uchicago.edu/node/72/#language) and to pass a reading examination in an additional language other than English. In years two and three, when students are writing qualifying papers, they must also take the Research Seminar course.

Upon completion of the qualifying papers and course and language requirements and defense of a dissertation proposal by the end of the fourth year students are admitted to candidacy for the PhD; the only remaining requirement is the dissertation.

APPLICATION AND ADMISSION

Completed applications for admission and aid, along with all supporting materials, are due in mid-December for the academic year that starts in the following Autumn.

Four parts of the application are critically important and should accompany the application: the student's academic record, letters of recommendation submitted by persons able to describe the student's achievements and promise, the student's statement of purpose, which describes the intellectual issues and subjects which they hope to explore at Chicago, and a sample of pertinent written work that demonstrates the applicant's research interests or capabilities. The sample may consist of published essays, class term papers, or a B.A. or M.A. thesis, or some combination of all of these. The student's academic record is documented through official transcripts, but applicants are also encouraged to submit as supplemental material an 'annotated transcript': a file they create that lists all the courses they have taken which are relevant to graduate study in linguistics, with the grade received, the full name of the instructor, major texts used or studied, and a brief (no more than five sentences) description of the material covered in the course. Such a supplemental file is more informative for judging the preparation of an applicant than is the official transcript.

When completing the application form, it is of benefit to the applicant to be as specific as possible in describing his or her research interests. General comments are of relatively little use; applicants are encouraged to discuss specific linguistic subject matters that they are interested in or have worked on.

If an applicant knows faculty members with whom he or she might work, the latter's names should be given as well. The faculty of the Linguistics Department would be happy to answer any questions that prospective students may have. Please contact them individually regarding their research or classes, or contact the Director of Graduate Studies for more general or administrative questions. Contact information is available online at: http://linguistics.uchicago.edu.

The application process for admission and financial aid for all graduate programs in Humanities is administered through the divisional Office of the Dean of Students. The Application for Admission and Financial Aid, with instructions, deadlines and department specific information is available online at: http://humanities.uchicago.edu/students/admissions (http://humanities.uchicago.edu/students/admissions/)

International students must provide evidence of English proficiency by submitting scores from either the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). (Current minimum scores, etc., are provided with the application.) For more information, please see the Office of International Affairs website at https://internationalaffairs.uchicago.edu, or call them at (773) 702-7752.

Questions pertaining to admissions and aid should be directed to humanitiesadmissions@uchicago.edu or (773) 702-1552.

LINGUISTICS COURSES

LING 23200. Topics in Semantics and Pragmatics. 100 Units.
This focus of this course is conversational implicature. We will take the classic characterization of implicature in Grice as our starting point, and spend the rest of the quarter working through subsequent proposals that refine,
rethink and/or reject it, and the empirical and theoretical concerns that motivate them. Topics to be discussed include: the relation between implicature and semantic composition; the nature and calculation of alternatives to what is said; game theoretic approaches to implicature and their relatives; Bayesean pragmatics; free choice inferences; manner implicature; pragmatic weakening vs. pragmatic strengthening.

Equivalent Course(s): LING 42010

LING 30150. Language and Communication. 100 Units.
This course can also be taken by students who are not majoring in Linguistics but are interested in learning something about the uniqueness of human language, spoken or signed. It covers a selection from the following topics: What is the position of spoken language in the usually multimodal forms of communication among humans? In what ways does spoken language differ from signed language? What features make spoken and signed language linguistic? What features distinguish linguistic means of communication from animal communication? How do humans communicate with animals? From an evolutionary point of view, how can we account for the fact that spoken language is the dominant mode of communication in all human communities around the world? Why cannot animals really communicate linguistically? What do the terms language 'acquisition' and 'transmission' really mean? What factors account for differences between 'language acquisition' by children and by adults? Are children really perfect language learners? What factors bring about language evolution, including language speciation and the emergence of new language varieties? How did language evolve in mankind? This is a general education course without any prerequisites. It provides a necessary foundation to those working on language at the graduate and undergraduate levels.
Instructor(s): Salikoko Mufwene Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): CHDV 20150, CHDV 30150, EDSO 20150, LING 20150

LING 30201. Syntactic Analysis I. 100 Units.
This course is an advanced survey of topics in graduate syntax examining current syntactic theory through detailed analysis of a range of phenomena and readings from the primary research literature.
Instructor(s): Erik Zyman Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Graduate student standing. Undergraduates with a grade of A or A- in Intro to Syntax may petition the instructor for admission

LING 30202. Syntactic Analysis II. 100 Units.
This course is a continuation of Syntax I. The emphasis will be on A'-movement and ellipsis operations within the framework of Principles and Parameters and the Minimalist Program. Although we will examine different types of movement and ellipsis constructions, as well as their interactions, the objective will be to understand to what extent we can develop a general theory of syntax. The course will have a strong cross-linguistic aspect to it, examining data from Irish, Austronesian languages, Mayan languages, Wolof, Russian, Romance, Germanic, and others. The topics will include wh-movement in questions, relative clauses, and other constructions, islands and other constraints on movement, sentence fragments (sluicing, split questions), VP-ellipsis, and gapping.
Instructor(s): Andrew Murphy Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): LING 30201

LING 30301. Semantics and Pragmatics I. 100 Units.
This is the first in a two-course sequence designed to provide a foundation in the scientific study of all aspects of linguistic meaning. The first quarter focuses primarily on pragmatics: those aspects of meaning that arise from the way that speakers put language to use, rather than through the formal properties of the linguistic system itself, which is the domain of semantics. However, a central goal of the course will be to begin to develop an understanding of the relation between pragmatics and semantics, by exploring empirical phenomena in which contextual and conventional aspects of meaning interact in complex but regular and well-defined ways, and by learning analytical techniques that allow us to tease these two aspects of linguistics meaning apart.
Instructor(s): Itamar Francez Terms Offered: Winter

LING 30302. Semantics and Pragmatics II. 100 Units.
This is the second in a two-course sequence designed to provide a foundation in the scientific study of all aspects of linguistic meaning. The second quarter focuses on the syntax-semantics interface and cross-linguistic semantics. The class will introduce in detail a theory of the way in which the meaning of complex linguistic expressions is formed compositionally from the meaning of constituent parts, and the interaction of semantic and syntactic composition. This theory will form the basis for exploring some empirical questions about the systematicity of cross-linguistic variation in the encoding of meaning.
Instructor(s): Chris Kennedy Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): LING 30301

LING 30800. Phonology-1. 100 Units.
TBD
Equivalent Course(s): LING 20800, ANTH 37301

LING 30900. Phonology-2. 100 Units.
TBD
Equivalent Course(s): LING 20900, ANTH 37302
LING 31000. Morphology. 100 Units.
This course is an advanced survey of topics in morphology examining current morphological theory through detailed analysis of a range of phenomena and readings from the primary research literature. The topics covered include blocking, inflectional features, syncretism, allomorphy and suppletion, and morpheme order.
Instructor(s): Karlos Arregi Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): ANTH 37500

LING 31720. Sociophonetics. 100 Units.
Variation is a ubiquitous feature of speech, yet most variations observed are non-random. This course will examine this type of structured heterogeneity (Weinreich et al. 1968) from the point of view of sociophonetics. We will focus on the interrelationships between phonetic/phonological form and social factors such as speaking style and the background of the speaker, with a particular interest in explaining the origins and transmission of linguistic change. Our goals will be to (a) acquire the phonetic and phonological foundation necessary to conduct sociophonetic research through practical exercises; (b) survey new sociolinguistic research that addresses issues in phonetic and phonological theories; and (c) locate and explain phonetic variation in its social context while drawing on current approaches to the relationship between language and society. This course will give students hands-on experience with designing and conducting experiments. As part of the empirical foundation of this course, we will focus on sociophonetic variation across Chicago neighborhoods. For a final project, students are required to conduct a small-scale study investigating a research question of relevance to sociophonetic research.
LING 20101 or graduate student standing.
Instructor(s): Jacob Phillips Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): CHST 21720, LING 21720

LING 33750. Language and Violence. 100 Units.
Language is generally associated with the abstract realm of thought, representation and expression, a realm that contrasts sharply with the material realm in which we tend to place violence. Language is furthermore often seen as antithetical to violence: violence is an outburst that comes when the rational order of language fails. In fact, however, questions of language, and especially of speech, surface in every aspect of thinking about violence. Speech is a medium within which violence is performed, and is part of the modern machinery of war. It is also a medium through which systems of oppression and subordination are articulated and registered by groups and individuals, socially and psychically. Violence relies on speech for its justification, rationalization, and sustenance. At the same time, the rawness of violence challenges our fundamental faith in the representational and expressive capacities of language, in both destructive and creative ways. This intensive reading seminar explores the relation between speech and violence through scholarly and literary texts from a variety of humanistic fields and traditions.
Instructor(s): Itamar Francez Terms Offered: Winter. Winter 2021
Equivalent Course(s): LING 23750

LING 33850. Sociolinguistic Typology. 100 Units.
Course Description TBD
Instructor(s): Jessica Kantarovich Terms Offered: Winter. Winter 2021
Equivalent Course(s): LING 23850

LING 35100. Old Church Slavonic. 100 Units.
This course is an introduction to the language of the oldest Slavic texts. It begins with a brief historical overview of the relationship of Old Church Slavonic to Common Slavic and the other Slavic languages. This is followed by a short outline of Old Church Slavonic inflectional morphology. The remainder of the course is spent in the reading and grammatical analysis of original texts in Cyrillic or Cyrillic transcription of the original Glagolitic.
Equivalent Course(s): REES 33115, MDVL 25100, LING 23115, REES 23115

LING 38355. A Linguistic Introduction to Swahili I. 100 Units.
Spoken in ten countries of Eastern and Central Africa, Swahili has more speakers than any other language in the Bantu family, a group of more than 400 languages most prevalent in sub-equatorial Africa. Based on Swahili Grammar and Workbook, this course helps the students master key areas of the Swahili language in a fast yet enjoyable pace. Topics include sound and intonation patterns, noun class agreements, verb moods, and sentence structures. Additionally, this course provides important listening and expressive reading skills. For advanced students, historical interpretations are offered for exceptional patterns observed in Swahili, in relation with other Bantu languages. This is a general introduction course with no specific prerequisites.
Instructor(s): Fidèle Mpiranya Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): LING 28355

LING 38356. Linguistic Introduction to Swahili II. 100 Units.
Based on Swahili Grammar and Workbook, this course is a continuation of Linguistic Introduction to Swahili I. It addresses complex issues related to grammatical agreement, verb moods, noun and verb derivation, non Typical adjectives and adverbs, double object constructions, subordinate / coordinated clause constructions, and dialectal variation. Additionally, this course provides important listening and expressive reading skills. For advanced students, historical interpretations are offered for exceptional patterns observed in Swahili, in relation with other Bantu languages. This course allows fulfilling the non-Indo-European language requirement.
Instructor(s): Fidèle Mpiranya Terms Offered: Spring
LING 38600. Computational Linguistics. 100 Units.
This course introduces the problems of computational linguistics and the techniques used to deal with them, focusing primarily on probabilistic models and techniques. Topics are drawn primarily from phonology, morphology, and syntax. Special topics include automatic learning of grammatical structure and the treatment of languages other than English.
Instructor(s): J. Goldsmith Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): CMSC 12200, 15200 or 16200, or by consent
Equivalent Course(s): CMSC 35050, DIGS 30013

LING 38620. Computational Linguistics II. 100 Units.
This course is a graduate-level introduction to topics at the intersection of computation and language. We will study computational linguistics from both scientific and engineering angles: the use of computational modeling to address scientific questions in linguistics and cognitive science, as well as the design of computational systems to solve engineering problems in natural language processing (NLP). The course will combine analysis and discussion of these approaches with training in the programming and mathematical foundations necessary to put these methods into practice. The course is designed to accommodate students both with and without prior programming experience. Our goal is for all students to leave the course able to engage with and critically evaluate research in cognitive/linguistic modeling and NLP, and to be able to implement intermediate-level computational models for novel computational linguistics research.
Instructor(s): Allyson Ettinger Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Computational Linguistics I or permission of instructor
Equivalent Course(s): CMSC 35620

LING 38951. The Development of Communicative Competence. 100 Units.
This course examines the emergence of communicative skills in humans. We will focus on how children glean information about language structure and language use from their home environments. We will also discuss the proposed cognitive and evolutionary roots of communicative behaviors, with a focus on current gaps in our knowledge and possible pathways forward. The course will consider these issues from multiple perspectives including linguistics, psychology, and linguistic anthropology. We will also briefly cover a range of methods associated with these different areas of study. It is expected that, by the end of the course, you should be able to think and write critically about how human communication and human language are intertwined in both adults and children.
Instructor(s): M. Casillas Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): UG: B, C, M; Grad: 5
Equivalent Course(s): PSYC 38960, CHDV 38950, EDSO 38950

LING 40301. Field Methods I. 100 Units.
The field methods course is a two-quarter course, taken by graduate students and advanced undergraduates. (Students may elect to take the course more than once.) This course is devoted to the elicitation, transcription, organization, and analysis of linguistic data from a native speaker of a language not commonly studied. Students will also gain practical experience in the use of fieldwork equipment. Language chosen may vary from year to year.
Instructor(s): Natalia Bermudez Terms Offered: Autumn

LING 40302. Field Methods II. 100 Units.
The field methods course is a two-quarter course, taken by graduate students and advanced undergraduates. (Students may elect to take the course more than once.) This course is devoted to the elicitation, transcription, organization, and analysis of linguistic data from a native speaker of a language not commonly studied. Students will also gain practical experience in the use of fieldwork equipment. Language chosen may vary from year to year.
Instructor(s): Natalia Bermudez Terms Offered: Winter

LING 40310. Experimental Methods. 100 Units.
This course will cover the basic methods for experimental studies, including experimental design, data collection and statistical analysis. To demonstrate different design and analysis tools, we will look at data set from different types of studies, including self-paced reading, acceptability judgment, eye tracking, ERP, etc. Students will also gain hands-on experience on different paradigms.
Instructor(s): Monica Do Terms Offered: Winter

LING 40311. Experimental Methods 2. 100 Units.
This course will cover the basic methods for experimental studies, including experimental design, data collection and statistical analysis. To demonstrate different design and analysis tools, we will look at data set from different types of studies, including self-paced reading, acceptability judgment, eye tracking, ERP, etc. Students will also gain hands-on experience on different paradigms.

LING 40312. Advanced Experimental Methods. 100 Units.
The Advanced Experimental Methods class provides comprehensive training on specific experimental paradigms/methods in language science research. In the current quarter we will focus on the EEG methods. Students will develop practical skills by carrying out a project, learning about the experimental design, data
collection and data analysis procedures. In addition to the methodology training, we will also read and discuss how EEG is applied to address theoretical and empirical questions in the domain of language and cognition. Prior to this class, students should have taken the graduate level Experimental Methods class or the equivalent.

Instructor(s): Ming Xiang Terms Offered: Winter

LING 41920. The Evolution of Language. 100 Units.
How did language emerge in the phylogeny of mankind? Was its evolution saltatory or gradual? Did it start late or early and then proceed in a protracted way? Was the emergence monogenetic or polygenetic? What were the ecological prerequisites for the evolution, with the direct ecology situated in the hominine species itself, and when did the prerequisites obtain? Did there ever emerge a language organ or is this a post-facto construct that can be interpreted as a consequence of the emergence of language itself? What function did language evolve to serve, to enhance thought processes or to facilitate rich communication? Are there modern “fossils” in the animal kingdom that can inform our scholarship on the subject matter? What does paleontology suggest? We will review some of the recent and older literature on these questions and more.

Instructor(s): Salikoko Mufwene Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): PSYC 41920, CHDV 41920, EVOL 41920, ANTH 47305, CHDV 21920

LING 46000. Seminar: Syntax. 100 Units.
This course is an advanced graduate seminar in theoretical syntax. Through readings from the primary research literature, we will investigate the nature and properties of the elementary syntactic operation Merge, as well as the related question of precisely how it should be formalized. We will also explore some pre-Merge approaches to phrase structure, with the aim of determining how the insights emerging from them should be understood in today’s theoretical context.

Instructor(s): Andrew Murphy (Autumn), Erik Zyman (Winter), STAFF (Spring) Terms Offered: Autumn Spring Winter
Prerequisite(s): Graduate student in Linguistics of consent of instructor
Note(s): This course has a different topic each quarter it is offered.

LING 48000. Linguistics Pedagogy. 100 Units.
This course deals with a variety of topics specific to Linguistic Pedagogy.
Instructor(s): Amy Dahlstrom Terms Offered: Autumn Spring Winter

LING 57727. LingAnthSem: Voiced Revelations on “Fieldwork” on Languages and Cultures. 100 Units.
The recent publication (2019) and prominent popular reviews of Don Kulick’s A Death in the Rainforest is at the leading edge of a long and distinguished line of publishing “the straight dope” on what it is like to engage in systematic empirical study of languages, particularly as denotational structures, and of cultures, particularly as the frameworks of value for the experiences in the field that envelop “natives” and the researcher. We take up the problem of how - and for whom - to ‘voice’ a kind of informal and revelatory retrospective of the fieldwork experience, using as examples writings by Bronislaw Malinowski, Hortense Powdermaker, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Margaret Mead, Robert M. W. Dixon, Don Kulick, and others - especially those suggested by members of the seminar.

Instructor(s): Michael Silverstein Terms Offered: Autumn. Autumn 2019
Equivalent Course(s): ANTH 57727