

# Graduate Program Requirements

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## Program vision

Linguistics at Yale has a long and storied history in traditional approaches to the study of language. Today the department takes a distinctively integrative and interdisciplinary approach in investigating the systems of knowledge that comprise our linguistic competence. We are convinced that an understanding of the human language faculty will arise only through the mutually informing relationship between formally explicit theories and insights from wide ranging descriptive and experimental work. Thus at Yale, theoretical inquiry grounded in introspection proceeds in partnership with historical and comparative studies, fieldwork, experimental investigations of normal and impaired language processing, cognitive neuroscience, laboratory phonetic analysis, and computational and mathematical modeling. Students in the PhD program are exposed to these methodological approaches, while receiving firm grounding in the traditional domains of linguistics. PhD students participate in research in phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, and historical linguistics, and explore data from a wide variety of languages, both well-studied and less well documented, with particular faculty expertise in the Slavic, Romance, Australian, and Indo-Aryan languages.

## Coursework requirements

The conception of Linguistics embraced by the Yale PhD program requires that students receive training that is both deep in its coverage of areas of linguistic inquiry and broad in the range of methodological approaches to which students are exposed. The coursework requirements are designed to accomplish these complementary goals.

### *Years 1 and 2*

During their first 4 semesters, students must complete a minimum of 14 term courses at the graduate level. These courses must include an eight course core, together with a set of three courses exposing students to a range of methodologies in linguistic research.

The core consists of the following courses:

LING 532 Introduction to Phonological Analysis	LING 535 Phonological Theory
LING 553 Syntax 1	LING 654 Syntax 2
LING 520 Phonetics	LING 580 Morphology
LING 663 Semantics	LING 512 Historical Linguistics

For the methodology requirement, students must take at least three of the following set of courses:

LING 641 Field Methods  
LING 624 Formal Foundations for Linguistic Theory

LING 541 Language and Computation  
LING 601 Experimental Linguistics

Students will typically enroll in these courses, even if they have had similar coursework elsewhere. During these initial two years of coursework, students must receive at least three grades of H (= Honors). Three or more grades of P or below or two grades of F during this period constitute grounds for dismissal from the PhD program.

*Years 3 and 4*

During the third and fourth years, students are expected to enroll in one seminar course for credit each term. Students should use such seminars as opportunities both for exploring new research areas and, especially, for pushing current research interests in novel directions.

**Program requirements**

In addition to coursework, students will also focus on the creative side of academic life by undertaking independent research. This work serves the multiple functions of promoting students' intellectual growth, strengthening their working relationships with faculty members, and providing a yardstick by which progress toward the degree can be measured.

1. *Portfolio and Special Field Exam:* During the first two years of the graduate program, students must complete a portfolio of three research papers, one each in the areas of syntax, phonology and either semantics or historical linguistics. These papers, which should demonstrate a student's ability to conduct independent research, will typically consist of revised versions of term papers students have written. The first two of these must be submitted by September 15th of a student's second year. It is the expectation of the faculty that students will make any necessary revisions of papers written during the first year during the summer between the first and second years in the program, so as to prepare two of these for submission by this deadline. The third paper must be submitted no later than the end of the first week in May in the second year. The entire departmental faculty will evaluate these papers soon after they are submitted. They may be approved, rejected, or the student may be asked to carry out further revisions prior to resubmission.

During the second year, students will, in consultation with their advisors, choose a sub-field of linguistics of particular interest to them, and prepare an annotated bibliography approximately 20 pages in length. After completing that bibliography, the student will complete an exam composed by his or her advisor. The deadline for completion of this special field exam is the end of the first week in May in the second year. The special field exam, like the portfolio papers, will be read and evaluated by the entire departmental faculty.

At the conclusion of second year, the Director of Graduate Studies will transmit an assessment of each student's progress as determined by the faculty on the basis of performance in classwork, the portfolio papers and the special field exam.

2. *Qualifying Papers*: By the end of the third year of graduate study, students will present two substantial research papers of publishable quality in different areas of linguistics. Satisfaction of this requirement includes the submission of a written version of the paper to be followed by an oral presentation to the department (typically at a Friday Linguist Lunch). Alternatively, the oral presentation requirement for either or both papers can be satisfied via a presentation at a professional conference provided at least one member of the department faculty is in attendance.
3. *Prospectus*: By the end of the seventh semester, students will present a dissertation prospectus to the faculty. The prospectus should lay out clearly the student's proposed dissertation topic. It should motivate the importance of the topic, present the core idea of the proposed work together with its promise and viability, and demonstrate how this work fits into past research in the area. The document should be 10 to 20 pages (single spaced) in length. After the document is submitted, the prospectus must be defended orally in front of the faculty. Upon successful completion of the prospectus defense, students advance to PhD candidacy.
4. *Dissertation*: By the end of the eighth semester, students must complete and have approved by their committee a chapter of the dissertation, together with a detailed outline of the dissertation and comprehensive bibliography. Once this requirement is completed, students are eligible for a University Dissertation Fellowship, which will support them in their fifth year of graduate study. Students are expected to complete their dissertations by the end of the fifth year. At least one month prior to the dissertation filing date, the completed dissertation must be orally defended. This defense will typically involve a public presentation of the main results of dissertation as well as questioning by the members of the dissertation committee, which must consist of at least 3 faculty members, 2 of whom must be members of the Linguistics department. Committee members must be given the completed dissertation no less than 2 weeks prior to the date of the defense.

### **Language Requirement**

Students are expected to exhibit some breadth in their knowledge of the languages of the world, beyond those most commonly studied (including but not confined to Romance, Germanic and Slavic languages) and those most similar in structure to the student's first language. LING 641 Field Methods fulfills this requirement; alternatively, with the permission of the DGS, the student may instead take an appropriate language structure class, or one or more classes characterized as L3 at Yale or the equivalent elsewhere.

### **Teaching Fellow/Research Assistant Requirements**

The faculty regard teaching experience as an integral part of the graduate training program in Linguistics. All students are required to serve as Teaching Fellows for a minimum of two terms, usually beginning in the first semester of the third year. In addition, students

must complete two additional terms of assistantship. These may either be as a Teaching Fellow, or through participation in externally supported, supervised research as a Research Fellow. Research assistantships may be provided by the Linguistics faculty and by various Yale and Yale-affiliated units. Before accepting a research assistantship in fulfillment of this requirement, students must receive approval from the Director of Graduate Studies. To be approved, a Research Assistantship must meet the following criteria:

1. It must be supervised by a Linguistics department faculty member or a faculty member from an affiliated unit, such as Haskins Laboratories or the Yale School of Medicine.
2. It must provide research experience that complements the student's academic plan of study.
3. It must provide at least 10 hours of experience per week.

If an approved Research Assistantship is accepted which does not provide a stipend equal to the standard departmental stipend, a University Fellowship will be provided to augment the stipend up so as to bring it up to the departmental standard.