

Department of Linguistics: Classes and Paths through the Major

DUS: Claire Bower (she/they)
claire.bowern@yale.edu
ling.yale.edu

Linguists investigate how language works. That is, linguistics looks at how and why languages differ (and what they have in common), how the brain processes and produces language, and how languages change. That is, it's about uncovering the systematic features of languages, how we use language in everyday life, for example, and how it can be modeled computationally.

We offer **introductory** courses, which are perfect for students who are new to linguistics. [These courses are tagged in courses.yale.edu as introductory].

Fall:

- Words, Words, Words: The Structure and History of English Words (Ling 033)
- Language Endangerment and Revitalization (Ling 107)
- Language: Introduction to Linguistics (Ling 110)
- Language and Mind (Ling 217I)
- Languages of Africa (Ling 131)
- Meaning: What, How, Why (Ling 167)

Spring:

- History of the English Language (Ling 109)
- Historical Linguistics (Ling 112)
- Cognitive Science of Language (Ling 116)
- How to Create a Language (Ling 119)
- Grammatical Diversity in US English (Ling 211)

Another route into the study of linguistics consists in taking courses that focus on the grammatical system of a particular language, for example:

- Introductory Sanskrit (Ling 110)
- Old English (Ling 150)
- American Sign Language (ASL 110)
- Cherokee (110 Fall)

We offer intermediate level courses that focus on various sub-fields of linguistics. Courses in bold are offered every year; other courses are usually offered every two years.

The study of sounds (phonetics and phonology):

- **Phonetics I (Ling 220, Fall)**
- **Phonology I (Ling 232, Spring)**
- Articulatory Phonology (Ling 236, Fall)
- **Phonology II (Ling 235, Fall)**

The study of how languages combine pieces words to form sentences (syntax):

- Grammatical Diversity in US English (Ling 211, Spring)
- **Syntax I (Ling 253, Fall)**
- **Syntax II (Ling 254, Spring)**
- Morphology (Ling 280)

The study of meaning (semantics):

- Philosophy of Language (Ling 271, Fall)
- **Semantics I (Ling 263, Fall)**
- Meaning, Concepts and Words (Ling 372, Fall)
- **Semantics II (Ling 264, Spring)**
- Topics in semantics (Ling 291)
- Pragmatics (Ling 275, Fall)
- Implicature and Pragmatic Theory (Ling 376, Spring)
- Experimental Semantics (Ling 334, Fall)
- Semantic Investigations (Ling 396, Fall)

The study of the psychological and neural underpinnings of language:

- Language and Mind (Ling 217, Fall)
- Neurolinguistics (Ling 231, Spring)
- Experimentation in Linguistics (Ling 200, Fall)
- The Literate Brain and Mind (Ling 233, Spring)
- Computational linguistics and Psychology (Spring)

The study of how languages change over time (historical linguistics):

- Historical Linguistics (Ling 112, Spring)
- The Evolution of Language and Culture (Ling 219, Spring)
- Indo-European Linguistics (Ling 113, Fall)
- Readings in Old Norse (Ling 183, Spring)
- Linguistic Change (Ling 212, Fall)

The documentation of understudied languages, including techniques for doing fieldwork and working on language revitalization and reclamation:

- **Field Methods (Ling 241, Spring)**
- Semantic Investigations (Ling 396, Fall)
- Topics in Language Documentation: Technology (Ling 350, Fall)

The study of the formal properties of language, and the computational techniques that are used for language processing by computers:

- Mathematics of Language (Ling 224, Fall)
- Language and Computation I (Ling 227, Fall)
- Natural Language Processing (CPSC 477, Spring)
- Seminar in computational Linguistics (Spring)
- Language and Computation II (Ling 229, Spring)

Other aspects of linguistics and its relationship to language and society:

- Sociolinguistics (Ling 205)
- Principles of Language Teaching and Learning (Ling 564, Fall)
- Quantitative Linguistics (Ling 234, Fall)

Most students take these courses after having taken one or more introductory courses. However, a student with some background in linguistics might be able to take them as a first year student. Please see the DUS to discuss this.

Every semester we also offer *seminar courses*, which focus on a particular topic that is typically an area in which a faculty member is conducting research. These are advanced courses for undergraduates (and graduate) students. They are tagged in the course catalog as <https://courses.yale.edu/?srcdb=202501&dept=LING>

QR classes: Mathematics of Language, Semantics I and Language and Computation I.

WR classes: Historical Linguistics, Syntax II, and Evolution of Language and Culture.

What is the difference between *Intro to Linguistics* and *Cognitive Science of Language*? Both are excellent options for introducing you to the study of language and providing you with a solid grounding to build on in future courses. *Intro to Linguistics* is a systematic overview of the field of linguistics and gives you exposure to different areas of linguistic analysis. Broader issues involving linguistic variation play a prominent role, including dialect variation, prescriptive versus descriptive grammar, pidgin and creole formation, and the distinctly human nature of the language faculty. *Cognitive Science of Language* situates the study of language and linguistic structure within the broader field of cognitive science, and will explore different methodological approaches (including linguistic analysis, but also experimentation, neuroscience, computation) to the science of language.

I'm thinking about majoring in linguistics, where should I start?

Start with one of the introductory courses. If your interests include cognitive science (e.g. minds, brains, psychology, and the like), start with *Language and Mind* or *Cognitive Science of Language*. If you're coming to linguistics through Classics or ancient languages, *Historical Linguistics* (or *Introduction to Linguistics*) are both excellent choices. If you're interested in a lot of different languages, *Introduction to Linguistics* is probably the class to start with. If you're more interested in English, start with *Grammatical Diversity in US English* or *History and Structure of English Words*.

I'm thinking of combining linguistics with another major, can I do that? Yes! The Linguistics major goes well with a major in another language. We also have students who double-major in other related fields (psychology, Classics, Computer Science, or Evolutionary Biology and Ecology). Please see the DUS for more information. We also now have a major in Computing and Linguistics.

Are there research opportunities in linguistics? Yes! They are advertised on our website.