WHY LINGUISTICS IS AWESOME!

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A&S Linguists Awarded NEH Grant for Video Game Concept

Linguistic Theory & Typology - Graduate
The MA in Linguistic Theory & Typology (MALTT) offers training by a world class faculty in theoretical frameworks for approaching descriptive, historical, and experimental linguistics. Learn more.

Linguistics
The Linguistics program offers a wide range of courses in the various subdisciplines of linguistics, including phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, historical linguistics, and more. Learn more.

Linguistics - Minor
Linguistics is an interdisciplinary program combining resources from English, anthropology, psychology, philosophy, computer science, and the foreign languages, to develop an understanding of the nature and structure of language. Learn more.
What is linguistics?

• First, what linguistics is NOT:
  • ≠ learning many languages
  • ≠ studying a language with the goal of learning to communicate in it
  • ≠ being the grammar police

• So, what is it...?
  • **Linguistics** is the systematic, scientific study of the phenomenon of human language.
  • **Language** is a complex system of symbols...an arbitrary and systematic relationship between form and meaning used to communicate.
  • Linguists study both languages structure (rules/grammar) and language use.
  • Straddles the line between humanities and social sciences.
What is linguistics?

• Some areas of study
  • Morphology – the study of the structure of words
  • Syntax – the study of the structure of sentences
  • Phonetics – the study of the ways in which sounds are articulated/produced/perceived
  • Phonology – the study of the structure of sound systems
  • Semantics – the study of the meanings of words
  • Sociolinguistics – the study of how language and society interact
  • Historical linguistics – the study of language change over time
  • Language Acquisition – the study of how people learn a first/additional language
  • Computational linguistics – the study of how the methods of computer science apply to the analysis/synthesis of language data
  • Typology – the study of what is possible in the structures of the world’s languages
Who studies linguistics?

• If a student asks about linguistics, they probably already know what it is 😊
• But most students have never heard of it 😞
• Students who show an interest in a language major, an English major, or really any of the humanities and social sciences, may be interested in linguistics
  • In the college, we have faculty with links to MCL, Hispanic Studies, Philosophy, English, Appalachian Studies, GWS, and others
  • Outside of A&S, we have faculty links to the College of Engineering, the College of Health Sciences, and others
• The main common trait among linguistics students is a curiosity about how language works!
Majoring in Linguistics

BA/BS in Linguistics

• Prerequisite: Students must complete the fourth semester of a foreign language (not exactly a pre-major requirement...)

• Core Courses (11 courses | 33 hours)
  • Two (2) foundational courses (BOTH courses required): LIN 221 Introduction to Linguistics I and LIN 222 Introduction to Linguistics II (GCCR)
  • Four (4) Major Area courses (ALL courses required): LIN 500 Phonetics, LIN 505 Morphology, LIN 512 Analysis of English Syntax, and LIN 515 Phonological Analysis

• Five (5) Other Linguistics courses (15 hours): 6 hours or more must be at the 500 level and distinct from the major area courses

• Courses Outside the Major (5 courses | 15 hours)
Majoring in Linguistics

- Those five other LIN classes?

- Those courses outside the major?
  - Anything (with the one exception listed) from these prefixes: AIS, ANT, APP, BIO, CHI, CLA, COM, CS, CSD, ENG, FR, GEO, GER, GWS, HIS, HJS, ICT, INT, ISC, ITA, JOU, JPN, LAS, MA, MCL, PHI, PS, PSY, RUS, SOC, SPA, STA, TSL, WRD (200-level or above)

- It’s so flexible!
  - Many of our students are either double major/degree in MCL, English, WRD, and others
  - Offering a BS makes it easier for biology, chemistry, and other science majors to add
Minoring in Linguistics

Minor in Linguistics

- 18 Hours of course work to include:
  - Two (2) foundational courses (BOTH courses required): LIN 221 Introduction to Linguistics I and LIN 222 Introduction to Linguistics II
  - One (1) phonetics/phonology course (choose ONE of the following): LIN 500 Phonetics OR LIN 515 Phonological Analysis
  - One (1) morphosyntax/semantic course (choose ONE of the following): LIN 512 Analysis of English Syntax, LIN 505 Linguistic Morphology, LIN 509 Semantics and Pragmatics, OR LIN 516 Grammatical Typology
  - Two (2) courses at the 300 level or above to complete the Minor
Other perks?

• Many of our classes are cross-listed with other departments (like ENG, PHI, etc.), so some courses may be able to double count in certain requirements, making a minor in linguistics an easy add-on to many majors
  • We draw many minors from Communication and Information, Health Sciences, Education, and Engineering – and we would love to see more cross-college double majors!

• We offer two UK Core classes:
  • LIN 331 – Language in US Society
    • Offered every spring, fulfills US Citizenship requirement
    • Can double count as a LIN elective!
  • **NEW!!** LIN 200 – How to Create Your Own Language
    • Offered every semester (including summer) online in the second 8-week session, fulfills Arts & Creativity requirement
    • See for yourself: https://vimeo.com/325530123
• What can you do with a degree in linguistics?
  • Anything!
  • But really, any job that just wants you to have a BA/BS would be perfect for a linguistics student.
  • I argue that more companies would hire linguists over other humanities degree holders (if they knew what linguistics was) because of the high level of analytical thinking, critical reading, and problem solving abilities our graduates possess.
  • I might be biased though... 😊
FAQs

• Students in linguistics primarily go on to careers in one of the following fields:
  • Education and testing
  • Computer industry (data science, AI, etc.)
  • Translation and interpretation
  • Language documentation and fieldwork
  • Publishing, communications, and journalism
  • Marketing and advertising
  • Government/military
  • Public relations

• You can find UK Linguistics alums as professors, SLPs, computer scientists, project managers, heads of marketing, etc.
FAQs

• What companies hire linguists?
  • If they don’t know what it is, they can’t look for it!
  • Some companies will actually list linguistics as a major they are interested in:
    • Nationally: American Red Cross, Yum! Brands Inc., American Printing House for the Blind, Proctor and Gamble, Fruit of the Loom, IHeartMedia, Smile Direct Club
    • Locally: Johnson & Johnson, Cornett, KCTCS, Ecampus, Windstream Communications, Big Ass Fans, Lexington Govt.
  • For those that don’t list linguistics, you need to adept at looking for companies that say “or related field”…then you need to know what fields are related to linguistics
    • Majors like English, history, any of the languages, philosophy, humanities, area studies, communications, speech, journalism, writing, computer science, sociology, anthropology, psychology
    • It ultimately depends on your interests!
FAQs

• How do I find these jobs?
  • [https://www.uky.edu/careercenter/handshake](https://www.uky.edu/careercenter/handshake)

• How do I prepare for such jobs?
  • Get an internship/research experience in your desired field
  • Attend career readiness workshops (e.g., how to make a resume, mock interviews, etc.)
    • Your career center is awesome!
  • Network – make contacts in your desired field (e.g., talk to professors, find industry insiders, go to conferences, etc.)
  • Attend career fairs
FAQs

• So what? Who cares? What good is all this information anyway?
  • People (maybe even your parents) will ask – why should people care about linguistics?
  • Especially those of us who study the societal implications of language variation (like me)
  • It’s not an easy question to answer because *some* linguists engage in research that is very eccentric (like many other professors...)
  • But when I teach my classes, I make it clear that one of my goals is to make people more appreciative of language, both in terms of the systematicity of it as well as the natural variation that exists, so that when they encounter people in their real worlds, they won’t be so quick to judge
FAQs

• What are the real world applications then?
  • Linguistic knowledge can impact
    • How a teacher views a student
    • How a parent understands a child’s development
    • How a government official creates policies
    • How a community saves (or fails to save) a dying language
    • How a second language learner succeeds (or fails to succeed)
    • How a person can talk to a phone...and how a phone can talk back!

• Understanding how language works helps us interact with real people!
  • You can understand why some miscommunication occurred
  • You can evaluate the language you encounter in ways that allow you to move beyond stereotypes
Three highlights of the program

1. We’re a new department!
   • That means reinvigorated faculty and a more solid sense of belonging for our students.
   • But we’ve been a program with a major for many years, so we know what we’re doing!
   • And we’re still growing, still gaining in reputation in the field.

2. We LOVE undergraduate research! And we’re good at it!
   • Our faculty enjoy getting our students involved in research, and they do so by conducting independent studies, getting them to volunteer in a lab, encouraging them to apply for undergraduate honors, etc.
   • We have had Gaines Fellows, Honors students, and Chellgren Fellows. Our students have presented their work at regional, national, and international conferences. Our students are competitive at very prestigious graduate schools.
   • And we have a departmental student research award! So experience + cash!
Three highlights of the program

3. We are a fun and sociable crowd!
   • Maybe everyone says this, but we like to have fun while we learn!
   • Evidence:
     • Our UK Linguistics Club loves to get together for food, movies, game nights, etc. It is run by both grads and undergrads, so there is also plenty of time for high-level linguistic debating, too!
     • We have hosted (and hopefully will host in the future) outreach activities for school-aged children to get them interested in linguistics. Student volunteers made it happen!
     • One of our faculty members made up some languages for a video game!! [https://youtu.be/UTZHkZpYgkA](https://youtu.be/UTZHkZpYgkA)
     • We host guest lectures from all-star linguists from time to time, and students often get to meet them up close! We hosted a very prestigious summer institute (LSA), which brought some of the greatest linguists to Lexington, and our students got a lot out of it!
     • We go out for dinner to celebrate graduating students!
My favorite part of the program is…

• Nerdy students!
  • I am so serious. Linguistics students tend to be some of the nerdiest students around...and I mean this completely lovingly.
  • If you’ve ever met someone who “created a language” or taught themselves how to speak Dothraki or loved all the Latin declensions or documented every syllable their little brother ever spoke, you know who I’m talking about.
  • Because students don’t know what it is beforehand, you rarely get someone who just wanders into linguistics. And if you do, they tend to wander out quickly...
  • But when I get an entire room full of these students, we will talk about things well beyond what’s in the syllabus.
University Scholars Program

• If you are already a major OR you declare one by your junior year, you could be considered for our University Scholars Program (USP)
  • = MA degree after only one year beyond your bachelor’s
  • You become part of the Master of Art’s in Linguistic Theory and Typology program

• In this program, you can:
  • Count 12 hours of your undergraduate degree toward your MA
  • Participate in the same activities other grad students participate in
  • Still be classified as an undergraduate until you complete the requirements of the undergraduate degree (important if you have scholarships)
University Scholars Program

• Deadline to apply = April 1 (for junior LIN majors only)

• You must
  • Complete the University Scholars Program Application Form –
    gradschool.uky.edu/sites/gradschool.uky.edu/files/Forms/StudentForms/UniversityScho-
    lars-0614EditableForm.pdf
  • Complete online UK Graduate School Application –
    https://app.applyyourself.com/AYApplicantLogin/fl_ApplicantConnectLogin.asp?id=ukg
    rad
  • Read through ‘Apply for Admission’ webpage from the UK Graduate School –
    http://gradschool.uky.edu/admissions
  • See https://linguistics.as.uky.edu/ling-university-scholars-program for more information
    or contact Dr. Rusty Barrett (Director of Graduate Studies)
University Scholars Program

• What is the coursework like?
  • The expectation is that you are wrapping up the LIN major requirements in your senior
    year AND starting graduate coursework
  • You will take LIN 601: Research Methods in the fall of your senior year, another 600-level
    class that year, and two other classes (likely 500-level LIN major requirements) that will
    count toward the graduate degree
  • In the year after your BA/BS, you will take 18 credit hours at the 500- and 600-level, also
    including LIN 701: Research Seminar
  • In your last semester (or the summer after it), you will complete a master’s thesis
  • In total, the graduate degree is 30 credit hours.
  • At least 15 credit hours must be at the 600- or 700-level (including those taken as part of
    both degrees).
Potential problem...

• Students in the USP program are not generally able to be considered for the same funding packages as regular graduate students
  • This means you will typically not be eligible to serve as a teaching assistant, research assistant, etc. in the department
  • This means you have to pay for that extra year
  • Some (not all) USP students have been able to 1) carry over undergraduate scholarships or 2) get picked up last minute for work in the department

• “I already have student loans. Why is this any different?”
  • Most graduate programs will pay your tuition and provide you with a stipend in return for your services as a TA, RA, etc.
  • I do not typically advise our students to select graduate programs in linguistics that will make them take out loans (this isn’t medical school...)
MALTT and beyond?

• Another option for students wanting to complete a graduate degree in linguistics but do not want to or cannot leave Lexington would be to complete the MALTT program in the regular way
  • Only an option for graduating seniors
  • Applications are due February 1

• Because the deadline for this has already passed, I won’t spend time on it now
  • Be on the lookout for an info session in the fall about applying to grad programs in linguistics
  • See https://linguistics.as.uky.edu/maltt for info
  • We’re also in the process of getting a PhD…more info on that when it is approved!
MALTT and beyond?

• I will say this – students who have received graduate degrees at UK (USP or MALTT) have gone on to some pretty cool things:
  • PhD programs: we’ve had students go on to graduate school in linguistics at places like Illinois, Colorado, Pennsylvania, Georgetown, Indiana, Stanford, Michigan State, UCLA, Michigan, among others
  • Professional school: some students have gone on to graduate programs in the speech and hearing sciences, law school, others
  • Lots of other great things: many students have gone on to become teachers, data analysts, missionaries, researchers, military personnel, etc.

• For more awesome things linguists do/have done, see http://www.linguisticsociety.org/
THANKS AGAIN!

For more information on the program, see https://linguistics.as.uky.edu/. Also, feel free to contact me: jennifer.cramer@uky.edu