

**Department of Linguistics
University of Rochester
Lattimore 501
Joyce McDonough, Chair**

11 April 2013

Learning Objectives for the Major

The Linguistics Major is designed to enable students to:

1. Have a fundamental understanding of the basic nature, branches and history of linguistic inquiry.
2. Understand and use methods of logical analysis in analyzing the data from a wide variety of languages and dialects.
3. Distinguish, evaluate and interpret the methodologies and their results in the context of the overall aim of understanding the nature of language.
4. Provide a broad interdisciplinary perspective on work in language to emphasize the connectedness and relevance of work to other fields.

The above-mentioned objectives will be achieved through the following touchstones of the linguistics curriculum:

- *Primary Writing Requirement* - teach students argumentation skills and the construction of arguments supported from analyzed data.
- *Analytic Thinking* - use analytic reasoning to understand structure of human language
- *Primary Data Analysis* - collect and analyze human language data in the context of the linguistic subfields of syntax, semantics and pragmatics and phonetics and phonology

The following core courses are required for linguistics majors and their specific goals are outlined below:

- **LIN 110 *Introduction to Linguistic Analysis***

By the end of this course, students will be able to analyze and interpret linguistic data in ways that aim to address theoretical and empirical issues in the study of language.

- **LIN 210/410 *Language Sound Structure***

By the end of term students will be able to transcribe speech from a variety of languages into the IPA. They have basic knowledge of the structure of sound systems in human language. The course is focused around a project: working with a native speaker, students produce an illustration of the phonemic inventory of a language, including an acoustic analysis of one aspect of that system, using the tools and techniques discussed in class.

- **LIN 220/420 *Introduction to Grammatical Systems***

By the end of this course students will be able to provide complete syntactic analyses for many sentences of English; in addition, they will be able to formulate and defend hypotheses for the analysis of new data.

▪ **LIN 225/425 *Introduction to Semantic Analysis***

In this course, students develop techniques used in formal analysis of natural language meaning, primarily in terms of truth-conditions. Comprehension of the basics of first-order logic and set theory, and they will begin to investigate how meanings represented in these terms correlate with the syntactic and lexical structures of sentences of natural language. Topics include such notions as negation, conjunction and disjunction, plurality, quantification, indexicality, entailment, implicature, and presupposition.

▪ **LIN 389 *Senior Seminar* [field methods, capstone course for majors]**

Field methods is our capstone course in Linguistics, taken second semester senior year.

In this course, class participants work with a native speaker of a language and, using elicitation methods, produce a body of documentation on that language. This documentation includes a short grammar of the language, presenting data on phonetics, phonology, syntax and morphological constructions of the language, derived from the elicitations, as well as an annotated lexicon and accompanying material such as annotated recordings and metadata. The course is the culmination of the work they have done in the major.

Second Tier major/minor courses

• **LIN 227/427 *Topics in Phonetics and Phonology***

Knowledge of the theoretical and practical issues surrounding a chosen topic in phonological or phonetic theory. An annotated bibliography and a project which requires the collection and analysis of relevant data related to the topic is required.

• **LIN 260/460 *Syntactic Theory***

By the end of this course students will be able to provide complete syntactic analyses for highly complex sentences of English; in addition, they will have the tools to probe the syntactic structures of sentences from any human language.

• **LIN 262/462 *Topics in Experimental Syntax***

By the end of this course students will be able to understand and critically evaluate research that uses various experimental methods, and be able to design and run their own experiments.

Peer Lead Workshops

In 2011-12, we adopted a Peer Workshop model for LIN220, and for LIN 210 the following year. These are core level courses. Enrollment in these courses had risen from about 20 to 40-50 students in the past 4 years. This increase required us to revise our curriculum to maintain the quality of our undergraduate program. The workshop allows students to interact with each other in the environment of smaller peer-lead groups to work on weekly problem sets and projects. Workshop attendance is required. The Peer Leaders are enrolled in a 2 credit class. The Workshops are assessed through that program, we receive these assessments. They are reviewed by the faculty during the yearly review of the undergraduate courses.

Assessments

The primary assessments used in our courses are student performances in problem sets and projects involving the collection and analysis of language data, and in exams and writing assignments.

Writing assignments for students in the writing section of the course are fulfilled by the write-ups required of all projects or through special writing assignments. For instance, Writing assignments are given feedback that are handed in to fulfill a writing requirement

Direct methods

- Core and elective courses in the curriculum contain embedded assignments, research papers, and exams that measure achievement of program learning objectives.
- Students are required to maintain an average of C or better in core degree requirements is a measure of program learning objectives 1-3. Transcript review by faculty advisers of students maintains this measure. (every term)
- Program retention and graduation rates are reviewed to ensure students are making academic progress through the program. (annual)

Indirect methods

- Satisfaction with overall program, advising, and teaching quality ratings in senior survey (annual)
- Yearly program learning outcomes
- Success of our undergraduates in receiving awards and national fellowships, in acceptance at top universities. We review our current and recent graduates yearly.

The assessment for LIN389 Senior Seminar

Students in LIN389 Senior Seminar are exposed to, require to adopt the professional standards of Best Practices in Field Linguistics, which dictates best practice for the collection and handling of speech and language field data, in working with consultants (social practices), in metadata practices (such as EMELD). Oversight on the organization of data and progress towards the goals of the course is given weekly throughout the semester by the faculty leading the seminar.

Assessment Data Review

Faculty fill our course assessment forms for each course they teach, every year. These include information on textbooks, syllabi, comments on successes, potential issues, and suggestions for change, class size.

Our undergraduate courses and assessments are reviewed annually by the faculty.