

Linguistics

A human language is an enormously intricate and highly structured communication system. All human languages share a striking number of properties that can be observed in their sound systems and grammars. Regularities can also be found, for example, in the ways languages change over time and in the steps by which children learn their native language. These facts about language call for scientific analysis and can be explained in terms of the human organs used to produce and listen to speech as well as with respect to specific cognitive abilities and limitations of the human mind.

The goal of linguistics is to provide an objective and systematic study of these properties in human languages. Though linguistics is fundamentally a humanistic discipline because of its subject matter, it is scientific in its goals and methods and has much in common with social sciences such as psychology, anthropology, and sociology. Linguistics as a discipline also has close ties to philosophy (logic and the philosophy of language), computer science (the processing of human languages by computer), communication, and of course the programs of individual language departments.

Pursuing Linguistics at Ohio State

All Ohio State freshman applicants are considered within a competitive admission process for the Columbus campus. The primary criteria for admission are the completion of the applicant's high school college preparatory program, performance in that program as indicated by class rank and/or grade-point average, and performance on either the ACT or SAT. Upon admission to the university, students can declare a major in linguistics within the Arts and Humanities. Interested students should contact the undergraduate advisor in the Department of Linguistics and Arts and Sciences Advising.

Linguistics Requirements

The undergraduate major program in linguistics permits students to combine in a single field a broad spectrum of humanistic and scientific interests and to develop analytic skills in depth. Students are encouraged to explore with faculty the many relationships of linguistics with other fields in order to discover the optimal program for their individual interests and goals.

Students majoring in linguistics are required to take the following:

- 5 credit hours of a general introductory linguistics course
- 5 credit hours of a foreign language beyond the 104 level or a course in linguistic field methods
- 25 credit hours of linguistics courses that introduce students to the main subfields of linguistics including phonetics, syntax, phonology, historical linguistics, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics

- 20 credit hours of linguistics or related courses, to be chosen in consultation with a faculty advisor

Additional electives and General Education Curriculum requirements totaling 181 hours are required by the College of the Arts and Sciences for graduation.

Co-Curricular Opportunities

Ohio State offers many opportunities for students to learn and grow outside of the classroom. Co-ops place students in professional environments while they are Ohio State students. Ohio State offers more than 100 study abroad programs in 40 countries around the world. In addition, there are hundreds of student organizations on campus to meet the interests of a diverse student population.

These experiences enable students to gain valuable work experience, learn about cultures, and take on leadership roles before they enter the workforce. All of these experiences enhance learning and may provide an advantage in the job market.

Internship Program in Linguistics

The Department of Linguistics offers opportunities for students to learn about linguistics-related fields outside of the classroom. Students are encouraged to participate in two general types of internships: research internships and non-research internships. A research intern typically works with faculty and graduate students as a research assistant on an existing project in the Department of Linguistics. This type of internship is done for course credit. A non-research intern generally works at an organization or business off-campus completing or assisting others in linguistic related projects. Interns gain valuable work experience, learn about other languages and cultures, and are able to explore opportunities existing in the field.

Topics in research-related internships have included intonation in Spanish and Portuguese, dialect patterns in Ohio, vowel production in Canadian English, conversational analysis, and computer-aided second language teaching. Non-research internships have been completed at The Columbus Literacy Council, The Department of Youth Services Legal Division, The Ohio Historical Society, and the Deaf Services Center.

Honors & Scholars Programs

Ohio State offers the Honors and Scholars programs to create an environment of intellectual support and stimulation within a close-knit community of high-ability undergraduate students. Through these programs, students have access to smaller classes, undergraduate research opportunities, close working relationships with faculty, priority scheduling, and unique housing options.

For more information, check these web sites:

Linguistics: linguistics.osu.edu

Arts and Humanities: artsandhumanities.osu.edu

Ohio State: osu.edu

Admissions: undergrad.osu.edu

Multicultural Center: multiculturalcenter.osu.edu

First Year Experience Program: fye.osu.edu

Curriculum Sample

This is a sample list of classes a student may take to pursue a degree in Linguistics. Since university students need more than specific education in a narrow field, they also will take classes to complete the General Education Curriculum (GEC). The GEC will allow students to develop the fundamental skills essential to collegiate success across major programs. Course work options satisfying the GEC often come from a variety of academic areas of study allowing students to tailor their GEC toward their interests. Note: This sample represents one of several possible paths to a degree in Linguistics. Consult the departmental web site, linguistics.osu.edu, for details on each specific track.

Freshman Year:

Introductory Linguistics course	5
Elective	5
GEC (foreign language)	15
GEC courses	25
Arts and Humanities Survey	1
Freshman Seminar	1
Total hours	52

Sophomore Year:

Linguistics courses	15
Electives	5
GEC (foreign language)	5
GEC courses	15
Total hours	40

Junior Year:

Linguistics courses	15
Electives	5
GEC courses	20
Total hours	40

Senior Year:

Linguistics courses	15
Electives	15
GEC courses	20
Total hours	50

Honors and Scholars programs represent great opportunities to be part of a smaller community within a large university. Good candidates for these programs are invited to apply upon admission to the university. For more information about these opportunities, refer to the Honors and Scholars web site at honors-scholars.osu.edu.

Career Prospects in Linguistics

Ohio State boasts one of the best linguistics programs in the nation; many students of linguistics go on to pursue graduate degrees. Through its emphasis on critical thinking, analytic skills, and language, a major in linguistics is designed to provide excellent preparation for graduate work in related disciplines such as cognitive psychology, anthropology, philosophy, speech pathology, and computer science. The study of linguistics allows students to consider careers in such fields as scientific or scholarly research, computing, communications, law, teaching English as a second language, and foreign service. All who study linguistics find that the experience sharpens their understanding of language in general and enables them to use their language more effectively and thus exercise a greater amount of control over their own lives, no matter what their eventual fields of interest or occupations.

Some Ohio State graduates with linguistics and related degrees have chosen jobs such as computer programmer at companies including Microsoft Corporation, OCLS Online Computer Library Center, Inc.; research scientists in private companies including Nuance Communications and Motorola; academic positions in universities in the United States and abroad; and language instructors in the private and public sectors including Language Training and Testing Center in Taipei, Taiwan, and The Spoken English Program at Ohio State.

More About Linguistics

Combined BA/MA Program in Linguistics

The Combined BA/MA Program in Linguistics is for those students who have fulfilled certain university and Arts and Sciences requirements and wish to combine major field and master's work to earn an MA in a shorter time than is usually necessary. The program is intended to allow students to develop the knowledge or skills normally needed for a master's degree.

Admission requirements are that the student has completed at least 135 hours of course work with a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.5 and have completed all GEC requirements for the BA. Typically, students accepted into this program will complete a BA degree after their fourth year of study and a MA degree after their fifth year.

Career Counseling and Job Placement

Students can explore career options by utilizing Career Connection as well as the Arts and Sciences Career Services Office. Providing complimentary services, Career Connection focuses on helping students establish a career direction, while the Arts and Sciences Career Services Office assists students with finding internships—experiences that are essential to testing out the suitability of career fields they are considering. Located in 48 Townshend Hall, the Arts and Sciences Career Services Office also assists seniors and recent graduates with finding entry-level career employment. More information about both offices is found at ascareerservices.osu.edu and careerconnection.osu.edu.

Revised September 2009. For the most up-to-date information on the linguistics program, please visit linguistics.osu.edu.

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