

Department of Linguistics



Linguistics is the study of language as a natural phenomenon. It focuses on grammar, the social context of language variation, the physics of speech sounds, and the properties of language evolution. As language is an exclusively and intrinsically human characteristic, research on the structure, acquisition, and use of language cuts to the heart of human cognition and the social world, linking linguistics to psychology, anthropology, information science, and many other disciplines.

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Lecturer Lance Forshay teaching American Sign Language

Education

The Department offers degree programs in General Linguistics and Romance Linguistics, each leading to a BA, MA, or PhD, and a Professional MA degree in Computational Linguistics (CLMA). In all programs, students study issues relating to any and all languages. General Linguistics students have a basic mastery of at least two languages from different language families, while Romance Linguistics students specialize in at least one Romance language. Computational Linguistics students study the underlying theory and current state of the art in speech and language processing technology. The Department also teaches ASL and Deaf Studies. Classes in the Department of Linguistics are usually limited to 30 students.

The CLMA degree, a self-supporting program initiated in 2005-06, prepares students for careers in industry involving machine translation, information retrieval, speech recognition, search engines, and other pioneering technologies. CLMA students intern at leading technology groups as part of the program; graduates have been employed by firms such as Google, Microsoft, and Amazon. Some students continue to pursue research in these areas by completing a PhD in General Linguistics.

Students of all levels are involved in ongoing research. Undergraduates in the honors program (five to ten each year) must take one graduate-level research seminar and then complete a senior thesis under the direction of a linguistics faculty member. In addition, undergraduates as well as graduate students often collaborate with faculty members on research projects. Doctoral program requirements include conference presentations and publication, and UW linguistics graduate students frequently present papers at prestigious conferences such as the annual Linguistic Society of America meeting.

Linguistics is an appealing major not only because of the intrinsic importance of language, a universal human characteristic, but also because linguistics has ties to cognitive science and other disciplines. Thanks to the broad-reaching nature of language study, numerous courses offered by other departments—such as Psychology, Computer Science and Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Speech and Hearing Sciences, Anthropology, Philosophy, and nearly all the language and literature departments—can be used toward a linguistics degree. A combination of linguistics and one of these disciplines provides an ideal opportunity for students seeking a double major or double degree. Recipients of our undergraduate and graduate degrees have found positions in industry, business, and education.

STUDENTS (AUTUMN 2009)

133	Undergraduate majors
20	Master of Arts students
57	Computational Linguistics Master of Arts students
20	PhD students

DEGREES AWARDED (JULY 2008-JUNE 2009)

54	Bachelor of Arts degrees
17	Master of Arts degrees
4	PhD degrees

MAJOR STUDENT AWARDS (SINCE 2006)

8	Phi Beta Kappa
2	Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowships
1	Fulbright Fellowship
1	Volkswagen Foundation grant

Faculty

Awards and leadership roles for Department of Linguistics faculty include:

Editor, *Phonology*, the most important journal in phonological theory

Elected membership on executive board of Linguistics Society of America

President, Washington ASL Teacher Association

2 NSF CAREER grants

1 R1edu Award for online learning

Scholarship

Formal studies of grammar (phonology, morphology, syntax) continue to occupy the central interest of a large majority of the faculty. In addition, Romance linguistics, phonetics, sociolinguistics, computational linguistics, and second language acquisition are also specializations. Twenty adjunct faculty in nine departments and cross-listed courses in eight departments attest to the interdisciplinarity of the department.



Professor Scott Farrar conducting field research in Cameroon.

Outreach

The Department of Linguistics has many ties to the community, including:

- ▶ a joint symposium series in computational linguistics with Microsoft;
- ▶ participation in World Languages Day, a UW event for high school students; and
- ▶ sponsorship of the North American Computational Linguistics Olympiad for high school students, 2009;
- ▶ host of Simpson Center-sponsored lecture series on early bilingualism, 2007-08; and
- ▶ host of Walker-Ames Lecturer Penny Eckert, 2007

Students working in the Computational Linguistics Lab.



FACULTY (AUTUMN 2009)

4 Professors

3 Associate Professors

6 Assistant Professors

2 Lecturers

4 Emeritus Professors

AREAS OF SCHOLARSHIP

Computational Linguistics

History of Linguistics

Indigenous Languages

Morphology

Perceptual Studies

Phonetics

Phonological Theory

Phonology

Romance Linguistics

Second Language Acquisition Theory

Semantics

Sociolinguistics

Sociophonetics

Spanish Syntax

Syntactic Theory

ENDOWMENTS

Howard and Frances Nostrand Professorship

Endowed Graduate Fellowship

CONTACT INFORMATION

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