

Linguistics Program

Western Washington University

I. Mission Statement

We provide Western students the skills analyze the structure of human language. To this end, students are provided with the skills to analyze language at the phonetic, phonological, morphological, syntactic, and discursive levels. These basic analytical linguistic skills are then applied to study of second and foreign language pedagogy, grammatical theory, historical linguistics, computational linguistics, psycholinguistics, and sociolinguistics.

We believe that linguistics is an inherently interdisciplinary undertaking, and to that end we require all students to develop a solid foundation in a foreign or second language, and as well we encourage the participation of students from a number of academic specializations that are relevant to the science of language, including but not limited to Anthropology, Communication Sciences and Disorders, Computer Science, English, Modern and Classical Languages, Philosophy, Psychology, and Teaching of English as a Second Language (TESL).

The Linguistics Program is committed to providing students with a global understanding of the structure of human language, as well as practical experience in studying language through careful gathering of data and equally thoughtful study of the same through use of available technology for quantitative and qualitative analysis.

II. Goals

The following goals represent the basic principles of the Mission of the linguistics program, and then focus them into categories of skills, abilities, and knowledge that will characterize graduates of our programs. The Linguistics Program, with faculty from the Departments of Modern and Classical Languages, Anthropology, English, Philosophy, Psychology, Computer Science, and Speech Communication Disorders, provides to Western Washington University students the skills required to analyze linguistic structure at the phonetic, phonological, morphological, syntactic, and sociolinguistic levels.

The faculty believes that the best way to understand a culture directly is through its language. For that reason, since language is an integral part of the linguistic experience, all students of linguistics are required to learn a second language. The minimum requirement is a full year of a non-Indo-European language or successful completion to the end of the second year of an Indo-European language.

Students are trained to recognize the sounds of language through articulatory description and acoustical analysis. This training leads directly to the study of the systematic organization of sounds, that is to say, phonology. Minimal units of meaning are enumerated and analyzed in morphology, and the theory of the organization of morphemes into sentential structures is contemplated in courses on syntax. Finally, at the senior level, students of linguistics at Western have the opportunity to apply the practical and theoretical concepts taught during core courses to the study of world languages, language teaching, history of the language, and sociolinguistics.

Skills/abilities

- *Demonstrate communicative ability in a non-Indo-European or Indo-European language (including the option of American Sign Language).
- *Comprehend fundamental fields of linguistic inquiry.
- *Read in a critical manner scholarly linguistic literature.
- *Write effectively about language structure.
- *Speak effectively on research in linguistics.
- *Develop advanced knowledge in an allied field (Anthropology, English, Computer Science, Communication Science and Disorders, Modern and Classical Languages, Philosophy, Psychology).

Knowledge

- *Inventory of articulation and acoustical properties of linguistic sounds (phonetics)
- *Systematic structure of sounds of world languages (phonology)
- *Analysis of minimal units of meaning (morphology)
- *Grammatical properties of movement, phrase structure and projection (syntax)
- * Understanding of ways linguists approach the study of meaning (semantics)
- *Discursive structures of text and conversation (pragmatics)
- *Application of linguistics to other fields (teaching, forensics, computation, sociology, psychology, political science, cultural studies, philosophy, etc.)

III. Objectives

For each goal, we have specific objectives, the outcomes assessment of which is facilitated by a clear connection between goal, objective, and outcome.

Goal 1: Demonstrate communicative ability in a non-Indo-European or Indo-European language (including the option of American Sign Language).

Objective: a. Complete first year course in non-Indo-European language or second year course in Indo-European language.

Goal 2: Comprehend fundamental fields of linguistic inquiry.

Objectives: a. Demonstrate recognition of fundamental levels of linguistic analysis (phonetic, phonological, morphological, syntactic, discursive).
 b. List and define major cross-disciplinary fields in linguistics (anthropological linguistics, applied linguistics, computational linguistics, historical linguistics, psycholinguistics, and sociolinguistics.)
 c. Organize a personal program of linguistic inquiry.
 d. Understand language structure using techniques of linguistic analysis.

Goal 3: Read in a critical manner scholarly linguistic literature.

Objectives: a. Use electronic databases to identify useful sources of information.
 b. Summarize main thesis and supporting data of sources.
 c. Identify deficiencies in scholarly literature, as well as significant

contributions to the field.

Goal 4: Write effectively about language structure.

- Objectives:
- a. Submit proposal to conduct original research.
 - b. Communicate contributions of scholars to past and current states of the art.
 - c. Organize research findings into document using introduction, development, support, and conclusion
 - d. Respond appropriate to constructive criticism of writing.
 - e. Use available technology to convey information on linguistics to others.

Goal 5: Speak effectively on research in linguistics.

- Objectives:
- a. Prepare useful supporting documentation for audience.
 - b. Develop effective oral presentations using multimedia for support.
 - c. Demonstrate ability to speak clearly and effectively within allotted time.

Goal 6: Develop advanced ability in an allied field.

- Objective:
- a. Meet with advisor in allied field to develop study plan.
 - b. Complete courses in supporting field as advised.

IV. Assessment

1. Direct Measures

Course portfolios constructed by instructors (including tests, homework, proposals, drafts, and final papers)

Student test results in sequenced linguistics courses that reflect developed competencies

Senior colloquium presentation in front of faculty and peers

2. Indirect Measures

Periodic review of syllabi, textbooks, exams, etc.

Surveys of alumni

Exit interviews/questionnaires

Transcript analyses

3. Explanation

Information gathered by direct and indirect means is assessed and evaluated by individual professors, and then at the level of the linguistics program. Faculty in the program meet regularly to discuss student outcomes at specific levels of the curriculum so that any curricular adjustment might be made if deemed appropriate. An example of this is that linguistic faculty noted difficulty with respect to identity of the mid-central vowel in a word like 'put'. In assessing the difficulty, it was decided that all faculty teaching this point need to make students aware of different traditions in American and International Phonetic Association transcription of the sound.

There are many examples of how the linguistics assessment plan has been

implemented both formally and informally, but the majority of the changes brought about by assessment are undertaken on a course-by-course basis by individual professors. For this reason, and to be as complete and thorough as possible, the linguistics program assessment contains individual plans for courses at all levels.

Direct measures of student outcomes for objectives are assessed by individual professors, accomplished by evaluating the results of activities and exams specifically designed to monitor the competency in question. So, professors are responsible for maintaining a direct link between goals, syllabi, and course activities. The senior colloquium presentation facilitates follow-up to individual original research, under the guidance of the faculty mentor of the student's choosing.

V. Individual Linguistic Program Assessment Plans

Linguistics 201 – Introduction to Linguistics

I. Goals

Skills and abilities

- obtain a broad understanding of the nature of human language
- read relevant documents critically
- comprehend and distinguish the different dimensions of linguistics
- ability to examine the structural components of sound, form, and meaning and the precise interplay between them

Knowledge

- understanding of the primary topics of language study
- familiarity with the basic linguistic structures of morphology, syntax, phonetics, phonology, and semantics
- ability to identify and solve elementary problems in the above categories
- understanding the relevancy of linguistics to other disciplines
- understanding the evolution of the English language and its relationship with the rest of the world's languages
- understanding the history of writing systems of the languages of the world
- basic knowledge of the distinction between 1st and 2nd language acquisition

II. Objectives

- that students demonstrate the above listed skills and knowledge in written form

III. Assessment

A. Direct Measures

- four objective examinations that assess student familiarity with the above stated skills and knowledge

B. Indirect Measures

- periodic review of syllabi, textbooks, exams, and lectures
- informal conversations with students and colleagues
- student evaluations of teaching

Linguistics 204 - Sociolinguistics

I. Goals

Skills and abilities

- basic understanding of the important branch of language study known as sociolinguistics
- read relevant documents critically
- comprehend and distinguish the different dimensions of sociolinguistics

Knowledge

- understanding of the primary topics in sociolinguistics
- understanding of the relationship of sociolinguistics to linguistics in general
- familiarity with the methods of studying language variation both on the regional and social levels
- familiarity with the basic research studies of sociolinguists
- understanding of gender differences in language
- familiarity with bilingualism and code-switching examples
- understanding the importance of language planning worldwide
- basic knowledge of contact languages

IV. Objectives

- that students demonstrate the above listed skills and knowledge in written and spoken form

V. Assessment

C. Direct Measures

- three objective examinations that assess student familiarity with the above stated skills and knowledge

- one project or paper that assesses student ability to critically interpret and analyze sociolinguistic data

D. Indirect Measures

- periodic review of syllabi, textbooks, exams, and lectures
- informal conversations with students and colleagues
- student evaluations of teaching

Linguistics 301 - Phonology

I. Goals :

Skills and abilities:

- To enable students to develop an understanding of phonological systems as well as the methods, tools and concepts used in phonological research and analysis.
- To enable students to be able to represent basic aspects of phonological systems and analysis such as: vowels, consonants assimilations, alternations, features and other characteristics of phonological segments, autosegmental phonology etc.
- To enable students to learn problem solving skills, data analysis, and the ability to generate hypothesis and test them within a particular phonological theory.

Knowledge:

- Understanding the regularities in the phonological systems of human languages.
- Ability to solve phonological problems, analyze data, generate hypotheses and test them within various phonological theories

II. Objectives :

- Ability to conduct sound phonological analysis of human languages
- Ability to work and function comfortably in several phonological frameworks
- Prepare students for graduate studies and research in linguistics in general and phonology in particular.

III. Assessment :

A. Direct measures

- Tests assess students' understanding of competing theories in phonology
- Assignments assess students' analytical skills and problem solving skills. Each of these assignments typically involves 4 different languages with phonological problems to solve.
- General assessment of class participation and attendance to monitor students' understanding of the concepts and methods studied in class.

B. Indirect measures

- Student evaluations of teaching
- Regular review of syllabi, textbooks and exams etc.
- Informal discussions with students and colleagues

Linguistics 302 - Morphology

I. Goals

Skills and abilities

- Ability to recognize and use basic International Phonetic Alphabet symbols
- Ability to solve word-formation problems involving dividing words into their constituent morphemes
- Ability to solve problems involving the generation of new word forms based on assigned morphological models.

Knowledge

- Be familiar with the general history of the study of word formation
- Be aware of existing linguistic schools of thought regarding morphology
- Know the distribution and constituency of the major language families of the world
- Know general linguistic terminology pertaining to word formation

II. Objectives

- Students must master the basic skills and knowledge involving the study of word formation both in English and cross-linguistically

III. Assessment

A. Direct Measures

- Students must complete three tests involving both objective questions as well as problems to solve
- In-class student participation in questions/answers and problem solving
- Homework involving the solving of morphology problems in English and other languages

B. Indirect Measures

- Periodic review of syllabi, textbooks, exams, etc.
- Regular induction into the course of new language material, particularly from languages that I perform original research on
- Quarterly student evaluations of teaching
- Informal exit interviews with students who have completed morphology and have moved on to higher classes in the linguistics program

Linguistics 303 - Syntax

I. Goals :

Skills and abilities:

- To enable students to develop an understanding of structure as well as the methods, tools and concepts used in syntactic research and analysis.
- To enable students to be able to recognize and understand basic aspects of syntactic structure such as lexical categories, functional grammatical categories, phrase structure, projection, and movement operations.
- To enable students to learn problem solving skills, data analysis, and the ability to generate hypotheses and test them within a particular syntactic theory.

Knowledge:

- Understanding the universal syntactic properties of human languages.
- Ability to solve syntactic problems by analyzing data, generating hypotheses and testing them within standard syntactic theory.

IV. Objectives :

- Ability to conduct syntactic analysis of human languages.
- Ability to work and function comfortably in standard syntactic theoretical analysis
- Prepare students for graduate studies and research in linguistics in general and syntax in particular.

V. Assessment :

A. Direct measures

- Tests assess students' understanding of basic modules of syntactic theory
- Assignments and research papers assess students' analytical skills and problem solving skills. These assignments cover the basic syntactic structure of major world languages, including, as an example, Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish, as well as local and less-studied native languages, such as Salish and Athabaskan languages.
- General assessment of class participation and attendance to monitor students' understanding of the concepts and methods studied in class.

B. Indirect measures

- Student evaluations of teaching
- Regular review of syllabi, textbooks and exams etc.
- Informal discussions with students and colleagues

Linguistics 314 - Phonetics

I. Goals:

Skills and abilities:

- Students will recognize and identify the physiology of articulatory phonetics.
- Students will recognize and identify the physiology of auditory phonetics.
- Students will recognize and identify the acoustical properties of consonants, approximants, and vowels.
- Students will use articulatory terminology to identify the sounds of major world languages.
- Students will use the International Phonetic Alphabet to transcribe the sounds of major world languages.
- Students will design and carry out a study in experimental acoustical phonetics.

Knowledge:

- Students will understand physiological basis for articulation of speech.
- Students will understand basis for sound changes and coarticulation.
- Students will understand phonetic transcriptions of speech.
- Students will recognize major features of sounds as represented in sound spectrographs.

II. Objectives :

- Students will be able to use articulatory phonetic terminology to describe the sounds of language.
- Students will be able to perform a close transcription of speech in English.
- Students will be able to discern relationships among similar phones in a given group of sounds.
- Students will record speech samples and analyze them using a sound spectrogram.
- Students will explain acoustical features displayed on a sound spectrogram.

III. Assessment :

A. Direct measures

- Tests assess students' understanding of basic phonetic terminology
- Assignments assess students' ability to transcribe words in the world's major languages, for example, Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish.
- General assessment of class participation and attendance to monitor students' understanding of the concepts and methods studied in class.

B. Indirect measures

- Student evaluations of teaching
- Regular review of syllabi, textbooks and exams etc.
- Informal discussions with students and colleagues

Linguistics 402: Dynamics of Language Contact (an example of one topic in a rotating topics senior capstone course)

I. Goals

Skills and abilities

- comprehend the types of language contact and the linguistic terminology used to describe structural and functional contact phenomena
- apply skills and abilities in identifying language contact phenomena in the community
- conduct field research with an informant and gather original data
- analyze language contact data using linguistic terminology
- present and discuss the linguistic and social factors for and outcomes of language contact

Knowledge

- familiarity with the world's bilingual/multilingual speech communities
- understanding of the linguistic terminology used to describe language contact phenomena
- understanding of the linguistic principals and processes of language contact and change
- understanding of the social factors and contexts that contribute to language contact and new contact varieties

II. Objectives

- that students demonstrate the above listed skills and knowledge in written and spoken forms.

III. Assessment

A. Direct Measures

Students will complete exams that will allow them to evidence their ability to identify and analyze the linguistic and social aspects of language contact phenomena using linguistic concepts and terminology. Students will participate in class activities that will demonstrate their skills in analyzing examples of language contact. Students will also complete a final project in which students will present their ability to apply their skills and knowledge through the procurement and analysis of original data.

B. Indirect Measures

periodic review of syllabi, textbooks, exams, etc.

informal conversations with students who take further courses in linguistics

student evaluations of teaching

exit interviews/questionnaires

transcript analyses

Courses in Allied Fields

All students in linguistics take a complement of supporting courses in an allied field of their choosing. For assessment plans in allied fields, please refer to assessment plans in the appropriate departments (Anthropology, English, Computer Science, Communication Science and Disorders, Modern and Classical Languages, Philosophy, Psychology).