

Linguistics, MA

The Master of Arts in linguistics emphasizes theory and research. They prepare students for academic and non-academic careers.

The Department of Languages, Linguistics, Literatures, and Cultures has particular strengths in phonology, syntax, and language acquisition.

The phonology curriculum emphasizes current theoretical perspectives, including optimality theory, and the collection, description, and interpretation of novel phonological and phonetic data. Courses feature extensive work in data analysis and problem-solving, focusing on the construction and evaluation of phonological theories, particularly in light of new empirical data.

The syntax curriculum includes the dual emphases of empirical and theoretical perspectives. It offers a variety of foundational courses that build analytic and argumentation skills, as well as specialized coursework on current issues in syntactic theory. The courses consist of intensive work in problem-solving. They combine the discovery and description of new linguistic data with the exploration of the implications of such facts in testing and constructing syntactic theories.

The curriculum in language acquisition includes courses that provide an overview and analysis of current second language acquisition research. Work focuses on experimental research investigating the influence of the first language, environmental and contextual factors, and related topics.

Learning Outcomes

The master's degree in linguistics is intended for students who want to pursue a PhD in linguistics or are interested in linguistics-related professional areas.

Students are expected to:

- be familiar with the basics of theoretical linguistic approaches to phonology and syntax, be able to analyze linguistic data using formal theoretical linguistics approaches, and be familiar with the basics of applied phonetics and approaches to multilingual language acquisition research;
- be familiar with the basics of empirical research in linguistics and be able to use appropriate software and methods to understand original research;
- be able to write a formal research paper in syntax and phonology demonstrating a critical evaluation of a particular problem or issue they have investigated;
- be familiar with the basics of multilingual language acquisition from a theoretical and empirical perspective;
- formulate a research project by the end of their third semester if they have articulated the goal of continuing to a PhD program in linguistics; and
- possibly explore course options in areas related to their professional development if they are not planning on continuing to a PhD program in linguistics.

Requirements

The Master of Arts in linguistics requires a minimum of 34–37 s.h. of graduate credit. Students must maintain a Graduate College major program grade-point average of at least 3.00. The degree is offered with two options: without a thesis (34 s.h.) and with a thesis (37 s.h.). A student's advisor must

approve all courses that count toward the degree. All courses must be taken on an A-F graded basis.

Core Courses

Students complete the following set of required core courses in phonetics, phonology, syntax, and language acquisition for a total of 22 s.h.

Course #	Title	Hours
All of these:		
LING:3005	Articulatory and Acoustic Phonetics	3
LING:5000	Proseminar: Morphosyntax	1
LING:5010	Introduction to Syntax	3
LING:5020	Introduction to Phonology	3
LING:6010	Syntactic Theory	3
LING:6020	Phonological Theory	3
LING:6080	Topics in Second Language Acquisition	3
One of these:		
LING:6040	Linguistic Structures	3
LING:6050	Language Universals Linguistic Typology	3

Electives

Students are encouraged to use electives to focus on a specialized area, such as data analytics. With advisor permission, additional non-linguistics courses may be considered as elective options.

Students not completing a thesis take 12 s.h. of linguistics courses (prefix LING) numbered 4000 or above, excluding LING:4010, LING:4050, LING:4900, LING:6900, and LING:7900. These may include a maximum of 6 s.h. total from LING:4195 Linguistics Lab II, LING:5090 Special Projects, and LING:7100 Special Projects.

Students completing a thesis take 15 s.h. of linguistics courses numbered 4000 or above, excluding LING:4010, LING:4050, LING:4900, and LING:7900. This may include a maximum of 9 s.h. total from LING:4195 Linguistics Lab II, LING:5090 Special Projects, LING:6900 Master's Thesis, and LING:7100 Special Projects. Students must take at least 3 s.h. in LING:6900 Master's Thesis.

Admission

Applicants to the MA program in linguistics must submit an application to the Graduate College, including three letters of recommendation. Applications for admission should be submitted as early as possible for the following academic year.

Applicants must meet the admission requirements of the Graduate College; see the Manual of Rules and Regulations on the Graduate College website.

Career Advancement

Career opportunities in linguistics can be found in academia, government, industry, and the non-profit sectors.

A number of companies, such as Microsoft, Xerox, Apple, Hewlett-Packard, and other high-tech firms, regularly hire employees with linguistics degrees. Opportunities also exist

for government work, for example, as a special agent linguist for the FBI.

The Linguistic Society of America has a wealth of resources available to individuals interested in pursuing a career in linguistics.

The Pomerantz Career Center offers multiple resources to help students find internships and jobs.

b Complete 12 s.h. of Department of Linguistics coursework, which may include a 9-12 s.h. focus. Work with faculty advisor to determine appropriate coursework and sequence.

Academic Plans

Sample Plan of Study

Sample plans represent one way to complete a program of study. Actual course selection and sequence will vary and should be discussed with an academic advisor. For additional sample plans, see MyUI.

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Course	Title	Hours
Academic Career		
Any Semester		
34 s.h. must be graduate level coursework; all coursework including up to a maximum of 6 s.h. of graduate transfer credits require approval. More information is included in the General Catalog and on department website. ^a		
Hours		0
First Year		
Fall		
LING:3005	Articulatory and Acoustic Phonetics	3
LING:5000	Proseminar: Morphosyntax	1
LING:5010	Introduction to Syntax	3
Elective or focus course ^b		3
Hours		10
Spring		
LING:5020	Introduction to Phonology	3
LING:6010	Syntactic Theory	3
Elective or focus course ^b		3
Hours		9
Second Year		
Fall		
LING:6020	Phonological Theory	3
LING:6080	Topics in Second Language Acquisition	3
Elective or focus course ^b		3
Hours		9
Spring		
LING:6040 or LING:6050	Linguistic Structures or Language Universals Linguistic Typology	3
Elective or focus course ^b		3
Hours		6
Total Hours		34

a Students must complete specific requirements in the University of Iowa Graduate College after program admission. Refer to the Graduate College website and the Manual of Rules and Regulations for more information.