Linguistics, BA

Linguistics as a discipline inquires into the fundamental nature of human language. The ability to learn and speak a language is unique to humans. Language is intrinsic to the human mind, as well as integral to human society. The study of linguistics at the undergraduate level teaches students how to analyze languages, which are highly structured in ways in which most people are not consciously aware.

Undergraduate courses in the linguistics major teach a vocabulary of concepts and notation for analyzing language and a process of analytical reasoning for applying the concepts to forms from specific languages. Students who major in linguistics achieve an informed awareness of language that has applications in many other fields, as well as preparation for continuing in linguistics and other fields that focus on language. The curriculum also provides an introduction to the kind of arguments used in scientific reasoning, using data and techniques that are perhaps more easily accessible to undergraduates than the kind used in laboratory sciences.

Depending on their vocational goals, students planning to major in linguistics should consider furthering their studies either through the MA in linguistics with a professional focus or through the PhD, or they should complete a second major. Appropriate companion fields include languages, anthropology, computer science, English, mathematics, philosophy, psychology, sociology, speech pathology, and elementary and secondary education.

Learning Outcomes

Students will have the ability to:

- identify generalizations in language data;
- apply theoretical concepts to the analysis of language;
- understand and use the scientific method;
- present a valid and sound argument; and
- identify the empirical shortfalls of a linguistic analysis and think creatively about alternative solutions.