Linguistics Department

Chairperson

Masters Program Director

Doctoral Program Director
Marie K. Huffman, Ward Melville Social and Behavioral Sciences Building N-251 (631) 632-1388

Degrees Awarded
M.A. in Linguistics; M.A. in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages; Ph.D. in Linguistics

Description of the Linguistics Department

The Department of Linguistics, in the College of Arts and Sciences, offers graduate training in Linguistics that leads to the Doctor of Philosophy in Linguistics as well as a course of study that leads to the Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL).

The Ph.D. program is designed to prepare students for advanced research in all branches of theoretical linguistics including syntax, semantics, morphology, phonology, phonetics and first and second language acquisition as well as experimental approaches to these areas. Students develop their research interests further through advanced seminars in Linguistics as well as courses in Psychology, Computer Science, Philosophy, and the interdisciplinary Language, Mind and Brain seminar series. Students are encouraged to develop an area of concentration beyond their primary specialization by focusing a number of their electives in a specific direction. The M.A. in Linguistics is normally part of the Ph.D. in Linguistics. It is typically granted to students who satisfactorily complete 30 credits, which include the courses required for the Ph.D.

The M.A. in TESOL is designed to prepare students to become professional teachers, teacher educators, and curriculum designers. The program offers courses in theoretical linguistics and its applications as well as pedagogy. It provides extensive supervised field experience in schools and in the English courses offered by the university for International students. Graduates of the program are successfully employed in public and private schools at K-12 levels, colleges, and universities in the United States and abroad. The requirements of the M.A. TESOL program satisfy a substantial portion of the requirements for New York State certification in TESOL, and students may arrange to complete the requirements for state certification in conjunction with pursuit of the M.A.

Admission requirements for the Linguistics Department

Interested students should begin the application process as early as possible, especially if they plan to apply for financial aid. New applications will be considered for admission to the Ph.D. program for the fall semester only. Usually only applications for full-time study will be considered. M.A. applications are normally considered for fall admission.

Ph.D. application materials should be submitted by January 15; M.A. applications should be received by March 1 but will be accepted through April 15. Admission to all programs is competitive and no single factor (GRE scores, letters, grades, etc.) will exclude anyone from being admitted. Similarly, no single factor will ensure admission.

For admission to the graduate programs in the Department of Linguistics, the following, in addition to the minimum Graduate School requirements, are normally required:

A. Baccalaureate Degree: A baccalaureate degree is required. Students must present evidence that such a degree will be awarded by the time they begin graduate work. A final transcript is also required prior to registration.

B. Cumulative Grade Point Average: A minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (or its foreign equivalent) on a four-point scale. If you have attended graduate school and obtained a master's degree, and the GPA is over 3.00, then the GPA of the undergraduate school can be below 3.00 for regular admission.

C. Letter of Recommendation: Letters of recommendation from three former instructors are required.

D. Graduate Record Examination: There is no subject test for linguistics or TESOL; the general test is all that is required. Please have the testing service send a copy of your score to the Linguistics Department.

E. Foreign Language Requirement: Proficiency in a foreign language equivalent to two years of college work is required.

F. Writing Sample: The writing sample should be a short paper written for a previous course taken in linguistics, or if that is not available, a paper on any subject is acceptable.

G. Curriculum Vitae or Resume.

H. TOEFL Score: Non-native speakers of English must have obtained a minimum score of 600 (paper), 250 (computer), or 100 (iBT) on the TOEFL test.

I. Acceptance: Students must be accepted by both the Department of Linguistics and the Graduate School.

Note: Students who do not meet the above requirements may be admitted conditionally. Their status will be reviewed after their first semester of graduate study.
Facilities of the Linguistics Department

The Department of Linguistics has several lab facilities. The Semantics Lab houses MacIntosh computers, and is devoted to research and instructional projects in semantics, natural language computation, and software development. The Phonetics Laboratory suite includes a sound-treated room, a teaching lab and a research lab. Speech analysis platforms available are CSL and Praat. Speech perception experiments are run with Superlab and E-Prime. There is also a computer lab for students with internet access and printing facilities.

Requirements of Linguistics Department

Requirements for the M.A. Degree in TESOL

In addition to the minimum Graduate School requirements, the following are required:

A. Coursework
1. All of the following: 21 credits
   LIN 522 Phonetics
   LIN 524 TESOL Pedagogy: Theory and Practice and
   LIN 579 Field Experience N-12
   LIN 527 Structure of English
   LIN 529 Content-based Language and Literacy Development Practice and
   LIN 579 Field Experience N-12
   LIN 530 Introduction to General Linguistics
   LIN 571 Curriculum Design and Evaluation and
   LIN 578 Field Experience in Adult and Tertiary Contexts
2. Two of the following: 6 credits
   LIN 525 Contrastive Analysis
   LIN 526 Analysis of an Uncommonly Taught Language
   LIN 532 Second Language Acquisition
   LIN 541 Bilingualism
   LIN 542 Sociolinguistics
   LIN 555 Error Analysis
   Or any other TESOL-related courses approved by the program director

Elective (3 credits)

One elective course to be approved by the department

B. Performance
The student must achieve a grade point average (GPA) of B (3.0) or higher in all graduate courses taken at Stony Brook in order to receive a degree.

C. Course Waivers
Certain required courses may be waived for students showing an exceptional background in linguistics or TESOL. Application for such waivers must be made in writing to the department. In any case, all students must complete 30 graduate credits of approved coursework to receive a degree.

New York State Teacher Certification: TESOL Teacher Certification program requirements are listed in the Professional Education Program (PEP) section of this bulletin.

Requirements for the Ph.D. in Linguistics

In addition to the minimum Graduate School requirements, the following are required:

A. Course Requirements
Students must complete a minimum of 60 credits.
1. Required Courses
LIN 521 Syntax I
LIN 621 Syntax II
LIN 523 Phonology I
LIN 623 Phonology II
LIN 625 Semantics (Syntax I must be taken before Semantics)

2. Elective Courses: Electives may include courses in other departments. The student’s choice of electives is decided in conjunction with faculty and must be approved by the doctoral program director.

B. Qualifying Papers
Acceptance by the department of two papers of publishable quality in distinct areas of linguistics (qualifying papers) is required. Each paper will be defended orally before a committee of at least three faculty members, at least two of whom will be full-time faculty from within the department. The inside membership of the two qualifying paper committees must not be identical. The pre-defense draft of a qualifying paper must be submitted to the committee at least three weeks before the defense date. The final version of the first qualifying paper must be submitted not later than six weeks before the last day of classes of the fifth semester and the final version of the second qualifying paper must be submitted not later than the last day of classes of the sixth semester. Failure to meet the first deadline will affect the student’s priority for funding. Students who have not had the final versions of both qualifying papers accepted by their committees by the end of the sixth semester will normally be dismissed from the program. Public presentation of one of these papers is required.

C. Language Requirement
Demonstrated knowledge of two foreign languages other than the student’s mother tongue. This requirement may be satisfied by any of the following methods:

1. Submission of an analytic paper demonstrating knowledge of the structure of the language.
2. Satisfactory completion of a course in the structure of the language.
3. Satisfactory performance on a standardized exam designed to measure language proficiency.
4. Satisfactory completion of two years of college-level instruction in the language.

Advancement to Candidacy: Advancement to candidacy takes place upon the successful completion of the following before the beginning of the fourth year of full-time study: the required courses in A, the qualifying paper requirement in B, and the language requirement in C.

D. Teaching and Research
Students become qualified in teaching and research by working with faculty on an individual basis as teaching assistants and by participating in research projects. They have the opportunity to prepare and teach undergraduate classes during the academic year and in summer sessions.

E. Dissertation
Before a student proceeds to write the dissertation, a dissertation proposal must be accepted by the department. The dissertation proposal outlines the topic and how the student plans to go about investigating this topic. The advisor will organize a discussion in which a committee considers the proposal with the student. The purpose of this discussion is to ensure that the topic is manageable and substantive.

The dissertation committee will consist of a minimum of four members, at least three from the full-time faculty in the department and at least one from outside the department (or University). The committee will be chosen in consultation with the dissertation supervisor, who will be a full-time member of the department faculty. The formal public defense of the dissertation requires the full attendance of the dissertation examining committee.

Faculty of Linguistics Department
Professors
Aronoff, Mark, Ph.D., 1974, Massachusetts Institute of Technology: Morphology; orthography.
Broselow, Ellen, Ph.D., 1976, University of Massachusetts-Amherst: Phonology; phonetics; second language acquisition.
Finer, Daniel L., Ph.D., 1984, University of Massachusetts-Amherst: Syntax; semantics; language acquisition.
Harris, Alice C., Ph.D., 1976, Harvard University: Historical linguistics; morphology; languages of the Caucasus.
Kaufman, Dorit, Ph.D., 1991, Stony Brook University: Language acquisition and attrition; language education.
Larson, Richard K., Ph.D., 1983, University of Wisconsin: Semantics; syntax.

Associate Professors
Bailyn, John F., Ph.D., 1995, Cornell University: Syntax; Russian syntax; Slavic linguistics.
Huffman, Marie K., Ph.D., 1989, University of California, Los Angeles: Phonetics; phonology.
Repetti, Lori, Ph.D., 1989, University of California, Los Angeles: Italian linguistics; Romance linguistics; phonology; Italian dialectology.

Number of teaching, graduate, and research assistants, fall 2009: 19

NOTE: The course descriptions for this program can be found in the corresponding program PDF or at COURSE SEARCH.