Washington University in St. Louis

Linguistics

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Courses

Visit online course listings to view semester offerings for L44 Ling.

L44 Ling 1036 First Year Seminar:Storming Off and Slaying Serpents: Linguistic Approaches to Comparative Mythology
This course is an introduction to comparative mythology through the lens of linguistic theory. As all of our most ancient mythological narratives are poetic-and given that the production of poetic texts is a fundamentally linguistic enterprise-students will acquire the linguistic skills necessary to fully engage with and analyze the language of ancient mythological texts.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC Arch: SSC Art: SSC EN: S

L44 Ling 148 First-Year Seminar: The Linguistics of Constructed Languages
Credit 3 units. A&S: FYS A&S IQ: SSC Arch: SSC Art: SSC BU: HUM EN: S

L44 Ling 170D Introduction to Linguistics
Language is one of the fundamental capacities of the human species, and there are many interesting and meaningful ways in which it can be studied. This course explores the core components of linguistic theory: speech sounds (phonetics and phonology), word formation (morphology), sentence structure (syntax), and meaning (semantics). It also provides an overview of interdisciplinary ideas and research on how language is acquired and processed, its relation to the mind-brain and to society, and the question of whether the essential properties of language can be replicated outside the human mind (specifically, in chimpanzees or computer programs).
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC Arch: SSC Art: SSC BU: BA, HUM EN: S

L44 Ling 225D Latin and Greek in Current English
An astonishingly large number of English words, especially in areas such as medicine, science, and law, are derived from Latin and Greek. This course will provide a study of the impact of Latin and Greek on the English language through study of the Latin and Greek roots, prefixes, and suffixes that are most commonly found in English technical and non-technical vocabulary and the linguistic principles through which these elements have entered the English language.
Same as L08 Classics 225D
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM BU: HUM EN: H

L44 Ling 258 Methods in Linguistic Research
This course will introduce students to a range of formal, computational, and experimental tools for conducting linguistic research. Students will learn about different types of linguistic data, experimental design, and statistical techniques in the context of research in general linguistics, psycholinguistics, and sociolinguistics. This course aims to make students more capable readers of linguistic research (and scientific research more generally) and to provide them with hands-on experience in employing linguistic research methods. The course will also serve as an introduction to R for statistical computing. The class is intended for freshman and sophomore students who are considering advanced study in the linguistics program. Prerequisite: Ling 170D.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC, AN EN: S

L44 Ling 263 Linguistics for Legal Purposes
This course exposes students to an array of legal matters in which forensic linguistic science can play a key role. It simultaneously introduces them to linguistic concepts, theories, and methods that can be differentially applied for a combination of forensic and legal purposes. Topics include trademark disputes, defamation suits, civil litigation, authorship identification, and linguistic evaluations of testimony presented during murder trials. Assignments will include the formulation of affidavits and the production of legal opinions derived from diverse linguistic analyses.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC Arch: SSC Art: SSC BU: BA EN: S

L44 Ling 301G Symbolic Logic
In the first half of the course we will be studying some features of truth-functional and first-order classical logics, including studying the model theory and metatheory for first-order logic in much greater depth than in Phil 100. In the second half of the course we will go on to study three different styles of proof-system: tableaux, axiomatic, and natural deduction. This course continues on where Philosophy 100: An introduction to Logic and Critical Analysis leaves off. It is recommended for students who have already taken that introductory course, or for students who already have a strong background in mathematics. Priority given to majors in Philosophy & PNP.
Same as L30 Phil 301G
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: NSM, AN Arch: NSM Art: NSM BU: HUM

L44 Ling 306G Philosophy of Language
A survey of major philosophical problems concerning meaning, reference, and truth as they have been addressed within the analytic tradition. Readings that represent diverse positions on these focal issues will be selected from the work of leading philosophers in the field, for example: Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein, Davidson, Quine, Kripke, and Putnam. Students are encouraged to engage critically the ideas and arguments presented, and to develop and defend their own views on the core topics. Prerequisites: one course in Philosophy at the 100 or 200-level, or permission of the instructor. Priority given to majors in Philosophy & PNP.
Same as L30 Phil 306G
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: HUM EN: H

L44 Ling 309 Syntactic Analysis
The ability to produce and understand an infinite number of sentences is perhaps the most fascinating aspect of the human language faculty. Syntax is the study of how the brain organizes sentences from smaller phrases and words. This course explores syntactic analysis from several perspectives within generative linguistics, focusing primarily on the Government and Binding framework but also introducing Minimalist and Optimality Theoretic approaches. Topics to be discussed include phrase structure, transformations, case theory, thematic roles, and anaphora. Assignments will help students learn to construct and compare analyses of syntactic problems in English and other languages. Prerequisite: Ling 170D or permission of instructor.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC Arch: SSC Art: SSC BU: HUM EN: S

L44 Ling 311 Introduction to Semantics
Semantics is the branch of linguistics which studies how speakers assign meaning to words, sentences, and larger units of discourse. We combine perspectives from both linguistics and philosophy to explore a variety of topics including polysemy, compositionality, quantification, anaphora, definite descriptions, attitude reports, presupposition, and implicature. Prerequisite: Ling 170D or Phil 301G or permission of instructor.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC Arch: SSC Art: SSC BU: HUM EN: S

L44 Ling 312 Phonetics
Phonetics is the study of the sounds of the languages of the world. The primary goal of the course is to learn how speech sounds are produced, so that the student can describe them in articulatory terms, write them out in a standard notational system, and produce them accurately. Other topics include a basic introduction to the acoustics of speech and the use of personal computers to display, analyze, and synthesize human speech. The course should prove useful to students desiring a deeper understanding of one of the fundamental underpinnings of linguistics, but also has practical applications in such fields as foreign language learning and the appreciation and acquisition of new dialects and accents. Prerequisite: Ling 170D.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC Arch: SSC Art: SSC BU: HUM EN: S

L44 Ling 313 Phonological Analysis
There are several important abilities involved in the use of human language, one of these being the ability to organize speech sounds. The system that the brain uses to accomplish this task is the subject matter of phonology. This course will explore phonology from several perspectives within generative linguistics, including both traditional rule-based and current Optimality Theoretic approaches. Topics to be discussed include phonological features, lexical phonology, prosodic morphology, tone, and metrical stress. Assignments will help students learn to analyze phonological problems in a variety of languages and to evaluate the consequences of using different analytic approaches. Prerequisite: Ling 170D or permission of instructor.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC Arch: SSC Art: SSC BU: BA EN: S

L44 Ling 315 Morphology
Concepts covered: morphemic analysis and investigation of morphological processes. Additional topics may include relationship of morphology to language-typology and to syntax. Prerequisite: Ling 170D, or permission of instructor.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC Arch: SSC Art: SSC BU: HUM EN: S

L44 Ling 317 Introduction to Computational Linguistics
Use of computers to analyze, understand, and generate human language. Emphasis on appreciating practical applications such as text analysis, search and creation of dictionaries and corpora, information retrieval, machine translation, and speech interfaces. Survey of rule-based and statistical techniques. Students acquire programming skills appropriate for solving small- to medium-scale problems in linguistics and text processing, using a language such as Python. Students have regular programming assignments and complete a semester project. No previous knowledge of programming required. Prerequisite: L44 Ling 170D.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC Arch: SSC Art: SSC EN: S

L44 Ling 320 Historical and Comparative Linguistics
Historical linguistics focuses on how languages change over time. Comparative linguistics focuses on their similarities and differences. In this course we will trace some of the differences and changes in sound (phonetics and phonology) word formation (morphology), sentence structure (syntax), and meaning (semantics). Topics include linguistic universals, the structural and genetic classification of languages, the techniques of reconstructing proto-languages, and the causes of language change. Examples from Indo-European languages (for example, Greek, English, and Spanish) and from Native American languages (for example, Quechua and Mayan) will be emphasized. Prerequisite: Ling 170D.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: LCD, SSC Arch: SSC Art: SSC BU: HUM EN: S

L44 Ling 339 Introduction to Sociolinguistics
Studies of language in social context are presented, including research related to diglossia, bilingualism, pidginization, creolization, and dialectology. Discourse analyses and conversational analyses of face-to-face conversation are examined in methodological and analytical terms. Beyond assigned readings, critical discourse analyses, the ethnography of speaking, the sociology of language, and accommodation theory are also considered. Students are required to develop a course project related to one or more studies of language in use. Experimental studies of sociophonetics and sociohistorical linguistics are presented during lectures to demonstrate advanced interdisciplinary research with potential educational and legal relevance. Prerequisite: Ling 170D.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC, SC, SD Arch: SSC Art: SSC BU: HUM EN: S

L44 Ling 340 Linguistic Pragmatics
Discourse analysis and pragmatics are the subfields of linguistics that investigate language as it is used in real-life contexts. The focus of this course is on the following question: What do people do with language, and how do they do it? One goal is to demonstate how the results of such investigations are relevant for a number of concrete problems in human communication. Some of the more specific questions we will explore are as follows: What distinguishes discourse analysis and pragmatics from each other? What is their relation to the other branches of linguistics? How can the two fields contibute to the establishment of a paradigm for interdisciplinary and intercultural studies? Prerequisite: Ling 170D or permission of instructor.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC Arch: SSC Art: SSC BU: HUM EN: S

L44 Ling 341 Linguistic Diversity in the United States
Linguistic diversity has always existed within the United States, and this course begins with a survey of many of the indigenous Native American languages that existed prior to European colonization. The emphasis of this course is linguistic research, as we examine diverse studies of language across the nation with respect to regional differences, racial and ethnic differences, historical differences, and differences in education and economic status. American bilingualism is explored, as are many of the dialects that have evolved in different parts of the nation. Students study a range of sophisticated linguistic analyses of language diversity in different parts of the USA at different points in the nation's history. The culmination of the course explores practical linguistic applications in legal and educational contexts. Prereq: Ling 170D and some familiarity with elementary statistics.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC, SC, SD Arch: SSC Art: SSC BU: BA EN: S

L44 Ling 3701 Introduction to Hispanic Linguistics
An introduction to the scientific study of the Spanish language, this course focuses on each of the major linguistic subsystems, including the sound system (phonetics and phonology), word formation (morphology), formation of phrases and sentences (syntax), and the use of the language to convey meaning (semantics and pragmatics). At each level of analysis, selected comparisons are made between Spanish and English and between Spanish and other languages. The course also examines different historical, regional, and social varieties of Spanish and situations of Spanish in contact with other languages. Same as L38 Span 370
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: LCD BU: HUM EN: H

L44 Ling 390 Linguistics Service Learning I
Because language is fundamental to human communication, differences in language can present particularly difficult barriers to learning. Taking classes in a language that is not your native language, for example, presents special challenges both to students and their teachers. For speakers of non-standard dialects, taking classes in a standard dialect presents subtler-and in some ways, even more difficult-challenges. This course provides students with a concrete understanding of the practical difficulties arising from linguistic differences and helps them discover ways in which these difficulties can be addressed. In particular, students are expected to devote two hours per week tutoring local K-12 students and to keep a journal focusing on their experiences from a linguistic perspective. Students will be expected to attend weekly meetings with faculty and community partners to relate challenges that they have encountered and to discuss possible solutions. Students will also receive training on how to better understand and serve under-sourced and diverse populations. Prerequisite: At least two 300-level courses in Linguistics or permission of the instructors
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC BU: HUM EN: S

L44 Ling 391 Linguistics Service Learning II
Linguistics Service Learning II meets with Linguistics Service Learning I, but it requires completion of additional written assignments. Prerequisite: Ling 390.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC BU: HUM EN: S

L44 Ling 396 Linguistics Seminar
Readings on a selected topic in theoretical linguistics with an emphasis on discussion, presentation, and writing. Prerequisite: varies with topic.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC EN: S

L44 Ling 396W Linguistics Seminar: Writing Intensive
Readings on a selected topic in theoretical linguistics, with an emphasis on discussion, presentation, and writing. Prerequisite: varies with topic.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC, WI Arch: SSC Art: SSC BU: HUM EN: S

L44 Ling 408 Psychology of Language
This course surveys current research and theory in psycholinguistics, covering the biological bases, cognitive bases, and learning of language. We consider studies of normal children and adults, the performance of individuals with various types of language disorders, and computer simulations of language processes. Topics range from the perception and production of speech sounds to the managment of conversations. Each student will carry out an original research project on some aspect of psycholinguistics. Prereq: Ling 170D and Psych 100B
Same as L33 Psych 433
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC Arch: SSC Art: SSC EN: S

L44 Ling 427 Computation and Learnability in Linguistic Theory
This course introduces the advanced linguistics or computer science student to the fields of learnability and computation as they apply to the study of linguistic theories and natural language. Topics covered include the formal language hierarchy, including the subregular languages; issues in the learnability of phonology, morphology, and syntax; and algorithms specific to constraint-based linguistic grammars. Prerequisites: either CS 130 or Ling 317 and at least one of the following: Ling 309, Ling 311, Ling 313, or Ling 315.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC Arch: SSC Art: SSC EN: S

L44 Ling 466 Second-Language Acquisition
There are many ways in which a second language can be learned: from infancy as the child of bilingual parents, or later through formal instruction, immersion in a new culture, or in a particular work or social situation. This class is an inquiry into the processes by which acquisition occurs. Topics include the nature of language learning within the scope of other types of human learning; the relationship between first and second language acquisition; the role of linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural factors; insights gained from analyzing learners' errors; key concepts such as interlanguage and communicative competence; bilingualism; the optimal age for second language acquisition; and a critical appraisal of different theories of second language acquisition. Both theoretical and instructional implications of second language acquisition research are considered. This course can be used towards certification in TESOL and is a required course for the Graduate Certificate in Language Instruction. Prerequisite: Ling 170D or equivalent is recommended, especially for undergraduates, but is not required.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM Arch: HUM Art: HUM EN: H

L44 Ling 4691 Second Language Reading and Writing: Theory, Research and Practice
This course, taught in English, extends issues in second language literacy beyond pedagogy by examining the wide range of theoretical and research issues, both historical and current. Literacy acquisition among second language learners involves a number of variables including both cognitive and social factors. Topics to be discussed in class include literacy and social power, universal cognitive operations, individual learner differences, text types and literary forms, and the extent to which reading and writing are interrelated. Students will discuss how to bridge research and practice, and they will create reading and writing activities driven by theory and empirical investigations. This course is a required course for the for the undergraduate minor in Applied Linguistics and an elective for the Graduate Certificate in Language Instruction. This course carries the Social and Behavioral Sciences attribute.
Same as L38 Span 4691
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC EN: S

L44 Ling 478 Topics in Linguistics
Meets with designated linguistics course, but with additional writing and research required for graduate credit and certification.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC Arch: SSC Art: SSC EN: S

L44 Ling 495 Senior Seminar in Linguistics
The Senior Seminar affords students an opportunity to integrate the various fields of linguistics. Readings, discussions, and presentations let students address issues that combine the content and the research methods of areas such as phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, diachrony, and semantics. Students have individual projects within the scope of the semester's particular topic, but the class as a whole helps in choosing, developing, and refining the treatment. This course fulfills the requirement for a senior capstone for primary majors in Linguistics. It is the normal option for students who wish to take the capstone as a regular class rather than as sponsored independent study.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC Arch: SSC Art: SSC EN: S

L44 Ling 499 Independent Work For Senior Honors
Prerequisites: senior standing and permission of the Linguistics Program.
Credit variable, maximum 6 units.