Linguistics

The School of Humanities

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Degrees Offered: B.A., M.A., Ph.D.

Undergraduate Programs. The department offers both a major program in linguistics, and a Certificate in Teaching English as a Second Language, which may be earned with or without a linguistics major.

Linguistics Major. Because human language is a multifaceted object of study, linguistics is, by its nature, an interdisciplinary field. The undergraduate major in linguistics provides both an in-depth grounding in the field as well as cross-disciplinary breadth. Students beginning a linguistics major should take LING 200, which is a prerequisite for many upper-level courses in the department. All majors are required to take at least 8 courses (24 semester hours) in linguistics at the 300 level or above, including 4 core courses: LING 300, 1 of LING 301 or 311, 1 of LING 402 or 416, and 1 of LING 305, 315, or 415. No more than 1 independent study course may be counted toward the major requirement. In addition, competency in 1 language other than English is required. This requirement may be satisfied by 2 courses in a foreign language at the 200 level or above or equivalent; or at the 100 level or above for non-European languages.

Students may elect either a general linguistics major or one of four areas of concentration. Majors who plan to pursue graduate training in linguistics are recommended to choose one of the areas of concentration. These students also are urged to apply for admission to the honors program by the end of their junior year.

The general linguistics major requires, in addition to the 4 core courses and the language requirement, at least 4 upper-level linguistics electives. The requirements for the various concentrations include additional courses, as follows.

Language Concentration. In addition to the basic language competency required of all majors, the language concentration requires an advanced level competency in a different language. This can be satisfied by 2 language courses taught in a language other than English at the 300 level or above, or equivalent. In addition to the core courses, 4 advanced linguistics electives are required, which should be chosen in consultation with the linguistics adviser. Courses in the structure or history of the languages studied are especially appropriate.
The program consists of 4 courses and a practical component. The courses are LING 200, 340, 394, and 1 of the following: LING 205, 309, 313, or 415. The practical component consists of a total of 20 contact hours of language teaching/tutoring experience. This requirement may be filled by tutoring in the Rice Student Volunteer Program or by teaching in a high school or community ESL program. Students will be expected to write a short report on their teaching experience. Successful completion of the certificate program must be certified by the director of the ESL Certificate Program and will be indicated on the Rice transcript upon completion of degree requirements.

**Doctoral Program.** The doctoral linguistics program at Rice emphasizes the study of language use and functional/cognitive approaches to linguistic theory. Areas of particular research strength in the department include field studies of particular languages (e.g., languages of North and South America; Austronesia; Africa; Europe; and East Asia), typology, language and mind (cognitive linguistics, neurolinguistics, schema-based theories, lexical semantics), language change (diachronic typology, grammaticalization theory, semantic change, language classification, and Indo-European linguistics), and discourse analysis, including corpus linguistics. Additional research areas represented are second language acquisition and applied linguistics.

The program admits students planning to study for the Ph.D. degree on a full-time basis. Undergraduate preparation should ideally include language study and course work in linguistics or disciplines related to linguistics, such as anthropology, applied linguistics, psychology, or computational modeling. Interdisciplinary interests are encouraged. A master's degree may be earned during progress to the Ph.D. degree. Admission to the program is competitive. Students admitted to the program are generally offered financial support in the form of tuition scholarships and/or stipends for living expenses.

During the first year of residence, each entering student works closely with the graduate adviser to choose a plan of study congruent with the demands of the program and the student's interests. Emphasis throughout the program is on a close working relationship with faculty. Students should select areas of specialization that fit well with faculty research interests and activities. (See the departmental homepage at http://linguistics.rice.edu for faculty research specializations.)

Students with master's degrees in linguistics will normally progress through the degree program in three to four years; those without in four to five. With no prior linguistics background, course work in the first two years will generally include 2 courses in the area of phonetics/phonology, 2 in the area of syntactic/semantic analysis, 1 two-course sequence in field methods, 1 problem-solving course in linguistic analysis, and at least 2 courses in other subfields of linguistics. Prior preparation in linguistics will be assessed with regard to its equivalence to particular Rice courses. Students are also normally expected to serve as teaching assistants for 1 course per year during the time they are receiving departmental support; such service is included in the normal course load. Graduate students are required to register for at least 12 hours credit per semester prior to advancing to candidacy.

At the end of the first year of study, students undergo an oral qualifying examination to assess their progress in the doctoral program. Continuation to the second year requires successful performance on this examination and in first-year course work. In each of the second and third years, in addition to their course work, students prepare an in-depth research paper on a topic chosen in consultation with a committee of faculty. These papers will represent different areas of the field, and at least 1 should be on the structure of a non-Indo-European language. Students should work toward establishing a close working relationship with various faculty such that multiple faculty members are closely familiar with the student's work. After the second research paper is accepted, a dissertation adviser is selected and a doctoral committee formed, by mutual agreement.
of the student and the relevant faculty members.

Before advancing to candidacy, students must demonstrate reading competency in 2 research languages other than English. It is also expected that students will submit their work for presentation at one or more professional meetings and publish such work in conference proceedings and/or journals. Funds may be available to defray the cost of travel to such meetings.

During the fourth year, students present to their doctoral committee a third research paper consisting of a substantial dissertation proposal and a comprehensive bibliography. This proposal, ideally building on their previous research, may take the form of a grant proposal to an external funding agency, particularly where fieldwork abroad is proposed. The proposal is also presented orally in a departmental forum. On acceptance of the proposal, the student formally advances to Ph.D. candidacy.

The doctoral research project may require fieldwork in residence or abroad prior to writing the dissertation. The student is expected to consult regularly with faculty members during the writing process. After a complete draft of the dissertation is submitted, the student defends the dissertation publicly. When the final version of the dissertation is accepted by the doctoral committee and filed with the university, and all other requirements are certified as filled, the degree is then granted.

See LING and SANS in the Courses of Instruction section.