Linguistics is the scientific study of human language. Courses explore the principles governing the structure of natural languages, how language is used in human social interaction, how languages are acquired by children and adults, and how they change over time.

Degree Requirements

Students must complete at least 120 credits to graduate, including at least 30 credits in the major.

The program offers two coursework options, both building on a common core of courses including an introduction to linguistics and single courses in phonetics and historical linguistics and capped by the senior project.

In addition, Option 1 requires one course in syntax and one in phonology plus 9 additional credits. Option 2 requires a course in linguistic analysis (covering both syntax and phonology) plus 12 additional linguistic credits. Students intending to pursue graduate study in linguistics are advised to select Option 1.

Related courses in other departments may be applied to the major with the approval of the director of undergraduate studies. At least seven of the preceding courses must be taken A-F.

Required Courses

- Ling 3001 or 5001 or 3011—Introduction to Linguistics
- Ling 3301 or 5301—Phonetics
- Ling 3601 or 5601—Historical Linguistics
- Ling 4901—Senior Project

Option 1

- Ling 5201—Introduction to Syntax
- Ling 5302—Introduction to Phonology

Nine additional credits in 3xxx or 5xxx linguistics courses, excluding 4002, with no more than 6 in any one area, such as phonology or syntax

Option 2

- Ling 4002—Linguistic Analysis

Twelve additional credits in 3xxx-5xxx linguistics courses, excluding 5201 and 5302, with no more than 9 in any one area.

One course in the history and/or structure of a language studied for at least one year at college level (or the equivalent). If such a course is not available, Ling 5931—Fundamentals of Contemporary English, or a similar course may be taken with the approval of the director of undergraduate studies.

Electives

Related courses in other departments may be applied to the major with the approval of the director of undergraduate studies.

Language Requirements

Three years of college study in one foreign language or two years in one language and one year in a second language. This requirement may be satisfied by examination.
Final Project

Students must complete Ling 4901—Senior Project with a grade of S. The usual requirement for this course is the revision and sometimes expansion of a paper written for another linguistics course, but it may involve an original research paper. Each student completes this paper under the supervision of a professor. The topic, supervisory professor, and final paper must be approved by the director of undergraduate studies.

Minor Requirements

The minor program must total at least 12 upper division credits and must be approved by the director of undergraduate studies.

Option 1
• 3001, 3301, 5201, 5302

Option 2
• 3001, 4002, two additional courses.

How do I declare a linguistics major?

You will be required to declare a major by the time you have completed 60 credits.

1. Talk with someone from the department: an adviser, a professor, or a teaching assistant, to learn more about the major and its requirements.

2. When you decide upon a linguistics major, meet with the director of undergraduate studies in linguistics to complete a Major Program form.

3. Bring a copy of the form to your CLA student community.

4. If you decide to change your major, contact your student community to learn more about your new major’s declaration process.

You have not declared a major until you have:
• completed a Major Program Form with your major adviser
• filed a copy with the major department
• filed a copy with your CLA student community
• be sure to keep a copy for yourself

Skills

Linguistics majors develop skills that are applicable to a wide variety of careers. These skills include:

• Data analysis and problem-solving
• Ability to formulate clear well-reasoned messages
• Listening, clarifying, questioning and responding skills
• Independent, self-motivated work ethic
• Critical reading and argumentation
• Ability to work well with diverse groups
• Sensitivity to linguistic and cultural diversity, social cues encoded in language

Employment

Common areas of employment for this major include but are not limited to:

• Education—teaching, research, language instruction and materials development, student affairs, speech therapy
• Technical—Natural Language Processing, including voice recognition development and speech synthesis, machine translation and parsing, knowledge engineering, software for spell checking and grammar checking, search engine development.
• Public Relations and Advertising—corporate public affairs, lobbying
• Media—writing, editing, public relations, management
• Arts and Entertainment—announcing, writing, managing, development
For more information

About the linguistics major:
Undergraduate Advising
214 Nolte Center
(612) 624-3331
http://www.iles.umn.edu

About CLA requirements, graduation, and other information about majors:
CLA Languages and Math Student Community
114 Johnston Hall
(612) 624-7540
http://langmath.cla.umn.edu
langmath@class.cla.umn.edu

or

CLA Martin Luther King, Jr. Program
19 Johnston Hall
(612) 625-2300
http://www.mlk.umn.edu/
mlk@class.cla.umn.edu

About careers, internships, and community learning opportunities in this major and others:
Career and Community Learning Center
135 Johnston Hall
(612) 624-7577
www.cclc.umn.edu
cclc@class.cla.umn.edu

About graduation with honors:
Students interested in graduating with honors should contact:

CLA Honors Division
115 Johnston Hall
(612) 624-5522
www.cla.umn.edu/honors/
honors@class.cla.umn.edu