

Linguistics



What is Linguistics?



Language is an important part of what makes us human and how we communicate with one another. Linguistics is the scientific study of language. Linguists study the properties of language, how language is used in social situations, how it is acquired in infancy, how it is learned as a second language, and how it evolves. Linguistics is a growing field with significant connections to other disciplines, such as: anthropology, computer science, philosophy, psychology, speech disorders/audiology, and the teaching of languages (including English as a Second Language).

Areas of Study

The program in Linguistics will familiarize you with the analytical tools needed to understand the internal functioning of language, as well as introduce you to historical and social variation in language. The Major in Linguistic Anthropology adds a cross-cultural, anthropological dimension to this training.

Linguistics (Major, Minor)

In your linguistics studies at Western, different courses will focus on the various sub-disciplines that together represent the systematic structure of a language:

- **Phonetics and Phonology:** the study of the articulation of the sounds of languages and their systematic organization
- **Syntax:** word order and sentence structure
- **Morphology:** the forms and functions of words in a given language
- **Semantics:** the meaning of words and sentences
- **Historical Linguistics:** the comparison of related languages and the reconstruction of earlier forms of a language

Linguistic Anthropology (Major)

In addition to study of the core areas of linguistics as given above, your training will include learning the foundations of socio-cultural anthropology:

- **Ethnography:** detailed study of the cultures of a particular area of the world.
- **Social Anthropology:** the comparative study of interpersonal interactions, social organization and institutions, and the relationship between these and the larger world in which they are embedded.

Anyone who anticipates working in or in connection with the developing world, or with Canadian First Nations peoples, should consider the Major in Linguistic Anthropology.

Sample Courses

Discourse Analysis and Linguistic Pragmatics

Analysis of the contexts in which sentences occur and of their communicative functions. The idea of communicative competence – social rules for what kinds of things are appropriate to say in particular situations – is developed and explored.

Introduction to Linguistics

Introduction to the basic concepts and methods of modern linguistics. Topics include phonetics, phonology, syntax, semantics, writing, language and society, language and psychology (language acquisition).

After Graduation

The study of linguistics is indispensable for anyone interested in a particular language or in a discipline with a focus on language in general. In terms of careers, this means that anyone interested in language teaching of any sort, in communicative disorders, in translation, or in interpreting, should be sure to include linguistics courses in their undergraduate preparation.

Students can choose to pursue further education and become an audiologist, a translator, a speech therapist/pathologist, librarian, a lawyer or a journalist. A student can also go on to receive graduate training in linguistics/anthropology to become a professional linguist/linguistic anthropologist.

Careers of Graduates

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| • Audiologist | • Lexicographer |
| • Copywriter (Advertising) | • Multilingual Programmer |
| • Education Policy Researcher | • Speech Analysis/Forensic Linguistics |
| • Editor (Publishing) | • Speech Language Assistant |
| • ESL Teacher | • Speech Pathologist |
| • Immigration Officer | • Speech Recognition Programmer |
| • Interpreter | • Technical Writer |
| • Lawyer | • Translator |
| • Linguist | |



"I enjoyed studying French and Spanish in high school but it wasn't until I got to Western that I discovered I could specialize in linguistics and learn about how language works at a deeper level. The professors were inspiring and the assignments challenged me to be both creative and analytical. With the linguistics training I received during my B.A. at Western, I was prepared for my first job teaching English in Korea. The great experience I had at Western led me back to graduate school to continue my studies in linguistic anthropology, doing research in Brazil as well as in a First Nations community in Canada. Now, I am thrilled to be a professor because I have the opportunity to work closely with new students and show them the diverse possibilities linguistics can open up for them."

Karen Pennesi, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Anthropology
The University of Western Ontario

"I thoroughly enjoyed my undergraduate experience in linguistics at Western. The instructors were passionate and approachable and I found the courses offered to be both engaging and comprehensive of the field. As a current master's student in Speech-Language Pathology, I believe that Western's linguistics program provided me with a broader, more global perspective of language, which has enriched my current studies greatly."

Courtney Dorrington
B.A. Honors Linguistics and Psychology, 2006



For more information on **Linguistics**, please visit: www.uwo.ca/linguistics and <http://anthropology.uwo.ca/linguisticanthro.html>