

Learning Outcomes

Department of Linguistics

May 8, 2019

1. Community

- Collaborate to produce a coherent analysis of linguistic data.
- Communicate original analyses of linguistic data in a field-appropriate medium (research paper, oral presentation, or poster) using commonly accepted formal frameworks (understood broadly).

⇒ We expect that beginning students will not be ready for full-fledged collaborations, and they should be able to present limited analyses in short formats, guided by targeted questions on exams, homework, etc. Advanced students should be ready for genuinely collaborative work, whether their “collaborators” are other students or faculty mentors. They should also be able to assemble a cohesive, fully developed presentation of their work without the guidance of specific questions that they must answer.

2. Knowledge & Skills

- Demonstrate command over formal frameworks (understood broadly) and research techniques in linguistics—i.e., students should be able to answer research questions via syntactic, semantic, or phonological analysis; by designing and executing a simple experiment; or by active participation in other kinds of research used by linguists.

⇒ Beginning students should be able to perform SPE-style phonological analyses, simple generative syntactic analyses, etc., using prearranged data. Advanced students should apply more advanced frameworks (*Autosegmentalism*, *Optimality Theory*, *Minimalism*, etc.) to data they retrieve from the primary literature or collect themselves. They should be able to ask a cogent, targeted research question and answer it in a field-appropriate way: through formal analysis, experimentation, etc.

3. Transformation

- Participate in a meaningful learning experience that prepares the student to meet his/her goals after earning a linguistics degree.

⇒ Beginning students should be laying the groundwork for this experience by acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge. Advanced students should show evidence of deeply engaged learning: UROPs, Honors theses, rigorous Capstone projects, etc.

4. Impact

- Identify the import of one’s own analyses for our understanding of language, people, or society as a whole.

⇒ Beginning students should be able to express the implications of their analyses in limited terms regarding the immediate consequences for the language or population at hand. Advanced students should show awareness of broader implications: what their analysis tells us about the structure of language beyond their specific focus, for example.

We will assess these outcomes with evidence from three sources. Student performance will be tracked through LING 4010 and 4020 at the start of their work in our major and again in LING 5900 at the end of the major. We will collect final exams/papers from LING 4010 and 4020, which will provide evidence of student performance in two core subfields of linguistics, phonology and syntax. Work in these courses uses relatively simple theoretical frameworks, and students develop analyses of data provided by the instructor, typically with a series of questions that guides students through the analysis. LING 5900 presents a wider set of opportunities for assessment and also a wider range of foci in student work. In this course, students typically develop a research project in collaboration with classmates. Their choice of research topics is much less constrained than in earlier classes: their work need not be theoretical, it is not confined to syntax and phonology, and students have more freedom in the selection of a specific research topic. They present this work orally, in poster format, or in a formal research paper (or, often, in all three formats), and we will collect examples of each of these to the extent possible: good documentation of oral presentations can be difficult to acquire, and not all instructors require all three presentation formats. Using the benchmarks articulated above, we expect significantly higher scores for work from LING 5900 than for even the best work from LING 4010 and 4020; this should reflect students' development as linguists.

To assess this work, the department's Curriculum Committee will, at its November meeting each year, choose 10 new linguistics majors to evaluate. The Curriculum Committee will do this by randomly selecting five students majoring in linguistics who are currently enrolled in LING 4010 and a different set of five linguistics majors currently enrolled in LING 4020. The instructors of these courses will be informed soon after the Curriculum Committee meeting concerning which five students have been selected from their classes, and will be asked to submit the final exams and/or final research papers for each of these students to the Department Chair and the department's Administrative Manager at the end of Fall Semester. In subsequent years—when the selected linguistics majors have reached the Capstone course (LING 5900)—the instructor of this course will be informed who the selected students are, and will be asked to submit their final project posters, final research papers, and a summary description of their oral presentations to the Department Chair and Administrative Manager at the end of Fall Semester. (Note: This course is offered only in Fall Semester.) To protect the privacy of each student, the Department Chair and Administrative Manager will anonymize each piece of work and mark it with a numeric identifier linked to the student's name only in a master list kept by the Administrative Manager and not available to anyone else.

Once the department has collected LING 4010 or 4020 and 5900 materials for any of the selected students, the Department Chair and the department's Director of Undergraduate Studies will assemble a committee of four people chosen from the department's tenure-line faculty and graduate students to evaluate the selected undergraduate students' materials. At a meeting held in January of each year, the Department Chair and Director of Undergraduate Studies will train the evaluation committee on how to evaluate the students' materials, and will then immediately assign each member of the evaluation committee to rate the materials of five students apiece in such a way that each student is evaluated by two raters. The members of the evaluation committee will do so by rating each piece of work on a four-point scale in relation to each of the four earlier-stated criteria. The four-point scale will be constituted as follows: Does not meet expectations (1), In development (2), Meets expectations (3), Exceeds expectations (4). A rating of 1 indicates that the student does not show evidence of progress toward meeting an outcome. A rating of 2 indicates that the student shows evidence of progress toward meeting an outcome but does not yet meet it. Ratings of 3 or 4 indicate that the student meets or exceeds,

respectively, the benchmarks specified in the outcome. The evaluation committee will complete all of their ratings by the end of the January meeting. The Department Chair and Administrative Manager will then collect all of the ratings and will present them to the Curriculum Committee each April.

Completed evaluations, consisting of ratings of selected students' work in LING 4010 or 4020 and LING 5900, will be archived by the Department Chair and Administrative Manager and will be made available to internal and external reviewers during each accreditation review process and the department's seven-year review.