

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS

LINGUISTICS PH.D. PROGRAM

(REVISED 08/20/07)

The Department of Linguistics at the University of Michigan, founded in 1963, currently has over 20 faculty, 30 Ph.D. students, and 60 undergraduate concentrators. The doctoral program provides a broad-based approach to linguistics as a cognitive and a social science. Students are encouraged to formulate and test theories of speakers' linguistic knowledge, and theories of linguistic variation and use, drawing on observational, experimental, and computational methods. In keeping with the long-standing interdisciplinary approach of the Department, close ties are maintained with the Departments of Anthropology, Computer Science, Philosophy, and Psychology, as well as the language departments and the English Language Institute.

Degrees offered

The Department of Linguistics offers the Ph.D. in Linguistics and the joint Ph.D. in Linguistics and Romance Languages. Student-initiated combined degree programs (e.g., Linguistics and Anthropology; Linguistics and Psychology) are also possible. The Department does not accept M.A. applications.

The University of Michigan also provides students with diverse opportunities to acquire expertise in other areas that complement their linguistics coursework and research (e.g., a certificate in Women's Studies).

Admission

New students are admitted once each year to begin in the Fall term. To be considered, all application materials must be received by the Department no later than December 15. Admission materials must include:

- Completed Rackham School of Graduate Studies application;
- Graduate Record Examination (GRE) results;
- Official transcripts of previous work;
- Three letters of recommendation;
- Sample of written work.

Students whose native language is not English must submit scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the Michigan Assessment Battery (MELAB). Scores of at least 620 (TOEFL) or 87 (MELAB) are normally necessary for admission. The minimum score for the computer based TOEFL is 260, or 84 for the internet-based test (iBT)

Advising

Each student will choose two advisors to assist them in moving through the Ph.D. program and to increase the breadth of perspective they receive. The first, the A advisor, is a faculty member in the student's primary area of research interest. For first term students, this advisor will be assigned by the beginning of the Fall term on the basis of the student's statement of interest in their application for admission to the Ph.D. program. The second, the B advisor, may be any member of the faculty whom the student chooses and is selected sometime during the Fall term. The student meets frequently with the A advisor, with whom they are likely to be engaged in research. After a dissertation committee has been approved, the student's A advisor will usually become the dissertation committee chair. Students are free to make changes in advisors at any time (by informing the Department's Student Services Assistant) and do not need to seek permission of their current advisor(s) to do so.

Course Work

In addition to meeting the fee hour and grade point requirements of the Rackham Graduate School (see Rackham's *Graduate Student Handbook*), Linguistics students who are not in a joint degree program must meet the following course requirements:

- Phonetics (Ling 512); Phonology (Ling 513); Semantics (Ling 514); Syntax (Ling 515); these 4 courses must normally be completed in the first year of graduate study;
- 1 course in either Advanced Phonetics (613), Phonology (Ling 613), Semantics (614), Syntax (Ling 615), or Advanced Morphology (Ling 621);
- 2 Linguistics courses outside of phonetics, phonology, syntax, semantics, and morphology, to be chosen in consultation with the A advisor;
- Research Writing (Ling 792), normally taken in the second year;
- 2 seminars, 1 of which must be in Linguistics;
- 2 cognate courses from outside the Department;
- Seminar on Graduate Study (Ling 801 — a 2-credit, Fall-Winter sequence);
- Graduate Student Instructor Training (Ling 993).

Students must maintain a minimum average of B+ in all Linguistics courses taken in their first year. At least two of the grades in Linguistics 512, 513, 514, and 515 (or a corresponding 600-level course) must be A- or better.

Exemption from, or substitution for, any of these courses must be done with the approval of both a faculty member who regularly teaches the course and the Graduate Committee.

Qualifying Research Paper

Students submit one substantial qualifying research paper (QRP); submission by end of the fifth term is expected. The QRP is written in addition to any papers done as part of course work, and is planned in careful consultation with a faculty member. The QRP may be a substantially expanded/elaborated version of a course paper or an entirely separate project. The paper should show the student's ability to pose a linguistic question within a framework of current linguistic research, collect and marshal empirical evidence that bears upon that question, and present the results in a way that communicates successfully to other linguists. The QRP is assessed by two readers, one serving as the primary advisor.

Candidacy

A student advances to candidacy when the following conditions have been met:

- At least 36 Rackham fee hours (18 for students with an approved MA);
- Successful completion of all non-seminar course requirements (including the 2 cognate courses) plus Ling 801;
- Successful completion of the Qualifying Research Paper.

Students are expected by both Rackham and the Department of Linguistics to advance to candidacy by the middle of their third year. Rackham's requirements state that students *must* reach this point within 4 years of first enrollment.

Language Requirement

Before graduation, students must demonstrate proficiency in 2 natural languages other than English, or the ability to carry out specialized research on those languages.

Language proficiency may be demonstrated in one of four ways:

- Passing an examination administered by a designated faculty member in the Department;
- Passing an examination set by the appropriate University foreign language department;
- Completing or having completed four semesters of college level work in a foreign language;
- Native competence.

Dissertation Prospectus

The principal goal of the prospectus is to communicate clearly to the dissertation committee the background to the proposed dissertation research, and its goals, scope and methods. It usually begins with a discussion of the central issue or problem, interwoven with a critical review of the scholarship to date in the area. The prospectus should include an outline of data collection procedures and other methodological issues, as well as a demonstration—usually via some preliminary analysis—that the proposed study will be able to deliver answers to the research questions.

The prospectus is prepared in consultation with members of the dissertation committee. (Students consult with their advisor in identifying faculty who might be approached as suitable doctoral committee members.) The draft prospectus is discussed in a meeting involving at least 3 committee members (ideally, the full committee) so that faculty will have a clear and common understanding of the student's plans, so that they can offer their advice and suggestions, and so the student can defend the prospectus. An approved prospectus, signed by all members of the committee, is filed with the Department.

Dissertation

The dissertation is a substantial piece of work that presents and analyzes original research results, and motivates the research and interprets the results within an appropriate framework. The dissertation is supervised by a dissertation committee consisting of at least 4 members, at least 2 of whom are in the Department of Linguistics and at least 1 Graduate Faculty member from another Department. The dissertation is examined at a public oral defense.

Portfolios

The Department maintains a portfolio on each student to help students develop a research and teaching dossier, and to provide regular faculty feedback on students' progress. Faculty contributions include coursework evaluation for first and second year students, and teaching assessment for each term that the student is a Linguistics Graduate Student Instructor. Student contributions include research papers (including two term papers of the student's choice in each of the first two years), both an abstract of the QRP and a two-page statement of purpose and direction by the end of the second year, the QRP, dissertation prospectus, and publications.

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