

# A Career Guide for

---

## Linguistics

---

Linguistics investigates all aspects of spoken and written human language. It applies the social sciences, the natural sciences, and the humanities to the study of language. Linguistics includes the study of how languages use sound, the organization of language in word structure, syntax, and semantics, the meaning and analysis of spoken and written texts, and the structural patterns of different

language systems, including sign languages, throughout the world and through history.

The study of linguistics enables students to develop the objectivity and analytical and argumentative skills, as well as cross-cultural awareness, that are applicable to numerous occupations. It also serves as a solid foundation for advanced work in graduate and professional-school programs.

### SKILLS&ABILITIES

---

A concentration in linguistics provides students with the opportunity to build skills and abilities in areas ranging from critical analysis to theory development to observation. Applying linguistic theory within a global perspective, students address myths about language in addition to acquiring new knowledge and skills. Whether working as a

librarian, a computer programmer, or a legislative aide, for example, a graduate would find an objective view of language and the ability to synthesize theories useful on a regular basis. Representative skills and abilities acquired by majors in Linguistics are highlighted below.

#### **Cross-Cultural**

Emphasizing a global perspective  
Relating language to social context  
Identifying relationships between language groups  
Adapting to/functioning in other cultures  
Working with persons from other backgrounds

#### **Communication**

Listening/reading for meaning and social use  
Applying knowledge about discourse skills  
Understanding historical language change  
Writing clearly  
Informing/explaining ideas  
Presenting information effectively

#### **Analysis**

Reading critically  
Identifying patterns  
Analyzing discourse  
Evaluating evidence  
Comparing interpretations

#### **Research**

Observing people/data  
Synthesizing novel theories  
Acknowledging historical perspectives  
Working with research subjects  
Identifying areas for research  
Applying methodologies from many disciplines

*Department of Linguistics  
440 Lorch Hall  
611 Tappan Street  
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1220*

# CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

---

## GENERAL AREAS

A concentration in linguistics has led graduates to successful careers in research, business, and professional fields. Many graduates go on to law school or medical school, where the analytic skills that are sharpened in linguistics courses are especially useful, or to academic graduate programs in fields ranging from psychology to computational linguistics to languages, or masters programs in speech pathology, information science, business, or language teaching.

## SPECIFIC AREAS

The range of occupational areas chosen by linguistics majors may be seen in the selected list below, which was developed from follow-up information from University of Michigan graduates and also from national data. Some of the occupations listed below require further study and/or specialized training.

- advocacy (e.g. supporting ethnic minorities or other social groups)
- cryptography
- editing/publishing
- information sciences
- international relations (government, business)
- international student support
- language-related software development
- lexicography
- research assistant
- speech pathology
- speech recognition/speech synthesis
- teaching English as a second language
- technical writing
- translating/interpreting
- website design

# CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

---

Students concentrating in linguistics take three required courses, one each in the core areas of phonetics/phonology, syntax, and semantics, and an additional 21 credits of courses in linguistics. Consult the LS&A Bulletin for more detailed information on program requirements.

# FOR MORE INFORMATION

---

For information about choosing a career, about graduate/professional school, internships, or job descriptions;

The Career Center  
3200 Student Activities Building  
764-7460  
[www.careercenter.umich.edu](http://www.careercenter.umich.edu)

For information about degree requirements for the linguistics concentration and minor, and for general information about choosing a major:

Student Services Assistant  
Linguistics Department  
440 Lorch Hall  
764-0353  
Email: [Linguistics@umich.edu](mailto:Linguistics@umich.edu)  
[www.lsa.umich.edu/ling/](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/ling/)

LS&A Academic Advising  
Angell Hall  
764-0332