Linguistics

ABOUT LINGUISTICS

Language is central to human life, and linguistics is the scientific study of human language. It explores the way we understand, acquire and use language, both spoken and written. And while it takes in the diverse characteristics of individual languages, it also uncovers the deeper properties that all languages share.

Why study Linguistics?

Studying Linguistics will enable you to analyse the role of social interaction, and the relationship between language, society, identity and culture. You will be able to communicate more effectively across cultures and use linguistic skills and knowledge to critically evaluate public discourse on language.

Linguistics is evidence-based, it uses data to explore the ways in which language enables human thought and feeling to be revealed in sounds or written shapes, and the ways speakers and listeners navigate this process. Your studies will involve many different areas of analysis such as Phonetics and phonology, which is the study of speech sounds in language, Psycholinguistics, which is the relationship between language and the mind and Sociolinguistics, which is the study of language used in societies. These are just some of the topics you will study in Linguistics.

Complementary areas of study

Linguistics crosses over many of the traditional boundaries of arts, social science, science, technology and business in its different applications. Because of this, you will also find that you can combine linguistics in your studies with a whole range of quite different subjects to create an exciting degree program. These include:

- European or Asian Language
- Psychology
- Law
- Philosophy

What are some of the topics Linguistics explores?

Your first year will consist of foundation units, which provide an introduction to the nature of language. You can take:

- The language game: Why do we talk the way we do?
- Describing and analysing language and communication
- Some of the elective units offered are:
  - Sociolinguistics
  - Structure of English
  - History and sociolinguistics of English
  - Descriptive syntax: Grammatical structure, typology and universals
  - Semantics and pragmatics: The study of meaning in human languages
  - Second language acquisition and attrition
  - Phonetics and phonology
  - Aboriginal languages of Australia
  - Managing intercultural communication
  - Literacies and communication: Education, media and cyberspace
  - Language and identity

Career prospects

Linguistics graduates will find their skills are relevant to a number of career pathways including:

- Audiology (hearing, balance and related disorders)
- Information technology, communication and signals
- Creative writing, journalism, media, editing and publishing
- Education, literacy and language teaching (English language, languages other than English, English as a second/foreign language)
- Field linguistics
- Foreign affairs, law, immigration and ethnic affairs
- Indigenous language study
- Language planning and policy work
- Language teaching
- Lexicography (dictionary making)
- Social work and counselling
- Speech pathology
- Translating and interpreting

From our students

“I got my job in cochlear implants precisely because I had studied linguistics. They were looking for somebody to assess the communication abilities of children with cochlear implants so my experience in describing and analysing language was exactly what they were after. In linguistics, you learn to analyse language from a variety of angles – there’s the sounds of the language, its rules for how to conduct a conversation, the grammar and so on.”

Colleen H.
Monash Graduate

For more information:
future.arts.monash.edu/ug-linguistics

How Linguistics fits into your Arts degree

Linguistics is offered as a Major, a Minor or simply as electives within your degree.