

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

Language has a profound impact on our lives: it influences how we act, who we are, and how we view the world. It is through language that we accomplish a great deal of our daily work: formulate plans, present proposals, negotiate contracts, develop brands, resolve disputes, provide advice, diagnose problems, hold meetings, learn from and/or teach others, and provide social, legal, and commercial services.



In today's workplace, people with different ways of using language—based on nationality, ethnicity, race, class, gender, region, age, and culture—often work together in what are frequently fast paced and multi-tasking environments. Sometimes they end up misunderstanding one another or making mistakes that can have unfortunate consequences.

One way we can try to avoid these problems is to learn more about language and its role in communication.

- ✦ How are sounds, forms, and meanings put together to construct messages?
- ✦ How does context influence meaning?
- ✦ How do explicit and implicit meanings combine to reveal peoples' intentions?
- ✦ How can language perform actions?
- ✦ What are the differences between spoken and written language?
- ✦ Why can stories have such powerful effects?
- ✦ How do we communicate electronically? What are the costs and benefits of doing so?
- ✦ How do people who have different backgrounds communicate with each other?

By learning about language and communication in everyday life, we can put language to work *for us*: we can take a proactive role in helping people accomplish a variety of interpersonal and institutional goals in a range of workplaces. We can use language not only to reflect, but also to *change*, our relationships, our work and our world.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW



Our program equips you with a **tool kit** of analytical and practical skills that help resolve the challenges of today's workplace.

Discourse analysis focuses on language in texts (both spoken and written) within a wide range of everyday work contexts, such as chats among co-workers, teacher/student lessons, routine office documents (memos, agendas, minutes, e-mails), and doctor/patient consultations. **In the tool kit:** how texts build cohesion and establish coherence to unite different parts of our overall messages; how links between forms and functions of spoken and written genres (e.g. narratives, explanations, lists, discussions) can reveal covert meanings.

Pragmatics focuses on how speakers select and present information in sentences and texts, and how hearers draw inferences about what is intended. **In the tool kit:** how ways of speaking (including word choice, word order, sentence form, intonation) reveal subtle features of messages; how language conveys who did what, how, why, where, when; how our speech can perform actions (apologize, warn, order) for different people in different situations; how we support our own—and challenge others'—perspectives.



Sociolinguistics focuses on language and society, culture, and ideology; how people with different identities (based on gender, age, ethnicity, region, nationality, race, class) speak; how speech changes in different situations and over time. **In the tool kit:** why and how using dialects and being bilingual matters; how ways of choosing, arranging and pronouncing words form personal, situational and cultural styles; how and why people using different ways of gesturing, speaking, writing and acting may misunderstand what is said, meant, and done.

PROGRAM DETAILS

We provide two options for the M.A:
-8 courses (24 credits) and Master's Thesis
-10 courses (30 credits), no Master's Thesis

Students (other than Linguistics majors) take one course in **General Linguistics** that introduces principles of sound, form, meaning and use. Remaining courses are **Basic Courses** (choose 3) and **Advanced Courses** (with 8 course option, choose 4; with 10 course option, choose 6).

Topics of basic courses include

Sociolinguistics Language in social context, dialects, style, language ideology
Approaches to Discourse Eight ways to analyze language in text and context
Pragmatics Meaning, communication, speech acts, information, inferences
Narrative Form and content, personal, social and cultural meanings of stories
Conversation Talk-in-interaction, turn-taking, topic building, mistakes & repairs
Language, Thought and Culture How language is inseparable from who we are
Cross Cultural Communication When how, where, and why culture matters

Topics of advanced courses include

American Dialects
Sociolinguistic Variation
Language and Identity
Sociolinguistic Field Methods
Ethnography of Communication
Multi-modal communication
Argumentation
Language and Clinical Practice
Language and Education
Language and Law
Language and the Internet
Language and Politics
Computational Tools for Linguists

CAREERS: LANGUAGE AT WORK

Our MA program provides an individualized curriculum, and career-planning workshops and panels, that equip you to take apart the forms, meanings and uses of language and then put them back together again into coherent messages that can help people accomplish interpersonal and institutional goals in a wide range of workplaces.

You will acquire skills to apply in fields such as diversity training, public relations, mediation and arbitration, advertising, technical writing, investment banking, interpretation and translation, marketing, branding, usability testing, media/public opinion research, and the professions, including:



Health care doctor/patient communication; medical, science and health writing

-From Joe Gattuso, president of MBS Vox, (health care consultants) “We are absolutely interested in graduates of this program.”

Law legal writing; interpretation of statutes and contracts; criminal investigations

-From Dick Oehrle, Cataphora (electronic discovery and analytics), “The kind of training you envision would definitely be useful in our environment.”

Business strategic communications, team building, diversity training

-From Burt Alper, strategy director of Catchword (brand name development) “ exactly the kind of background we look for.”

Education diversity in the classroom, multi-modal communication, assessment

- From Julie Sweetland, Senior Research Associate, Center for Inspired Teaching “Anyone working in schools needs a thorough understanding of language and communication.”

THE FACULTY

Deborah Tannen, language and gender, cross-cultural communication, power and solidarity

Deborah Schiffrin, narrative, pragmatics, approaches to discourse

Heidi Hamilton, discourse across disciplines, health communication, language and aging

Andrea Tyler, legal genres and international law, linguistics and writing, metaphor and mind

Jeffrey Connor-Linton, quantitative discourse analysis, assessment

Natalie Schilling-Estes, dialects, style, language and the city, forensic linguistics

Rob Podesva, language and identity, social dialects, sociolinguistic variation, phonetics and phonology

Michael Lempert, language and culture, public argumentation, language and religion

Craig Hoffman, language and law, US legal discourse, forensic linguistics

Additional courses are also offered by other Georgetown University faculty or local experts.

For more about faculty, students, research, courses, and FAQs about the MA, go to <http://linguistics.georgetown.edu/>

THE STUDENTS

✚ College graduates with B.A. or B.S., with majors including, but not limited to, humanities and social sciences

✚ College graduates seeking further credentials for medical, law or, business school

✚ Members of the workforce (public and private sectors) who seek advancement

Questions? gulingmlc@gmail.com
Apply <http://grad.georgetown.edu>

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**Master of Arts
Georgetown University
Washington D.C.**



*Language reflects
and changes
our relationships
our work
and our world*

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