



## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Although language is involved in nearly every aspect of the human experience, most of us know surprisingly little about how languages work. Linguistics takes a scientific approach to the workings and use of human languages, using data from interviewing speakers of various languages, searching linguistic corpora and running carefully designed experiments. The language and linguistics program at Brandeis offers multiple perspectives on language, and the major prepares students for jobs or graduate study in fields ranging from speech recognition, artificial intelligence, speech pathology and language teaching to publishing and writing, along with M.A. or Ph.D. work in linguistics itself.

### What makes the program distinctive?

Our flexible program covers both theoretical linguistics — phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics — and its connections to fields like anthropology, philosophy, computer science and psychology.

Students tailor coursework to their interests. Our computational linguistics curriculum adds growing fields like automated text analysis, speech recognition, information retrieval, web search and machine translation.

### FAST FACTS

**Current number of majors and minors:** 24

**Number of faculty:** 9

**Can you minor in this program?** Yes

**Emphasis within the major:** the structure, meaning and use of languages including Ancient Greek, English, French, Hebrew, Irish Gaelic, Mandarin Chinese and Russian — from theoretical and computational perspectives

**Popular second majors:** anthropology, computer science, French and Francophone studies, German studies, psychology

**Website:** [brandeis-linguistics.org](http://brandeis-linguistics.org)

---

## ACADEMICS AND RESEARCH

### Resources

The Brandeis Lab for Linguistics and Computation conducts computational and theoretical linguistics research, including the building and annotation of corpora of linguistics texts. The lab regularly hires linguistics undergraduates for annotation and other work, offering interaction with faculty and graduate students on actual research being conducted outside the classroom.

### Student research

Final course papers often involve students carrying out original research on a topic of their choosing, and outstanding students can apply to the senior honors thesis program for more extensive research work. Students also can complete an M.A. in computational linguistics in just one additional postbachelor's year.

---

## BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

### Study abroad

A good number of our students have completed one or two semesters abroad in countries such as Ireland, China and Senegal. Brandeis currently has more than 250 programs in 70 countries worldwide.

### Summer internships

Internships completed by our students in the past year have included collecting sociolinguistic data within the Hmong (Chinese ethnic minority) community of New England; conducting research at a nongovernmental organization in Peru working with two indigenous-based communities to help run and organize a women's fair-trade weaving cooperative; and working at the International Institute of Buffalo to provide language, legal and resettlement services to refugees and immigrants in the Western New York area, including victims of human trafficking.

### Student organizations

Brandeis is a co-sponsor of the North American Computational Linguistics Olympiad, a competition for middle-school and high-school students. Undergraduate students participate in outreach to area high schools and other aspects of hosting the competition in the Boston area.

---

## AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

### Student awards

Students majoring in language and linguistics have received a range of scholarships and research and internship funding awards, including Brandeis' Justice Brandeis Scholarship, Jane's Travel Grants and the World-of-Work Internship Program. We also grant the Otto Jespersen Award for Outstanding Achievement in Linguistics to a top graduating senior each spring.

### Distinguished faculty

Faculty in the program — including chair James Pustejovsky and Nianwen Xue — have current grants from the National Science Foundation and other agencies for work carried out by the Brandeis Lab for Linguistics and Computation. Current topics of particular focus include the modeling and understanding of expressions that describe time and space in texts, as well as a range of tasks relating to Mandarin Chinese.

---

## AFTER BRANDEIS

### Graduate study

Graduates of our B.A. program have a strong, long-standing record of continuing on to Ph.D. work in linguistics at prestigious universities. Recent graduates are Ph.D. students at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Rutgers, New York University and the State University of New York, Albany. In addition, prominent linguists with Brandeis bachelor's degrees in linguistics are members of the faculty at Yale University, the University of Southern California, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Johns Hopkins, the University of Maryland and Cornell.

### Diverse career fields

Other graduates have gone on to work at Education Testing Service, publishing companies, law firms and a range of other companies developing computational and natural language processing applications. Language and linguistics minor Myq Kaplan '00 was a recent finalist on the NBC reality standup competition "Last Comic Standing" and is pursuing a full-time career as a comedian.

---

*"Linguists are people who never got over the fact that they could talk."*

*An unknown linguist*



Photo by Ken Schles

Office of Communications ©2011  
Brandeis University A168