

MA in Linguistics

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| Awarding Institution: | The University of Reading |
| Teaching Institution: | The University of Reading |
| Faculty of Arts & Humanities | Programme length: 12 months |
| For students entering in 2003 | Date of specification: 01/10/03 |
| Programme Director: | Prof. Irene Philippaki-Warburton |
| Board of Studies: | MA in Linguistics |
| Accreditation: | N/A |

Summary of programme aims

The MA programme in Linguistics is a conversion course and, as such, presupposes no previous knowledge of Linguistics. It aims to introduce students to the field of theoretical linguistics (phonetics, phonology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics) in an intensive, rigorous and critical way and to bring them up to date with linguistic theory. The MAL course thus provides students with the foundation skills for further independent study and research at a more advanced level (Ph.D.), and equips them with knowledge and skills of potential value to future employers.

Transferable skills

In addition to those skills which all students are expected to have developed by the end of their degree programme, it is envisaged that MAL students will have developed or enhanced the following more specific transferable skills:

- an appreciation of the principles of the scientific study of language;
- a knowledge of the nature of language and an understanding of the role and significance of language in the individual and society;
- practical skills in the analysis of language;
- a range of transferable intellectual skills including the ability to synthesise, analyse and evaluate information and theoretical claims and to communicate effectively through written and oral reports to varied audiences;
- designing and conducting a research project, with a clear statement of research aims; searching the relevant bibliographical sources, analysing and interpreting results in relation to established theory;
- the ability to work independently and cooperatively;
- an awareness and experience of the application of information technology to language studies and basic computing skills;

Programme content

The MAL programme consists of a combination of core (compulsory) modules, and option modules which are selected from a range of available subjects within the School. The structure of the programme allows students some flexibility in following their own interests within a general framework.

The compulsory modules are divided into three areas: Foundation, Core and Research. The Foundation runs intensively in the Autumn term and introduces students to the core areas of linguistic analysis concerned with sound (phonetics, phonology), grammar, and meaning. In the Spring, students study three of the four core subjects at a more advanced level. There is a research seminar and dissertation of 15,000 words, on a topic of descriptive-theoretical interest, on a selected language.

The option modules cover a wide range of pure and applied areas, and, together with the

dissertation, provide the opportunity for specialization in areas of particular interest.

The following profile lists both compulsory and option modules. In addition to the 120 credits gained through compulsory modules, students select a further 60 credits from option modules.

Masters Level (three terms) *Credits* *Level*

Compulsory modules

Autumn term

| | | | |
|--------|---|----|---|
| LSMSY1 | <i>Foundation Syntax</i> | 10 | M |
| LSMPH1 | <i>Foundation Phonetics & Phonology</i> | 10 | M |
| LSMSM1 | <i>Foundation Semantics</i> | 10 | M |

Spring term

Students select three of the following core modules

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|--------|-----------------------------------|----|---|
| LSMPH2 | <i>Phonetics</i> | 10 | M |
| LSMPN2 | <i>Phonology</i> | 10 | M |
| LSMSY2 | <i>Syntax</i> | 10 | M |
| LSMSM2 | <i>Semantics & Pragmatics</i> | 10 | M |

Summer term and vacation

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|--------|--|----|---|
| LSMDIG | <i>Research and Dissertation (Linguistics)</i> | 60 | M |
|--------|--|----|---|

Option modules

Students complete three option modules (each of 20 credits).

Autumn Term

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|--------|--|----|---|
| LSMGLL | <i>English Grammar and Lexis</i> | 20 | M |
| LSMMG | <i>Aspects of Modern Greek</i> | 20 | M |
| LSMCL | <i>Child Language Development</i> | 20 | M |
| LSMDA | <i>Discourse Analysis</i> | 20 | M |
| LSMIP | <i>Issues in Phonetics & Phonology</i> | 20 | M |
| LSMSO | <i>Sociolinguistics</i> | 20 | M |
| LSMLP | <i>Language Pathology</i> | 20 | M |

Spring term

| | | | |
|--------|--|----|---|
| LSMAA | <i>Linguistic Aspects of Aphasia</i> | 20 | M |
| LSMFL | <i>First Language Acquisition</i> | 20 | M |
| LSMIS | <i>Issues in Syntax & Semantics</i> | 20 | M |
| LSMLT | <i>Applied Linguistics & Language Teaching</i> | 20 | M |
| LSMPL | <i>Psycholinguistics</i> | 20 | M |
| LSMPY | <i>Language Play</i> | 20 | M |
| LSMRTL | <i>Research Topics in English Grammar</i> | 20 | M |
| LSMVE | <i>Varieties of English</i> | 20 | M |
| LSMVC | <i>Language Variation & Change</i> | 20 | M |

Summer Term

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|-------|--|----|---|
| LSMST | <i>Stylistics and the Teaching of Literature</i> | 20 | M |
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Modules running in the Autumn term will be assessed by assignments to be completed over the

Christmas vacation; modules running in the Spring term will be assessed by assignments to be completed over the Easter vacation or by tests in the first week of the Summer Term. The dissertation will be submitted by 20th September.

Part-time/Modular arrangements

The programme may be completed on a full time basis, in which case the normal period for completion is 12 months. An alternative to full time involves the completion of the taught components and the dissertation on a credit-accumulation basis part-time or modular over a period of up to six years. Such an arrangement offers participants considerable flexibility to fit the degree around their commitments. UK-based applicants, for example, may be able to attend on a couple of days a week only and can gradually complete obligatory and optional components over more than one year. Applicants who are based overseas may be able to obtain leave for one term at a time, and may complete the required components by returning in subsequent years.

Progression Requirements

The University's taught postgraduate marks classification is as follows:

| <u>Mark</u> | <u>Interpretation</u> |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 70 – 100% | Distinction |
| 60 – 69% | Merit |
| 50 – 59% | Good standard (Pass) |
| <u>Failing categories:</u> | |
| 40 – 49% | Work below threshold standard |
| 0 – 39% | Unsatisfactory Work |

For Masters Degrees

To pass the degree of Master students must gain an average mark of 50 or more overall including a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 in compulsory modules LSMSY1, LSMPH1, LSMSM1, LSMPH2, LSMPN2, LSMSY2, LSMSM2. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 must be less than 60 credits.*

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more overall including a mark of 70 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more overall including a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be awarded eligible for a Merit.

For Postgraduate Diplomas

To pass the Postgraduate Diploma students must gain an average mark of 50 or more and have no mark below 40 in compulsory modules LSMSY1, LSMPH1, LSMSM1, LSMPH2, LSMPN2, LSMSY2, LSMSM2. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 must be less than 60 credits.*

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for the award of a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more and have no mark below 40 will be awarded eligible for a Merit.

For Postgraduate Certificate

To pass the Postgraduate Certificate students must gain an average mark of 50 or more and have no mark below 40 in compulsory modules LSMSY1, LSMPH1, LSMSM1, LSMPH2, LSMPN2, LSMSY2, LSMSM2. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 10 credits.*

*The provision to permit a candidate to be passed overall with a profile containing marks below 40 is made subject to the condition that there is evidence that the candidate applied himself or herself to the work of those modules with reasonable diligence and has not been absent from the examination without reasonable cause.

Summary of teaching and assessment

The structure of the MA course is modular. Each module is relatively self-contained (although a module may serve as a prerequisite for another) and is independently assessed. There are no formal final examinations at the end of the course.

The course may be completed on a full-time basis, in which case the normal period for completions is 12 months. Normally students begin the course at the beginning of the academic year, that is October, and complete all taught components by April or June. The dissertation is then completed during the summer months. For their dissertation MAL students are required to undertake a close study of an aspect of a language in the context of the theoretical issues they have been exposed to on any level of analysis.

Modules are taught by lectures, seminars and small group practical work. The dissertation is additionally supported by individual supervision. Some modules are assessed wholly by coursework, some wholly by examination, and others by a mixture of the two: details are given in the module descriptions.

Admission requirements

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained the equivalent of a 2/1 Honours degree in a related field.

Admissions Tutor: programme director

Support for students and their learning

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories.

(1) Learning support includes resources provided by the IT Services Department, which has several hundred computers, and the University Library, which across its three sites holds over a million volumes, including 14,000 pure and applied linguistics titles, and subscribes to around 4,000 current periodicals, of which 60 are in pure and applied linguistics. These library facilities provide excellent coverage of the field of language and linguistics in the humanities, social sciences and education. The main University Library has a range of electronic sources of information and houses the Student Access to Independent Learning (S@IL) computer-based teaching and learning facilities. There are language laboratory facilities both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme. Further facilities that are campus-wide include the Statistics Advisory Service and the Statistical Computing Advisory Service.

(2) Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Programme Directors, the Careers Advisory Service, the University's Special Needs Advisor, Study Advisors, Hall Wardens and the Students' Union.

Within the School, there are considerable computing and technical facilities, including a large and well-equipped Speech Research Laboratory offering facilities for work in acoustic, articulatory

and physiological aspects of speech, and supported by a range of computational and electronic hardware. In 2001, the School set up a Language Acquisition Laboratory with the aid of a University grant. There is also a PC-based Corpus Facility, locally networked through Sun workstations and offering access to all well-known language corpora, e.g. the BNC, and databases such as the MRC Psycholinguistic Database, as well as a number of our own research databases; it also provides advanced computational techniques for stimulus presentation and response analysis. The School's computers host major statistical packages, such as Minitab and SPSS. Further PCs are located in the student common room for student use.

The School employs a full-time technical officer, who deals with the purchase and maintenance of computers, software and audio-visual equipment. There is also a School Library, which houses 10,000 titles in ELT and other applied linguistic areas and subscribes to 50 journals. It contains elements of the former British Council English Teaching Information Centre library collection, and it is probably the largest collection of its kind in the country.

Each student is provided with a course handbook which contains full details of the degree programme, the staff and facilities in the School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, and a range of useful information including advice on note-taking in lectures, preparation of written work especially the dissertation, and dates of terms and examinations, and the University's procedure for assessment. The Director will advise students on selection of modules, learning and assessment.

Career prospects

Students graduating in Linguistics are equipped to enter a range of professions that obviously concern themselves with written or spoken language: for example, publishing, broadcasting, advertising and translating, as well as academic Linguistics. In some cases, further study and qualifications will be necessary, for which Linguistics forms an excellent foundation, as in teaching, including second and foreign language teaching, and speech and language therapy. More broadly, employers have come to recognise that graduates in Linguistics have the ability to organise complex data and to work in IT environments, and these are skills that are in demand in many types of employment that are not directly concerned with language.

Educational aims of the programme

The MA programme in Linguistics aims to enable students to achieve their full intellectual potential by means of the rigorous and critical study of language; to develop students' skills in core areas of linguistics including phonetics, phonology, syntax and semantics; to allow students to develop their own interests in the applications of linguistics in a variety of areas; to provide students with the foundation skills for further independent study and research; and, by exposing students to a variety of learning experiences, to equip them with a range of transferable skills of potential value to future employers.

More specifically the aims of the programme are:

- to provide a thorough introduction to theoretical and descriptive linguistics;
- to offer the students the opportunity, through the optional modules, to become acquainted with the ways in which linguistic theory to a number of more applied fields;
- to provide expertise in undertaking and evaluating linguistic research

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

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| <p>A. Knowledge and understanding of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. the systems for the production and perception of human speech sounds2. the principles of phonological contrast and organisation of linguistic sound systems3. the principles of derivational and inflectional morphology4. the principles for determining syntactic constituents and their inter-relations5. the principles of semantic contrast, and the role of sense, reference and denotation6. the principles of pragmatics, including speech acts, entailment and presupposition7. a range of specialist areas in which linguistic principles are applied | <p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</p> <p>Lectures, seminars and practical sessions</p> <p><i>Assessment</i> By assignments requiring essays of different length or by tests.</p> <p>Dissertation</p> |
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Skills and other attributes

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| <p>B. Intellectual skills – able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. think logically2. analyse and solve problems3. operationalise abstract concepts for testing of hypotheses4. assimilate rapidly-evolving concepts and models of language5. generalise knowledge and methods from one area of study to others6. plan, carry out and present an extended independent investigation of a research topic | <p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</p> <p>Lectures, seminars occasional practicals</p> <p><i>Assessment</i> Assignments, tests and dissertation</p> |
| <p>C. Practical skills – able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. perceive, produce and transcribe a full range of sounds produced by the human vocal tract2. analyse an unknown language at all levels of linguistic organisation3. identify patterns in complex linguistic data and account for them in terms of appropriate levels of representation and generative rules4. address and assemble the information contained in modern electronic linguistic corpora | <p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</p> <p>Lectures, seminars, practicals</p> <p><i>Assessment</i> Practical analysis aspects of assignments Sections requiring analysis in Dissertation</p> |

D. Transferable skills – able to:

1. use IT (word processing, using standard and statistical software)
2. define a research topic and mount a principled investigation by means of hypothesis-formulation and testing
3. give oral presentations
4. work as part of a team
5. use library resources
6. manage time
7. formulate and implement career plans

Teaching/learning methods and strategies
Lectures, seminars

Assessment
2. is assessed by the research proposal
1,5 and 6 are assessed by the dissertation and some assignments. 4 is involved in the preparation for exams and discussions in the seminars.

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably expect to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in module and programme handbooks.