The MA Program in Linguistics focuses on investigating language from both theoretical and functional approaches. Our dynamic curriculum combines core studies in the structure of language (phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics) with current approaches in sociolinguistics, language acquisition, psycholinguistics, language contact, world Englishes, endangered languages, discourse analysis, and identity studies. In addition to directly applying to the teaching of linguistics, English and other languages, an MA in linguistics is a recognized asset for careers in curriculum development, publishing, product branding, speech pathology, natural language processing, translation, law, education, and other professions within social and behavioral sciences, especially those concerned with language policies and practices in multilingual settings.

Through their course work and hands-on research, students will be introduced to

- The nature and structure of language;
- The principles and methods of language analysis;
- The relationship between language and cultural, national, social, and personal identity;
- The role of language as a mediator of intercultural understanding.
Admission Requirements

• 2.75 or higher undergraduate GPA;
• No GRE required.
• 9 hours of foreign language study at the undergraduate level or above OR for English as a second/foreign language learners a minimum TOEFL score of 550 (paper); 79 on the Internet-based test; 213 (computer-based); OR a score of 6.5 on the IELTS.
• Submission of completed application to the Graduate College. Applications can be obtained on-line through the Grad College website at http://www.neiu.edu/~Gradcoll/. International students should also follow the instructions at http://www.neiu.edu/~gradcoll/admission/apply International.html.

Graduation Requirements

• Completion of 36 hours of course work (including Capstone or Thesis);
• Cumulative 3.0 GPA with no more than 2 grades of C;
• Successful completion of a Capstone course or Thesis.

FAQ

Q: Do I need any special background in Linguistics?
A: The MA Program in Linguistics welcomes students with the degree of BA, BS, MA, or MS in any discipline who appreciate the role of language at a local and a global level.

Q: How long will it take me to complete the program?
A: Full-time or part-time? Ask us about our 2-, 3-, and 4-year plans.

Q: I have a full-time day job. Do you offer courses in the evenings?
A: To help optimize opportunity, all our classes are offered at either 4:15pm or 7:05pm and meet once per week.

Q: What are my career options with an MA in Linguistics?
A: Linguistic knowledge and training help you achieve career goals in fields such as language teaching, computational linguistics, curriculum development, publishing, translation and interpretation, speech pathology, forensic linguistics, and language policy and revitalization.

Awards and Assistantships

Every year, there are a number of merit-based Awards and a number of assistantships made available though the Graduate College and through the College of Arts and Sciences. Awards may cover tuition for one or two classes for a given semester. Assistantships provide tuition for up to 2 classes and a monthly stipend in exchange for up to 20 hours per week of work with a faculty supervisor. The numbers of available awards and assistantships vary from year to year based on the University’s budget. Graduate advisors will provide details about application deadlines. Merit Tuition Awards and Assistantship information can be found at http://www.neiu.edu/graduate-college/financial-aid/index.html.
Credit Transfer and Student-at-Large Credits

With the approval of your advisor, you may transfer up to three relevant courses (nine credits) taken in a program from another institution to count towards the MA degree. You may also take up to three courses in the Linguistics Program as a student-at-large which will count towards degree completion once you enter the MA program.

Course Requirements

Required Courses

LING-401 Fundamentals of Modern Linguistics  
LING-405 Typology  
LING-422 Phonology  
LING-427 Morphology or LING-435 Semantics  
LING-437 Generative Grammar  
LING-446 Sociolinguistics  
LING-448 Discourse Analysis  
LING-450 First Language Acquisition  
LING-461 Issues in Multiple Language Acquisition

Electives

*Elective courses marked with an asterisk may be selected as a Capstone.

LING-427 Morphology* (if not serving as a core course)  
LING-430 Structure of Language*  
LING-433 Lexicology  
LING-435 Semantics* (if not serving as a core course)  
LING-438 Syntax*  
LING-447 Origin of Language*  
LING-449 Anthropological Linguistics*  
LING-452 Psycholinguistics*  
LING-453 Language Contact*  
LING-454 Language and Identity*  
LING-462 Lexical Acquisition*  
LING-471 World Englishes*  
LING-472 American English—History and Growth*  
LING-473 The English Language—History and Development*  
LING-475 Historical and Comparative Linguistics*  
LING-481 Language and Tourism*  
LING-482 Stylistics*  
LING-483 Field Methods in Linguistics  
LING-484 Language Endangerment and Documentation  
LING-488 Language and Cultures of Iran*  
LING-489 Linguistics in the Professions  
LING-491 Translation and Linguistic Analysis: Topics Varies*  
LING-491E Translation and Linguistic Analysis: Aleut*  
LING-491F Translation and Linguistic Analysis: Mandan*
LING-491N Translation and Linguistic Analysis: Biloxi*
LING-491O Translation and Linguistic Analysis: Crow*
LING-492 Seminar: Linguistics and Related Fields*
LING-493 Seminar: Linguistic Theory*
LING-494 Seminar: Historical Linguistics*
LING-499 Thesis Seminar

**Thesis and Capstone**

Students may choose to complete their MA degree through either a Capstone Experience or the Thesis Seminar. Both options engage students in an assessment component that authentically addresses and evaluates their knowledge and skills in linguistics and applied linguistics. All Linguistics MA students will be required to complete the Capstone course or the Thesis with a grade of ‘B’ or better.

**The Capstone Course**

The capstone experience involves completion of a Capstone Course (see Capstone Courses listed under Electives). The Capstone Experience offers students a unique opportunity to integrate their MA linguistics education. The Capstone courses require students to exhibit a comprehensive knowledge of linguistics by demonstrating their understanding of how a minimum of two linguistic sub-areas covered in the seven required courses are relevant to the content of the capstone course and paper. The product of this capstone experience will be a research paper that is appropriate for conference presentation and/or publication. Students will have completed the seven required courses with a B average or higher and have obtained the approval of their graduate advisor before registering for a capstone course.

**Thesis Option**

Students will work with a committee of three Linguistics faculty members to conduct original research and to write a thesis. Students will have completed the 7 required courses with a B average or higher, and have obtained the approval of their graduate advisor before registering for the thesis seminar.
COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

LING 401 Fundamentals of Modern Linguistics
Overview of language as a rule-governed system, with particular emphasis on the following subfields of linguistics: phonetics (the sounds of a language), phonology (the functioning and patterning of sounds), morphology (the analysis of word structure), syntax (the analysis of sentence structure), and semantics (the analysis of meaning). This course will also give a historical overview of the field of linguistics. Other topics may include historical linguistics, language typology, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, the brain and language, and computational linguistics.

LING 405 Typology
Typology studies the similarities and differences among human languages. We observe which categories (such as noun, verb, past) and which structures (such as questions, passive, causative) are universal, common, or rare among the world’s languages and how they are crosslinguistically similar and different. We then ask why languages seem to prefer some categories and constructions over others and what that might say about the human capacity for language. Through reading, problem solving, and fieldwork, students learn about these language structures and discuss proposed explanations for why languages are the way they are. Prereq: graduate standing or consent of instructor

LING 409 Research Design
Research Design is a survey course that reviews some of the major trends and methodologies used in linguistics, language acquisition, and language teaching. It will provide an exploration of primarily quantitative approaches used in language-specific inquiry by examining a variety of studies from the literature, their questions, their underlying assumptions, and their design.

LING 422 Phonetics and Phonology
This course provides a foundation in the acoustics and articulatory properties of the sounds used in human languages, and introduces theories about the systematic variation of sounds in ordinary speech. Through reading, problem solving, and class discussion, students become familiar with basic phonetics, the analysis of sounds into features, both rule-based and constraint-based theories of sound variation, and the structures of sound at the segment, syllable, and phrase levels. Prereq: LING 401 or consent of instructor

LING 427 Morphology
The goal of morphology is to understand word structure and speakers’ implicit knowledge of the components of words and their properties. By looking at data from many languages, students will become familiar with morphological processes such as derivation, inflection, compounding, incorporation, and cliticization, and with various proposals to account for word structure in languages. Prereq: LING 401 or consent of instructor
LING 430 Structure of Language
Phonological and grammatical structure of a selected language and its genetic relations to others of its family. Topics may include Arabic, Farsi, Lakota, or Hidatsa. **Prereqs:** LING 401, LING 422, and LING 437

LING 430C Structure of Language: Lakota
Lakota is a member of the Mississippi Valley branch of the Siouan Language family. The language is an agglutinating one with many synthetic characteristics. This course will examine the structure of the Lakota language, focusing on the phonology, morphology, and syntax of the language. This will be accomplished by reading and comparing a number of grammars and sketches as well as examining original Lakota texts. **Prereqs:** LING 401, LING 422, LING 437

LING 433 Lexicography
Review of the problems and trends of word study in the past, especially the notions surrounding the concepts of authority and usage of language; scrutiny of the various types and sources of English vocabulary; recent linguistic insights considered in the light of their value for various kinds of handbooks. **Prereq:** LING 401

LING 435 Semantics
Semantics studies meaning in human language and how word meanings build up into sentence meanings. Among the topics covered are aspects of word meaning, lexical semantics, truth-conditional semantics through formal logic, the relationship between language and the world, and the pragmatics of speech acts and conversational implicature. After proposing how word meanings compose into sentence meanings, we explore how sentences are used in context with meanings that extend beyond sentence semantics through the intentions and presuppositions of speakers. **Prereqs:** LING 401, or consent of instructor

LING 437 Introduction to Generative Grammar
This course introduces the study of sentence structure in natural language, with a goal characterizing the unconscious knowledge that speakers have for recognizing, producing, and interpreting any sentence in their language. Working with a Chomskyan generative approach, students analyze data in English and other languages to become familiar with issues such as constituent structure, argument structure and theta roles, case, movement, and empty categories. Emphasis is placed on theory building and generalizing particular solutions to what might be universals about sentence grammar. **Prereq:** LING 401 or consent of instructor

LING 438 Syntax
This advanced course builds on LING 437, reviewing basic principles of syntax and investigating them in greater detail. Students are introduced to recent literature on syntax, mostly within a generative perspective, but the strategy of the class is also to have students explore issues, analyze data, and come up with their own proposals to various problems under Minimalist assumptions. The class also emphasizes theory building and justifying many assumptions that underlie syntactic theory. Topics include clause structure, noun phrase structure, and the interface between syntax and semantics. **Prereqs:** LING 401 and LING 437, or consent of instructor
LING 446 Sociolinguistics
Sociolinguistics studies the relationship between language and culture. The language practices of individuals and communities correlate with social, cultural, and individual factors. This course examines variation in analyses of topics like social and regional dialectology, interactional discourse, language and identity, ethnography of communication, and language and gender.

LING 447 The Origin of Language
Organized as a seminar, this course discusses recent theories about how, when, and why language appeared in the human lineage. Students are introduced to scholarship from a range of fields including linguistics, philosophy, anthropology, cognitive science, primatology, and evolutionary biology to address questions including: What is language? What cognitive and social preconditions underlie it? What are the similarities and differences between human language and other animals' communication systems? What language-specific biological wiring may exist at the core of human language faculty? How was language adaptive for early humans? Did language emerge relatively recently and suddenly, or gradually over millions of years? Prereq: LING 401, and LING 405 or LING LING 437, or consent of instructor.

LING 448 Discourse Analysis
Discourse analysis examines the structuring and use of language to promote social action—i.e. language produced in recognition of and response to its role in society and effects on others. Research explores spoken, written, and visual texts and sociolinguistic aspects of the relationship between languages, cultures, and individuals. Students will come to understand that identity—personal, social, national—as well as ideology—are constructed by and, in turn, serve to construct interactional discourse. Prereqs: LING 401, LING 437, and LING 446

LING 449 Anthropological Linguistics
Combining the theory and methodology of the ethnographic analysis of culture with the theory and methodology of the sociolinguistic analysis of contextualized talk and text, this course examines the social practice of language in use. Through collection and analysis of naturally-occurring culturally-grounded data, students will identify and come to appreciate how language structures and reveals the systems that both influence and expose cultural knowledge. Students can apply their awareness to culturally-bounded events in settings such as education, corporations, families, and the world at large. Prereqs: LING 401, LING 437, and LING 446

LING 450 First Language Acquisition
Examination of the stages through which a child passes as he/she masters the phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic systems of his/her native language, consideration of the various theories which attempt to account for the child’s ability to acquire language. Prereq: LING 401 or consent of instructor
LING 452 Psycholinguistics
This course looks at the interface between language and the brain as it pertains to the mapping, storage and access of language. We examine current psycholinguistic models of language organization and access and discuss the implication of these approaches vis-à-vis various linguistic models and theories. **Prereq:** LING 401 or consent of instructor

LING 453 Language Contact
This course examines language contact and bilingualism and articulates their impact on individuals and society. The focus is on topics such as language choice, language maintenance and language death in multilingual communities, national and individual identity, the structure, function and impact of codeswitching, and issues such as bilingual language acquisition and the relationship between bilingualism and cognitive, linguistic and social development. **Prereqs:** LING 401, 437, 446

LING 454 Language and Identity
This course explores the role of language in the construction of identities and the significance of identity construction as a negotiated social action within language variation. The concept and construction of identity is investigated at the individual, community, and global levels. The focus of the course is on how these multi-leveled identities are developed and realized through the use of language. The course explores a wide range of theoretical and methodological perspectives on identity in mono- as well as multi-lingual contexts. **Prereqs:** LING 401 or consent of instructor and LING 446

LING 461 Issues in Multiple Language Acquisition
This course examines how speakers of one dialect/language learn other dialects/languages. Going beyond the traditional research on second language acquisition, this course emphasizes the theoretical issues of the acquisition of phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics in a third language. Also emphasized are the differences and similarities in learning a second dialect, which may be more difficult than second language acquisition for learners. **Prereqs:** LING 401, LING 422, and LING 437, or consent of instructor

LING 462 Lexical Acquisition
This course examines how language learners acquire/learn vocabulary. Going beyond the traditional research on second language acquisition, this course focuses solely on the theoretical issues of lexical acquisition. Though the primary emphasis is on the acquisition of vocabulary in a second or third language, first language vocabulary acquisition will also be discussed. **Prereqs:** LING-401, LING-427 or LING-435, or consent of instructor.
LING 471 World Englishes
Examination of issues involved in the development and maintenance of varieties of English throughout the world, now commonly referred to as world Englishes. Specifically, this course emphasizes the historical, political, and ideological issues of post-colonialism, globalization, nativization, standardization, hegemony, and pedagogy of native and non-native varieties of English. Prereqs: LING 401 and LING 446

Linguistics 472 American English—History and Growth
Phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon of English in the United States as well as its cultural history with reference to the mother country and the New World, both in colonial and post-revolutionary times. Prereq: LING 401

LING 473 The English Language—History and Development
Survey of English phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon and cultural history through Old English, Middle English, early Modern English and recent Modern English, using literary documents for the older periods, and literary as well as spoken records for the more recent times. Prereq: LING 401

LING 475 Historical and Comparative Linguistics
This course introduces students to the systematic comparison of languages to understand how languages change through time, and how they are thought to be related to one another and to their common ancestors. We bring together the standard aspects of linguistics – the lexicon, morphology, phonology, syntax, and semantics – and look at patterns of how each of these changes over time. The course covers the history of the comparative method from the birth of modern linguistics and integrates modern theories about dialectology and sociolinguistics, and how language variation is related to language change. Prereqs: LING 401 and LING 405; and one of the following: LING 422, LING 427, LING 437; or consent of instructor

LING 481 Language and Tourism
Advanced work and individual projects in language and tourism, a growing area of applied linguistics. Topics will include the sociolinguistics of tourism, social/identity construction of not only tourists but also of touristic locations, language use in tourism, discursive, visual semiotic, and ethnomethodological analyses of tourism materials. Prereqs: LING 401 and LING 446

LING 482 Stylistics
Adopting theory and techniques of linguistic and discourse analysis, this course in stylistics focuses on the linguistic analysis of literary texts. Both in terms of their structure and their communicative functions, literary texts participate in the construction and presentation of nations, regional and social communities, and individuals. The language of literature—including word choice, sentence structure, and paralinguistic cues—functions to position characters and places. At the same time, literary texts, can be understood, in a social constructionist framework, to construct the identities of those
who partake in their consumption. **Prereqs:** LING 401 and LING 448, or consent of instructor

**LING 483 Field Methods in Linguistics**
This course will introduce students to the goals and methods of linguistics research, including both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Topics include the scientific method, data collection and transcription, corpus research, psycholinguistic research, field methods, argumentation, structuring of abstracts and research papers, APA vs. MLA style, conferences, ethical issues, professionalization, and interpretation of research articles. **Prereqs:** LING 401, LING 422, and LING 437, or consent of instructor

**LING 484 Language Endangerment and Documentation**
This course focuses on language endangerment and documentation. It will look at issues of language shift and discuss how languages become endangered and lost. We will also discuss how languages are best documented and discuss how the field's Best Practices Guide has evolved. **Prereqs:** LING 401, LING 405, and LING 422

**LING 488 Languages and Cultures of Iran**
The language and culture of modern Iran are explored through academic readings, essays, autobiographies, and films as we delve into the question, Who are the Iranians? The languages and identities of this multilingual nation are explored through language variation, gender, age, class, and other social variables. Special attention is given to social and linguistic contact phenomena as we trace the history and evolution of the languages spoken in Iran and the communities who speak them. The structure and use of modern Farsi, along with its historical and social development will also be investigated. **Prereqs:** LING 401, LING 405, and LING 446, or consent of instructor

**LING 489 Linguistics and the Professions**
Linguistics, defined as the scientific study of language, has both formal aims in describing the structural components of language and functional aims in applying understanding of these formal systems to addressing matters pertinent to interactional discourse, the presentation of self, and the co-construction of social and personal identity. Linguistics offers its graduates many varied opportunities for careers across numerous disciplines. This course offers students new to the field an introduction to many of those disciplines; as they continue their studies in our program, they can do so with the necessary schema for how they can apply what they learn. **Prereqs:** none

**LING 491 Translation and Linguistic Analysis: Topics Varies**
This course focuses on the translation of texts for a linguistic analysis of various aspects of the structure of the language in question. Students learn how to do a linguistic analysis of the target language focusing on some aspect of linguistics. The end project is a 15–20 page paper that can be presented at a professional conference. Students can focus on any area of the field of linguistics (these areas can include phonology, morphology, syntax, or discourse analysis). **Prereqs:** LING 401, LING 405, LING 422, and LING 437
LING 491E Translation and Linguistic Analysis: Aleut
This course is an exercise in linguistic analysis. Aleut is an extremely endangered language spoken in the Aleutian Islands by less than 500 speakers. Employing a critical linguistic analysis of the existent texts, students will analyze some aspect of Aleut grammar. Topics can include any aspect of phonology, morphology, syntax, or narrative discourse structure. **Prereqs:** LING 401, LING 405, LING 422, and LING 437

LING 491F Translation and Linguistic Analysis: Mandan
This course is an exercise in linguistic analysis. Mandan is an extremely endangered language comprising its own branch within the Siouan family. Employing a critical linguistic analysis of the existent texts, students will analyze some aspect of Mandan grammar. Topics can include any aspect of phonology, morphology, syntax, or narrative discourse structure. **Prereqs:** LING 401, LING 405, LING 422, and LING 437

LING 491N Translation and Linguistic Analysis: Biloxi
This course is an exercise in linguistic analysis. The Biloxi language is an extinct member of the Ohio Valley branch of the Siouan language family. Employing a critical linguistic analysis of the existent texts, students will analyze some aspect of Biloxi grammar. Topics can include any aspect of phonology, morphology, syntax, or narrative discourse structure. **Prereqs:** LING 401, LING 405, LING 422, and LING 437

LING 492 Seminar: Linguistics and Related Fields
Advanced work and individual projects in a selected area of linguistic specialization, such as psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, bilingualism and creole languages. Consult the Schedule of Classes for specific topics. **Prereqs:** graduate standing, LING 401, LING 422 or LING 427 or LING 435, LING 437, LING 446, and a B average or higher

LING 493 Seminar: Linguistic Theory
Advanced work and individual projects in a selected area of linguistic theory. Topics may include Readings in Syntax, Semantics, Syntax-semantics interface, Origins of Language. Consult the Schedule of Classes for specific topics. **Prereqs:** graduate standing, LING 401, LING 422 or LING 427 or LING 435, LING 437, LING 446, and a B average or higher

LING 494 Seminar: Historical Linguistics
Advanced work and individual projects in a selected area of historical linguistics. Topics may include etymology and cultural contexts. Consult the Schedule of Classes for specific topics. **Prereqs:** graduate standing, LING 401, LING 422 or LING 427 or LING 435, LING 437, LING 446, and a B average or higher
LING 5901 Thesis Seminar, 1 credit hour
Student will work with a committee of three Linguistics faculty to conduct original research and to write a thesis. **Prereqs**: Completion of seven required courses with a B average or higher, consent of advisor

LING 5902 Thesis Seminar, 2 credit hours
Student will work with a committee of three Linguistics faculty to conduct original research and to write a thesis. **Prereqs**: Completion of seven required courses with a B average or higher, consent of advisor

LING 5903 Thesis Seminar, 3 credit hours
Student will work with a committee of three Linguistics faculty to conduct original research and to write a thesis. **Prereqs**: Completion of seven required courses with a B average or higher, consent of advisor
FACULTY

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