

Honours in Linguistics 2009

Entry to Linguistics Honours requires a Major in Linguistics with an average 'B' result. Students who complete their degree in Semester 2 2008 with suitable results will be sent an offer of enrolment from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in December, for enrolment on a specified date in mid-February 2009. This offer may be deferred for a semester or a year. The enrolment is in fourth year Linguistics and does not specify what coursework is being taken. Students may later withdraw from Honours and receive their normal degree.

Honours is both a qualification in its own right, and a transition to more advanced study at the postgraduate level, including MA and PhD in Linguistics and/or DipEd in English as a Second Language. Honours graduates receive higher beginning salaries in the public service, and are more likely to be successful in obtaining this and other kinds of work.

Students who undertake Honours full-time may be eligible for Austudy. There is also a grant program to assist Honours students; information is posted on notice boards early in the year, with applications closing early in Semester 1 2009. In previous years, Linguistics Honours students have been partly supported to attend relevant conferences or Australian Linguistic Institutes in Australia and it is hoped that this will continue.

The Linguistics Honours course for 2009 will consist of a coursework component (50%) and a thesis component (50%). The coursework comprises two honours level units, each 25% of the year's assessment.

The following units are available on a rotating basis:

Advanced Phonetics

Provides an introduction to the theory and practice of acoustic phonetics, as well as an introduction to important articulatory phonetics techniques.

Advanced Phonology

Provides students with the opportunity to further study the grammatical patterning of sounds in the world's languages. We will explore both segmental and supra-segmental aspects of speech, and will compare and contrast abstract representations with psycholinguistic reality.

Advanced Sociolinguistics

Introduces students to the systematic study of variation through observation of speech behaviour, and in particular to the methods developed by William Labov for documentation and quantification.

Morphosyntax

Introduces students to the basic concepts and methods of grammatical analysis and description covering a wide range of phenomena taken from the world's languages and analysing the relationship between morphology and syntax using both formal and functional aspects of linguistic theory.

Language families of the world

Provides a systematic overview of an individual language family and the languages within it. Issues to be discussed include the historical, social, geographic and other factors resulting in the current situation, the structural characteristics of members of the language family, and the genetic and contact relationships within the family.

It is also possible to combine Honours in two areas, in which case the exact composition of the course varies: normally this comprises half of the coursework in one area and half in the other, and a thesis relevant to both areas, supervised by a staff member from each area, and marked by assessors from each area.

The thesis is 15,000 words, following the Linguistics style guidelines. For full-time students who commence in March 2009, it is due Friday 24th October 2009 by 12 noon. Two printed copies are required, in two binders. All theses will be assessed by two staff members, but not including the supervisor. Students are expected to revise the thesis after they receive reports from these two assessors, and lodge one revised copy of the thesis within two weeks of receipt of the report.

Apart from the special Honours Seminar Series, which is compulsory, students are expected to attend the Linguistics seminars held approximately every two weeks, and provide the opportunity to hear visitors, staff and postgraduate students talking about their work. In mid-September every Honours student presents a poster presentation on their thesis in one of these seminars.

In April 2009 students will submit a one to two-page thesis proposal which outlines the area they intend to work in for their thesis. By March 2009 however, each student will be assigned to a supervisor who will be available to discuss their topic, provide references and advice, and comment on thesis drafts. Students should meet this supervisor about every two weeks from then on. Of course it is also possible to meet potential supervisors or any other staff member at any time, to discuss possible topics, obtain suggestions about what to read, and discuss plans for Honours.

Intending Honours students are invited to discuss their plans with the Honours co-ordinator or another staff member, and to borrow an Honours thesis from previous years on a related topic from the Linguistics administrator, Heather Wilkie, to see what kind of work is expected in a thesis. A list of previous theses is available from her.

If the thesis topic chosen requires the collection of data from people, the student must first obtain approval from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Human Ethics Committee **before** starting to collect data. The form must be filled out in conjunction with the supervisor, who also must sign it before it is submitted.

Honours students are entitled to a CAVAL card, which enables them to borrow books from another university library in Melbourne, including the University of Melbourne (Parkville), Deakin (Burwood), Monash (Clayton) and so on. This card is available from the Library loans desk. Student may find that books on reserve at La Trobe are available for borrowing from other libraries. There is also a shared office available for Linguistics Honours students, with computer facilities and Internet access.

Mark levels are

80 and above H1 (First Class Honours)

70 to 79 H2A

60 to 69 H2B

50 to 59 H3

below 50 N (fail).

At present, admission to DipEd at La Trobe for English as a Second Language requires an Honours degree with a good H2A result (equivalent to a high B). It is necessary to have a very good H1 Honours (equivalent to A) result, 85 or above, to have any likelihood of a postgraduate scholarship La Trobe.