

Honors in English (Linguistics)

Linguistics: (noun, used with a singular verb) The study of the nature, structure, and variation of language, including phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, sociolinguistics, and pragmatics.

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What constitutes a thesis/creative project in Linguistics?

An honors thesis/creative project in Linguistics can take various forms and will be decided by the student in direct consultation with the faculty member who will supervise the thesis/creative project. The finished product is often between 30 and 50 pages of expository text, although different topics may warrant different formats.

Broadly speaking, a thesis/creative project in Linguistics may address nearly any facet of language structure and/or use, and it may intersect with one or more neighboring disciplines, including anthropology, computer science, education, history, philosophy, political science, psychology, sociology, and others. Past projects are listed in the next section to provide a sense of the breadth of topics that our faculty have supervised, although students are free to develop topics outside of these categories in consultation with their thesis/creative project director.

Past projects

Listed below are the titles and topic areas of some theses/creative projects that recent Barrett students have completed under the supervision of current or former Linguistics faculty in the Department of English.

(Hyperlinked titles are indexed in and available for download from the [Barrett Collection of the ASU library's Digital Repository](#). Print copies of non-hyperlinked titles are housed in one of Barrett's physical libraries.)

Community engagement

- [Negotiating Community Relationships through Language: Creating a Multilingual Book for Youth in Phoenix, Arizona](#)

Constructed Languages (ConLangs)

- [Dieva: A Constructed Language](#)
- [Constructed Language: Feral Goblins](#)
- The Avene Artificial Language
- Voyalinthian

Discourse Analysis

- [Hijrah to the Islamic State: A Preliminary Analysis](#)

Language and gender

- [The Differences in Language Use Between Men and Women on Twitter and the Potential Applications towards Social Media Marketing Campaigns](#)
- Sex Taboos and Gender Construction in Cosmopolitan Magazine

Language and the law

- [Perceptual Dialectology: Accents and Jury Verdicts](#)

Language policy and education

- [The Galician Standardization Dilemma: Analysis and Mediation](#)
- Education and Language Policy in French Colonial Indochina
- A Less Commonly Taught Language: Persian History, Heritage and Implementation

Second Language Acquisition

- [A Linguistic Comparison of English and Bahasa Indonesia: Examining Language Transfer Effects](#)

Social media and Internet language

- “At First I Loled, and then I Seriouised”: Lexicalization of Abbreviations from Computer-Mediated Communication
- What Every Noob Should Know: A Corpus of World of Warcraft Terminology and Discourse
- Linguistic Variation in Study Abroad Blogs
- An Analysis of Emoted Text and Other Syntactic Features of Online Discourse

Syntactic analysis

- Phrasal Verbs in English: Breaking Up is Hard to Do, So Can't We All Just Get Along?
- Don't Be a Treehugger: Matrixization of Phasal Derivations

Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)

- [Meeting the Needs of English Language Learners in Arizona's Mainstream Math and Science Classes: The Teachers' Perspectives](#)
- A Comparative Analysis of Arizona State University's American English and Culture Program and English Language Education in Five Other Countries

Writing systems

- Writing Systems as Windows Into Linguistic Structure
- The Hybrid Writing Systems of Egyptian and Japanese

Other topics

- Culturomics in Art History
- Sound Symbolism: Exploring the Relationship between Sound and Meaning
- Dr. Seuss's Sensible Nonsense for All Ages: A Project on Naming and Word Play
- You Just Got Served: A Basic Guide to Modern American Insult
- College Slang at Arizona State University: A Corpus

In addition, Linguistics faculty in the English Department are often willing to serve as a second (or third) committee member on topics that deal with language and linguistics even when the director is part of a different unit. A few recent theses/creative projects for which Linguistics faculty served as committee members include:

- [Individual Differences in Simulating Language: Do Good Readers Embody More or Less?](#)
- [Negotiating Bilingualism: Reflections on Lived Experiences](#)
- [A Sociolinguistic Analysis of a Regional Dialect of Sicilian](#)
- [Citizen Fashionistas: An Analysis of the Rise of the Personal Style Blogger](#)

Finally, a keyword search for “linguistics” or “language” in the [Digital Repository of past Barrett theses and projects](#) can also be used to explore recent projects that intersect in some way with linguistics and/or language more broadly. (Because linguistics is inherently interdisciplinary, you will find that many such projects involve faculty from many different units within the university.)

Other resources for exploring past (and current) research by Barrett students are provided by Barrett at the following link: <https://barretthonors.asu.edu/academics/thesis-and-creative-project/examples-and-past-projects>.

Committee Structure Requirements

Currently, the committee structure requirements for an honors thesis/creative project in Linguistics are the same as the minimum requirements set out by Barrett, as outlined in the [Honors Thesis/Creative Project Student Guidebook](#). In brief, those requirements are:

- Two committee members (minimum): a Director and a Second Committee Member; and
- The thesis/creative project Director must be an ASU lecturer or tenure-line faculty member.

An individual faculty member serving as the thesis/creative project director *may* have stricter requirements, and students must consult with their director before forming a committee.

Linguistics faculty available to direct honors projects

All of the Linguistics faculty members in the Department of English are interested in working with honors students on theses/creative projects. The list below includes current Linguistics faculty and the general subject areas with which they identify. Links are provided to each faculty member's ASU iSearch Profile page and personal website (if available).

- Karen Adams ([Profile](#) | [Website](#))
Sociolinguistics; pragmatics and discourse analysis; language and politics; language and gender; Southeast Asian languages
- Elly van Gelderen ([Profile](#) | [Website](#))
Syntax; history of English; historical linguistics; typology
- Mark James ([Profile](#) | [Website](#))
Curriculum, teaching, and learning in second language education
- Aya Matsuda ([Profile](#))
TESOL; English in the global context; multilingualism
- Tyler Peterson ([Profile](#) | [Website](#))
Semantics; pragmatics; language documentation; endangered languages (including Arizona); theoretical linguistics
- Matthew Prior ([Profile](#) | [Website](#))
Applied linguistics; second language acquisition and use; TESOL; multilingualism; discourse and interaction; sociolinguistics; narrative; language and emotion; language and identity; LGBTQ+
- Kathryn Pruitt ([Profile](#) | [Website](#))
Phonology; phonetics; typology; linguistic theory; stress; intonation

Preparation for the thesis/creative project

The honors thesis/creative project is a learning experience in itself, so students will develop skills and knowledge in the process of carrying out the project. Linguistics faculty members who have supervised these projects in the past have pointed out that it can be beneficial if a student has already taken at least one ENG 414 Studies in Linguistics or ENG 404 Studies in Second Language Acquisition course by the time they approach a potential thesis/creative project supervisor.

In addition, the Barrett Honors College requires students to take a thesis/creative project preparation workshop. More information is available here:

<https://barretthonors.asu.edu/academics/thesis-and-creative-project/getting-started>

Advantages and opportunities for graduates with honors in Linguistics

Doing an honors thesis/creative project has a range of benefits, both personal and professional.

Potential personal benefits:

- Completing a large-scale project can provide a sense of personal accomplishment.
- Working in-depth on a topic can allow you to decide if you like the topic and the type of work well enough to continue it in graduate/professional school or for a career.

Potential professional benefits:

- The scholarly research and writing skills honed through the honors thesis can transfer to a range of professional careers, including publishing, editing, law, business, and others.
- Applications to graduate and professional school are often more competitive among students who have previously completed in-depth research or creative projects, since this indicates that you already have a foundation in skills needed for an advanced degree.
- A thesis/creative project may lead to presentations and/or publications, which are excellent experiences and may stand out as significant accomplishments on your resume/CV.

Where do I start?

If students have an idea about the topic they would like to focus on for their thesis/creative project, they can go directly to a faculty member whose area of expertise overlaps with that topic. If students are not yet at that stage, or have general questions about the thesis/creative project, they can contact Dr. Kathryn Pruitt (kathryn.pruitt@asu.edu), faculty honors advisor for Linguistics.

Where can I find additional information?

Resources for Linguists and Linguistics

General information

- [What is linguistics?](#)
- [Why major in linguistics?](#)

Professional associations

- [American Association for Applied Linguistics](#) (AAAL)
- [Linguistic Society of America](#) (LSA)
- [Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages](#) (TESOL)

Information on conferences, jobs, degree programs, and much more

- [The LINGUIST List](#)

Linguists on the Internet

- [Language Log](#)
- [All Things Linguistic](#)
- [Lingthusiasm](#) (podcast)
- [The Vocal Fries](#) (podcast)

Barrett resources

- [Forms and Deadlines](#)
- [Thesis/Creative Project Guidebook](#)
- [Thesis/Creative Project Checklist](#) [pdf]
- [“Taking Charge of the Thesis and Creative Project Process”](#) [pdf]
- [Past and current projects](#)
- [Celebrating Honors Symposium](#)