

# Linguistics

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

The Department of Linguistics is introducing three exciting new courses in Winter 2025! The description of these courses is presented below.

## **LIN206H1S: Languages of the World**

**Instructor:** Professor Peter Jurgec (<https://www.jurjec.ca/>)

This course is a survey of languages and language families around the world. The course focuses on their linguistic similarities and differences, as well as their historical and social relationships. Course content will be explored through individual and comparative analysis of the linguistic structures of a representative sample of languages.

## **LIN207H1S: Language and Technology**

**Instructor:** Professor Guillaume Thomas (<https://gpythomas.github.io>)

This course will address language technologies from the emergence of writing in ancient civilizations to current large language models (such as GPT-4). We will first discuss why writing can be considered a technology and how literacy has affected human societies. We will then review the early history of mechanized speech and language technology from the late 18th century to the early 20th century. We will discuss the emergence of modern speech technology in the 20th century and current speech processing technologies. We will then explore the history of machine translation, from knowledge based models to statistical models, to neural machine translation models. Finally, we will discuss large language models such as generative pre-trained transformer (GPT) models and their use in text generation. Note that this course is not a Natural Language Processing or Computational Linguistics course. We will not discuss the mathematical foundations or computational implementation of language models in any depth. Instead, when discussing current language models, we will focus on questions such as: How are such models evaluated? How do they perform compared to human speakers? In what sense can we say that such models capture linguistic knowledge? How has linguistics contributed (or not) to the development and evaluation of such models?

## **LIN208H1S: Linguistic Discrimination and Justice**

**Instructor:** Professor Samantha Jackson (<https://drsamanthajackson.com/>)

This course explores the relationship between language and unjust social structures and practices, with a focus on discrimination against users of particular language varieties. A key component of the course is understanding and practicing methods from the field of sociolinguistics to identify and combat linguistic discrimination, contextualized through discussion of examples from multiple languages and communities. Topics may include dialect discrimination, language ideologies, language and the law, linguistic colonialism, language rights, prescriptivism, slurs and linguistic abuse, language and gender, and audism.

### **For all three courses:**

Pre-requisites/Co-requisites/Exclusions/Recommended Preparation: None

University of Toronto Mississauga Distribution Category: Humanities

Arts & Science Breadth Category: Thought, Belief and Behaviour (2)

Note: these courses do **not** count towards the Linguistics major or specialist programs.



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