

LINGUISTICS: FINAL HONOURS SCHOOL (confirmed for 2010)

Papers for the Final Honours School

The subjects below (Papers XIII and XII) comprise the 'Linguistics' part of the Final Honours School for candidates offering one language and Linguistics. Brief descriptions of the scope of each paper, and teaching and examining conventions are given below.

PAPER XIII

Description

This is a paper specially designed for students who have a strong interest in the theoretical underpinnings of linguistic analysis. It is compulsory for students taking the Modern Language and Linguistics course, and is available as an option to students taking a sole language for the Honour School of Modern Languages, as well as students for the Honour Schools of Experimental Psychology, and Psychology, Philosophy and Physiology.

The paper requires students to show a knowledge of contemporary linguistic theory regarding the different aspects of human linguistic capacity in the areas of phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics. The student should also be able to examine the relation of these systems to issues of linguistic variation, language acquisition and language change. The paper is concerned largely with issues of theory and general techniques of analysis, rather than the description of individual languages or language groups. It is intended to complement the linguistic study of individual languages (Papers IV and V) and may also be used to complement the general study of human cognitive systems and philosophy of mind.

Paper XIII presupposes and builds on the content of the Foundation Course in Linguistics offered for the Preliminary Examination in the Faculty of Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics. In view of this, while paper XIII is an option for some students who have not taken this examination, the Faculty of Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics has agreed that it would not normally be sensible or advisable for any student to start to prepare for paper XIII unless and until he or she has mastered the material that is covered in the Foundation Course in Linguistics.

There is an annual course of lectures, with modules in all three terms, which is specifically geared to this paper. Tutorial teaching can be provided from among those lecturing on this course.

Method of assessment A.

Examining Convention

This paper is divided into two sections, of approximately 12 questions each. Section A contains questions on phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics. Section B contains questions on sociolinguistics, language variation and change, psycholinguistics and language acquisition, and theories of language universals.

Candidates must answer THREE questions, including AT LEAST ONE from EACH section. EACH answer MUST start on a new answer-book

Paper XII. Phonetics and Phonology

Description

This course is aimed at those who wish to study how sound is used in language to a greater depth than is possible for paper XIII. The topics covered include:

Coarticulation and models of speech production
Approaches to speech perception
Phonetic acquisition
Experimental methodology
Prosody
Non-linear phonology
Constraint-based phonology
The phonetics/phonology interface.

This option is taught through seminars and practical sessions.

Method of Assessment A* (Three-hour unseen written paper and a half-hour practical phonetic transcription exercise: 75%/25%)

Examining Convention

Candidates must answer THREE questions.

Candidates must avoid substantial overlap between their answers in terms of content.

Paper XII. Psycholinguistics

Description

Psycholinguistics is an interdisciplinary area of study which addresses the relation between language and cognition. Fields covered in this course include the study of the development of language in children and the investigation of the psychological mechanisms which underlie the production and understanding of speech.

Teaching is through a combination of lectures and classes.

Method of Assessment A.

Examining Convention

Candidates must answer THREE questions.

Paper XII. Semantics

Description

This option is a thorough introduction for candidates who wish to explore the ways in which meaning is encoded in language. The areas under study will include: lexical meaning and lexical relationships,

combinatorial and truth-conditional semantics, the interaction between semantics and pragmatics, and the syntax-semantics interface.

This option is taught through lectures and tutorials.

Method of Assessment A.

Examining Convention

Candidates must answer THREE questions.

Paper XII. Sociolinguistics

Description

Sociolinguistics is the study of language variation and change, and their relationship to social phenomena (e.g. class, gender and ethnic divisions, patterns of migration and contact, social network structures). Topics covered include sociolinguistic methods, geographical and social dimensions of dialect variation, mechanisms of language change, code choice and code-switching in multilingual settings, pidgin and creole languages, language shift and language death.

Teaching is through a combination of attendance at lectures and tutorials.

Method of Assessment A.

Examining Convention

Candidates must answer THREE questions.

Paper XII. Syntax

Description

This option is designed for candidates who wish to attain a more detailed knowledge of modern generative syntactic theory than is possible within Paper XIII. Attention will also be given to recent debates and developments within the field.

The option is taught through lectures and tutorials or classes, as appropriate.

Method of Assessment A.

Examining Convention

Candidates must answer THREE questions.

Paper XII. Translation Theory

Description

This option is designed for those who are interested in what light general linguistic theory can shed on both the theory and the practice of translation. Some reference will be made to literary discussions of

translations, but the main emphasis will be on those sub-disciplines of linguistics which are concerned with texts (performance versus competence), and how the results of such analyses can be applied. Special attention will be given to stylistic analysis and discourse analysis, and to the ways in which texts in one register can be reformulated within other registers of the same language (intralingual as distinct from interlingual translation). The course will also consider a number of limiting cases, including verse translation and the translation of humour.

The course will be taught primarily by tutorials, although a course of lectures/seminars will be offered on a two-yearly basis.

Method of Assessment A.

Examining Convention

Candidates must answer THREE questions.

Paper XII. Language Change and Historical Linguistics

Description

The course will examine major current issues in the areas of phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic change, looking at both internal developments and external changes resulting from contact between languages. Amongst topics likely to figure on the course in any given year are: comparative reconstruction; regularity and lexical diffusion in sound change; analogy; grammaticalization; the sociolinguistics of language change.

Teaching will be by a combination of lectures, classes, and tutorials.

Method of assessment A.

Examining Convention

Candidates must answer THREE questions.

Paper XII. Linguistic Project

Description

This option allows a candidate to undertake a descriptive project, using the analytic tools acquired in other core areas of Linguistics. The report should document a piece of original research conducted by the student into some aspect of a particular dialect, language, or variety. The data may be collected at first hand by the student (possibly during the year abroad), or it may be from another credible source. The analysis of the data may focus on an aspect or combination of aspects of linguistic structure or usage.

Examples of the sorts of topics which might be undertaken are:

Idioms in Marseilles French

The phonology of Swabian

The Arabic component in Portuguese place names

Code-switching in Swiss German.

Topics must be discussed with a course co-ordinator, and are subject to approval by the Faculty of Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics: applications for approval, supported by the student's supervisor, must be made to the Chairman of the Faculty on the relevant form no later than Wednesday of second week of the Michaelmas term in the academic year of examination.

Method of Examination B (1).

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