

## DO YOU WANT TO DO RESEARCH?

If you are considering applying to graduate school, it is strongly recommended you obtain research experience during your undergraduate years. The sooner you start with this, the better! Here's how to get involved in linguistics research on campus.

## WHEN TO START?

Again, the sooner, the better! The sooner you start, the more experience you will have, and the better this looks on your CV. Maybe you can even get your research published! You can be involved in research even as early as your freshman year. Most students will start looking for a research project as part of a senior (honors) thesis. If you want to write a senior thesis, it is recommended you start at least in the summer before you graduate (given a May graduation). However, for research that does not involve experimentation or elaborate data collection, starting two semesters before graduation may be sufficient. One semester is not enough time.

## WHO QUALIFIES?

To qualify for a senior thesis, you need to have and maintain a gpa of at least 3.5 in Linguistics AND an upper level gpa of at least 3.5 (that is, for all courses you take in your junior and senior year). However, if you do not plan on writing a senior thesis, you can still be involved in research as independent study project (LIN 4905), or volunteer. Of course, it is expected that you are capable of working independently and that you have a strong desire to do research.

## HOW TO FIND A PROJECT

(1) Think about what aspect of linguistics you are most interested in, e.g. phonology, sociolinguistics, Bantu syntax, aphasia, .. For instance, was there a particular course, or part of a course that you thought was really cool, or did the professor address a certain topic that got you thinking and that you really want to know more about?

(2) Find a faculty member with a specialization in that particular field. For a list of linguistics faculty members and their research interests, see [www.lin.ufl.edu/faculty.html](http://www.lin.ufl.edu/faculty.html). Note that the person in your area of interest need not be in linguistics, but can be in psychology, languages, literatures and cultures, anthropology or even neuroscience. You also also consult the research data base on <http://www.honors.ufl.edu/research.html>.

(3) Contact the faculty member of your choice to see if s/he is willing to work with you and what kind of research projects/opportunities there are. For tips on approaching faculty, see <http://www.honors.ufl.edu/facultytips.html>. Typically, faculty are very happy when a student shows up who expresses an interest in working with them, so do not be shy to knock on professors' doors.

(4). Once you have found a mentor, meet regularly and come up with a research plan and time line. For an honors thesis, you need to sign up for independent study in the one/two semesters you do research (LIN 4905), and for senior thesis (LIN 4970) in your last semester. Practically speaking, you will spend the last semester writing up what you did in the two previous semesters. Your thesis needs to be handed in to your mentor about a month before the end of your last semester. For students not writing a thesis, it's up to them and the mentor to determine what the grade for their independent study will be based on. Sometimes, even helping out with on-going

research in a lab can count towards independent study. You can of course, also offer to volunteer as a research assistant without signing up for independent study.

#### CAN I GET FUNDING FOR DOING RESEARCH?

Yes you can! Some faculty members may have a grant from which they can pay you as a research assistant (although typically, they may first have you volunteer to see what you are good at). You can also apply for your own funds. For a list of funding opportunities for students, see under 'Research opportunities' <http://www.honors.ufl.edu/research.html>

The most successful for linguistics students have been:

- the USP program: <http://www.scholars.ufl.edu/> (deadline typically beginning of March)
- the McNair program: <http://gradschool.ufl.edu/mcnair/index.html> (deadline the end of January).

Work closely with your mentor to increase your chance of getting the award.

#### STILL NOT SURE?

Feel free to contact the Linguistics undergraduate advisor with questions.

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