

Carleton

Department of Linguistics

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Dear Future Carl,

The [Linguistics Department at Carleton](#) warmly congratulates you on your admission to our College. We are delighted that Linguistics is on your list of potential majors. As you may know, only a few liberal arts colleges offer linguistics as a program of study, and we believe that our curriculum is among the strongest.

[Our faculty](#) actively pursue scholarly research on a wide array of languages. [Our students are also deeply engaged in research](#), contributing to faculty research projects and also pursuing their own. They've written excellent [senior projects](#) on topics including reflexive verbs in Maltese, questions in Nukuoro (an understudied Polynesian language), tense and aspect in Haitian Creole, the phonology of child language, modal verbs in Korean, and code-switching in Junot Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. They often present their work at undergraduate linguistics conferences, such as the Minnesota Undergraduate Linguistics Symposium, and conferences held at other institutions (e.g. Cornell, Emory, Harvard, University of Southern California).

While [our curriculum](#) is anchored in syntax and phonology, we offer a broad range of courses. Over the years, we have cultivated various methods of instruction and engagement in [our courses](#). Our first-year seminar, *The Noun*, considers the many forms and functions of nouns across the world's languages. *Field Methods* involves extensive interaction with a native speaker consultant, with a focus on the analytical tools and skills required to elicit and analyze linguistic data, while *Semantics and Pragmatics* considers the ways in which speakers derive meaning from language. Our *First Language Acquisition* course offers a deep dive into the acquisition, learning, and development of language. We also offer extensive opportunities to conduct research with faculty. Every faculty member has engaged students in their research – including collaboration with colleagues and research partners external to Carleton, presentations at conferences, and co-authoring manuscripts.

Our majors are a lively, close-knit, supportive group of students with diverse backgrounds, talents, and pursuits. They gather regularly for [colloquia, student research presentations, and social events](#), and even [IPA Bingo](#). They go on to [careers](#) in medicine, law, technology, higher education administration, speech language pathology, and linguistics. Our students have won Watson, Fulbright, Boren, and NSF fellowships, have worked in the Peace Corps, and have taught English in Japan and France. They begin these journeys with the faculty and fellow students in our department, where our goal is to help students become adept at solving problems, identifying patterns in noisy data, and thinking creatively.

We are so glad that you are considering joining us. I warmly invite you to contact me at any time with any questions that you have about linguistics at Carleton, or just to say hello.

Best wishes,



Cherlon Ussery
Chair, Linguistics Department

