

HKU Master of Arts in Linguistics  
Student Handbook  
September 2017

HKU Department of Linguistics  
Room 930, 9/F  
Run Run Shaw Tower  
Centennial Campus  
The University of Hong Kong  
Pokfulam

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## **Introduction**

Founded in 2003/04, the Master of Arts in Linguistics (MAL) programme was intended to provide postgraduate training for potential research students, in-service teachers and other language-related professionals such as editors and speech therapists. The programme provides an important forum for staff and postgraduates to keep abreast of the latest in the subject and to contribute to its advancement. The programme has been approved by the Vetting Committee of the Education Bureau to be included on the list of "Programmes accepted for Grants under the Professional Development Incentive Grant Scheme for Language Teachers" of the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR). The MAL programme is also a recognized degree specifically in the study of the English language for Language Proficiency Requirement (English Language) exemption.

## **Aims**

The objectives of the programme are: to provide an opportunity for new ideas in linguistic research to be explored and discussed; to provide training at the postgraduate level to students who wish to do independent research in linguistics; and to impart up-to-date knowledge in the field of linguistics.

## **Learning outcomes**

The programme strives to provide an outstanding student-centred learning experience. Our curriculum, course contents, pedagogy, and assessment method are designed to develop students' capabilities in life-long learning, critical intellectual enquiry and professional excellence. Especially as a language-related discipline, the programme emphasizes communication and collaboration.

We would like to welcome you again to the MAL programme and wish you every success on. This handbook aims to provide you with information you need during your study with us. If you still have questions after reading this handbook, please contact us.

## **Programme Structure**

To fulfil the degree requirements for MA in Linguistics, full-time students are required to complete 60 credits of coursework, equivalent to 7 courses (2 cores and 5 electives) and a capstone experience (the dissertation) in 1 year.

## **Study plan**

Usually we recommend full-time students to split their coursework component into 3-4 courses per semester. Under special circumstances in which you need to take more than 4 courses in a semester, you must seek approval from the Programme Chairperson in advance.

If you wish to take more courses than required (i.e. more than 7 courses), you should also seek approval from the Programme Chairperson. The course results from ALL the courses you take will be counted towards your final GPA, NOT the 7 courses with top results.

## **Capstone Experience**

The capstone experience of a programme is the dissertation. is a compulsory component for our programme. Supervisor will be assigned based on your research interest. You are advised to look for a potential topic / area of interest in semester 1. By November, students are expected to identify a dissertation topic. A supervisor

will be assigned in December. By April end, the final dissertation title must be submitted for the Faculty's approval. Following is a suggested schedule for preparing your dissertation.

#### Timeline for Preparing and Submitting Dissertation

Submission of proposed dissertation topic with a brief description	30 November, 2017
Submission of final dissertation title	28 April, 2018
Submission of complete draft to supervisor	Preferably one month before the dissertation submission date
Submission of 3 temporarily bound dissertations to the Faculty of Arts (4/F, Run Run Shaw Tower, Centennial Campus)	1 August, 2018, 5:45 pm

Please note that Turnitin submission is compulsory. Turnitin offers Originality Checking on students' work for proper citation or potential plagiarism. Once a paper is submitted to Turnitin, it will compare with documents in a continuously updated database consisting of current and archived web pages, millions of student

papers worldwide, and collections of newspapers, magazines, scholarly journals, e-Books and e-Texts.

## Course selection

The first week of study for each semester is the course selection week. You are welcome to sit in different classes and decide which one you want to sign up.

### Courses available this year (2017-18)

#### Core courses

Phonetics and Phonology - [LING7004](#)

Grammar: Theories and Applications - [LING7005](#)

#### Elective Courses

The History and Structure of Cantonese - [LING6014](#)

Language Development and Language Behaviour - [LING6017](#)

Grammar and Interaction - [LING6019](#)

Language Types and Universals - [LING6021](#)

Reading Acquisition and Developmental Dyslexia - [LING6022](#)

Multilingualism - [LING6031](#)

Readings in Linguistics - [LING7006](#)

LING7006 is a directed reading course. There is no fixed timetable, and the readings and assessment are laid out by individual teachers. Students should approach our teachers and ask for their express consent to supervise you in this course.

Please forward the consent of your teacher to the programme office ([malhku@hku.hk](mailto:malhku@hku.hk)) for record.

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## Assessment

Courses are assessed either by coursework, or by examination, or by a combination of coursework and examination as specified in the descriptions of individual courses. Coursework assessment is based on essays, term papers, projects, oral presentations, quizzes, and other kinds of oral or written work as prescribed by the course instructors. Examinations may be in the form of written examinations, open-book examinations, or take-home examinations.

Assessment / Examinations will normally be held at the end of the semester in which the courses are taken. Students who fail to satisfy the examiners in not more than 2 courses may be re-assessed. Re-assessment may take the form of re-submitting term papers or projects, or re-sitting examinations, as appropriate, the exact format of re-assessment will be determined in each case by the Board of Examiners. Students who fail to satisfy the examiners in the re-

assessment may be required to discontinue their studies. Students who fail to satisfy the examiners in more than 2 courses may be required to discontinue their studies.

## **Discontinuation**

A candidate who

(a) is not permitted to present himself for re-examination in any paper or papers in which he has failed to satisfy the examiners or to revise and re-present his dissertation or its equivalent requirement; or

(b) has failed to satisfy the examiners in a second attempt in any course(s) or examination or in his dissertation or its equivalent requirement; or

(c) has failed more than two courses in a first attempt in an academic year may be required to discontinue his studies under the provisions of General Regulation G 12.

## **Plagiarism**

According to the Faculty of Arts' circular on Plagiarism in Assessments and Examinations, "Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. The Faculty of Arts upholds the principle that plagiarism in any form is unacceptable and any student found plagiarizing is liable to disciplinary action in addition to failing the examination." Regulation 6 of the University's Regulations Governing Conduct at Examinations also states "A candidate shall not engage in plagiarism nor employ nor seek to employ any other unfair means at an examination or in any other form of work submitted for assessment as part of a University examination. Plagiarism is defined as

the unacknowledged use, as one's own, of work of another person, whether or not such work has been published." For more details, please read the Art's Faculty's circular on plagiarism in assessments and examinations and the Protocol on the Handling of Plagiarism.

Faculty of Arts' circular on Plagiarism on Assessments and Examinations:

<http://arts.hku.hk/PGprogrammes/PlagiarismAE.pdf>

Protocol on the Handling of plagiarism:

<http://arts.hku.hk/BAprogramme/2010/assessment/plagiarism.html>

If you have questions, please consult your teacher and the two booklets below.

What is plagiarism:

<http://www.rss.hku.hk/plagiarism/page2s.htm>

Plagiarism and How to Avoid it: <http://www4.caes.hku.hk/plagiarism/>

## **Other information**

### **Deferral of studies**

Students may apply for deferral of studies under exceptional circumstances, e.g. illness or personal issues, etc. The decision rests with the Programme Chairperson and the Faculty. To apply for deferral of studies, please write a letter/an email to the Programme and submit supporting documents as appropriate.

## Dissertation submission extension

Students may apply for dissertation submission extension if they need more time to work on the dissertation. Please suggest a new deadline and seek approval from your supervisor. Upon the supervisor's consent, write an extension request to the Programme. Your request will be forwarded to the Programme Chairperson and the Faculty for further approval.

## Semester Dates

### First Semester

First Day of Teaching	01 September, 2017 (Fri)
Course Selection Period	01 September, 2017 (Fri) - 10 September, 2017 (Sun)
Last Day of Teaching	30 November, 2017 (Thur)

### Second Semester

First Day of Teaching	15 January, 2018 (Mon)
Course Selection Period	15 January, 2018 (Mon) - 21 January, 2018 (Sun)
Class Suspension Period (Lunar New Year)	16 February, 2018 (Fri) - 22 February, 2018 (Thur)
Reading Week	05 March, 2018 (Mon) - 10 March, 2018 (Sat)
Last Day of Teaching	28 April, 2018 (Sat)

There is no class on public holidays. For your information:

HK Public Holiday 2017:

<https://www.gov.hk/en/about/abouthk/holiday/2017.htm>

HK Public Holiday 2018:

<https://www.gov.hk/en/about/abouthk/holiday/>

Class arrangements during bad weather:

[http://www.exam.hku.hk/A\\_4.htm](http://www.exam.hku.hk/A_4.htm)

When Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 8 (or above) or Black Rainstorm Signal is hoisted, the following arrangements will apply:

(a) For classes and examinations not yet started

If either of the warnings is hoisted or in force at or after 6:00am All classes and examinations commencing before 2:00pm will be cancelled automatically.

If either of the warnings is hoisted or in force at or after 11:00am All classes and examinations commencing at any time from 2:00pm and before 6:00pm will be cancelled automatically.

If either of the warnings is hoisted or in force at or after 3:00pm All classes and examinations commencing from 6:00pm onward will be cancelled automatically.

(b) For classes and examinations already started

When Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 8 or above is hoisted All classes will be suspended immediately.  
All examinations to continue until the end of that examination session.

All classes and examinations, except those held outdoors, would continue.

When Black Rainstorm Signal is hoisted For outdoor classes and examinations, the responsible staff members on the spot should suspend the activities immediately,

ensure that all students are taken to a safe place, and remain there until it is safe for them to return home.

The Examinations Office will re-schedule postponed examinations to a later date and inform the candidates of the details as soon as possible.

When Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 3 or below or Red or Amber Rainstorm Signal is in force, it should be assumed that all classes and examinations will be held as scheduled unless an announcement to the contrary has been made by the University.

## Important dates

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
<b>1 – 10 September 2017</b>	Semester 1 course selection
<b>1 Sept – 30 Nov 2017</b>	Semester 1
<b>30 November 2017</b>	Submission of proposed dissertation topic and a brief description of your project
<b>December 2017</b>	Supervisor assigned. Please contact your supervisor accordingly
<b>15 – 21 January 2018</b>	Semester 2 course selection
<b>15 Jan – 28 Apr 2018</b>	Semester 2
<b>28 Apr 2018</b>	Submission of final dissertation title
<b>1 July 2018</b>	Full draft of dissertation ready for supervisor's comment
<b>1 August 2018</b>	Submission of dissertation

## Appendix A – Programme Syllabus

### 1. Core Courses

#### **LING7004.    Phonetics and Phonology**

This course introduces students to two areas of study of the speech sounds of language, phonetics and phonology. In phonetics, students acquire the knowledge of (i) the articulatory and acoustic properties of the speech sound segments, including consonants, glides, vowels, and diphthongs, and (ii) the prosodic characteristics of the suprasegments, such as duration, pitch and stress, associated with the syllables. Students acquire the skills of (i) IPA transcription and (ii) speech analysis, using instruments. In phonology, students learn about (i) the patterns of speech sound systems and (ii) the phonological properties and linguistic functions of the sound segments and suprasegments. Students are required to analyze phonological data, solve phonological problems, and formulate phonological rules.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

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#### **LING7005.    Grammar: Theories and Applications**

This course offers an in-depth study of recent advances in syntactic research. Theories of language and theories of grammar are first discussed, followed by a consideration of the methods with which syntactic structures and syntactic functions are handled in the major theoretical frameworks. The role of the lexicon in these theories is examined. It is shown how these contemporary theories find applications in areas such as language learning.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

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### 2. Elective Courses

#### **LING6013.    Data-Driven Linguistic Analysis**

This course offers students training in the latest data-based approaches in linguistic analysis. Different kinds of linguistic data and their theoretical status are first presented, followed by a discussion of the methods currently being used for constructing natural language corpora. Topics including corpus design and annotation, the sampling and retrieval of information from language corpora, and their use in linguistic analysis are discussed.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

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### **LING6014. The History and Structure of Cantonese**

This course offers a wide-ranging account of Cantonese in all of its major facets: its origins, historical development, phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexis, as well as dialectal and social variation. Recent advances in research on Cantonese will also be discussed and reviewed.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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### **LING6015. Discourse and Conversation**

This course looks into recent advances in the fields of Discourse Analysis and Conversation Analysis. Students are given hands-on experience in collecting and analysing discursive data. Different approaches to the study of connected speech and texts are presented. The notions of meaning, context, and interpretation, and the inter-relationship between them, are discussed in some detail. Areas of current research such as discourse markers and focus are also presented.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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### **LING6017. Language Development and Language Behavior**

The aims of this course are to introduce students to some research methods employed in the study of language acquisition and language behavior, and to assess the significance of research results in these fields. The main topics to be covered include: stages of language development, reading acquisition, second language learning, language and reading disorders, and the influences of writing systems on language processing.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

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### **LING6019. Grammar and Interaction**

This course introduces students to the recent advances in the study of the interface between linguistic structure (grammar) and human interaction (spontaneous communication). It focuses on issues of the identity of basic interactional units and how syntax, prosody, semantics and conversational structure shape one another in naturally occurring talk. Topics include: Syntax of sentences in progress, Adverbial clauses in conversation, Repair and syntax, Conversational turns and their extension. Assessment: 100% coursework

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### **LING6020. Advanced Topics in Psycholinguistics**

This course will examine issues concerning how language is acquired and processed in the mind. Advanced research topics to be covered in this course are as follows: brain and language development, language and thought, mental systems for words, word segmentation in Chinese and English, dyslexia, language disorders. There will also be practical laboratory classes.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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### **LING6021. Language Types and Universals**

This course introduces linguistic typology as an approach to language structure based inductively on investigation of a wide range of languages. It does not require prior knowledge of many languages, although some knowledge of a language such as German or Japanese is a useful asset. The course includes applications of typology in the field of language acquisition.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

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### **LING6022. Reading Acquisition and Developmental Dyslexia**

This course aims to provide a theoretical understanding of reading development and reading disorders in different writing systems, with a specific focus on alphabetic (English) and logographic (Chinese) writing systems. Through attending the course, students will be able to understand how different cognitive processes contribute to the development of skilled word reading and text comprehension and what problems children may encounter during the course of reading development. Effective treatment and instruction approaches will also be discussed.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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### **LING6023. Researching Language in Hong Kong**

This course introduces students to contemporary research on languages issues with special reference to the study of language and linguistics in Hong Kong. This course will survey recent research on the languages of the HKSAR, and discuss how language research may be critically read and interpreted, with particular attention to research design and methodology. The central aim of the course is to help students to understand the techniques of quantitative and qualitative research, with case studies relevant to Hong Kong. It will be of special interest to students intending to carry out locally-based research for their dissertation.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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### **LING6024. Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL)**

This course focuses on the theory and practice of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL). Areas covered in the course include: a brief review of the history of CALL; latest pedagogical approaches based on CALL (such as the Data-Driven Learning approach); the introduction of various CALL software packages (vocabulary and grammar learning programmes, electronic-storybooks, language quizzes and games, etc.); introduction of online language teaching and learning (WebQuest, online communication, WWW resources, etc.); the use of E-dictionaries and thesauruses; and the use of corpus and concordancing programmes for language teaching and learning (both monolingual concordancing and

English-Chinese parallel concordancing will be introduced). Other related topics such as machine translation, speech recognition and language learning through PDA (Personal Data Assistants) will also be briefly introduced.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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### **LING6025. Language Planning and Language Management**

Most societies in the world are officially multilingual and face many problems relating to language planning and language management. Language planning typically refers to language policies in such areas as government and education, while language management refers to smaller-scale decisions and applications within institutions and business organizations. The broad aim of this course is to inform students about recent trends in language planning internationally and in Hong Kong and, with reference to such topics as national language traditions, official language policies, and the use of languages in at work.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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### **LING6027. Topics in Functional Linguistics**

This course examines a selection of topics within a field of study which has come to be known as 'functional linguistics'. The topics may vary from year to year, but will include a sample of influential functional approaches to the study of language from the following list: cognitive linguistics, construction grammar, information structure and sentence form, grammaticalization theory, bio-linguistics. Through an in-depth discussion of a small number of studies the selected approaches will be evaluated for their theoretical and methodological contributions to linguistics.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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### **LING6028. Topics in Language Acquisition**

The course introduces current linguistic approaches to language acquisition in bilingual and multilingual contexts. Topics will include the

acquisition of Cantonese and English by bilingual children; acquisition of English as second language by Chinese speakers, and vice versa; and the acquisition of a third or additional language by bilinguals. The course is particularly suitable for those with some experience of language teaching. Assessment: 100% coursework

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### **LING6029. Current Issues in Linguistics**

In this course current issues in different sub-fields of linguistics are discussed, with an emphasis on new approaches, methodologies and findings. The topics may vary from year to year but will include a selection from such major fields of research as linguistic theory, sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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### **LING6030. Language Evolution**

The aim of this course is to give students an understanding of the emergence of new languages, such as contact languages, pidgins and creoles. We compare an evolutionary approach to language change with other, more orthodox theories, and evaluate the role of Eurocentric ideologies in the formulation of theoretical systems. We also reflect on the structural and social forces that drive speakers to construct new grammars through a number of case studies from East, South and Southeast Asia, including Chinese Pidgin English, Sri Lanka Malay and Bazaar Malay.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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### **LING6031. Multilingualism**

This course provides a broad overview of issues pertinent to multilingualism, with an emphasis on the linguistic, social and cultural diversity of multilingual societies. Theories and approaches to the study of multilingualism will be illustrated by different multilingual settings around the world, with special focus on Hong Kong and Asian contexts. Topics related to the linguistic consequences of multilingualism include

diglossia, code-switching and language change. We also look at educational issues created by multilingualism and how they are resolved. Assessment; 100% coursework.

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### **LING6032. Semantics**

This course introduces students to the linguistic study of meaning. It focuses on the meaning of signs and the relation between signifiers and what they stand for. Topics to be examined include both traditional and current approaches to lexical and sentence meaning. The role of semantics in the language system will be addressed. Central problems and theoretical concepts of Semantics will be discussed, with illustration from a variety of languages.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

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### **LING7006. Readings in Linguistics**

In this course students are asked to read a selection of classical works and exemplary books and research papers in linguistics. Selections may vary from year to year, but will usually include important works by early masters including Bloomfield, Sapir, and Chao, as well as influential works by current linguists. Students are required to submit written reports and give oral presentations on the readings.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

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### **LING7007. The Sound Patterns of Language: Phonological Theory and Analysis**

Why is English so hard for a Cantonese speaker to pronounce? The sounds of each language are organized by different principles: English allows consonant clusters at word edges (as in *strengths*) while Cantonese does not. Each human language has its own *phonology*, a set of principles for organizing its sounds into a unique signature for that language. This course addresses phonological systems from a variety of perspectives. Objectives include teaching the following: a, an overview of common types

of phonological phenomena; b, analytic tools for determining the phonological patterns found in a given language; c, theoretical grounding in order to interpret the results of an analysis; d, argumentation logic to evaluate the validity of analyses; e, presentation skills for both oral and written professional presentations. Thus, the primary focus is on analytic, argumentation, and presentation skills, set against the backdrop of phonological systems.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

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### **LING7008. Language and Speech Sounds: Acoustic and Articulatory Phonetics**

When speaking, people tend not to actively think about the sounds that make up their language. The task of listening to and producing speech sounds seems so effortless and automatic for native speakers of a language that it can often be one of the most challenging obstacles for the non-native learner to overcome. Contemporary inquiry into the nature of human speech sounds, however, reveals a complex system of phonetic knowledge that language users must use to navigate their linguistic environment. This course introduces students to the nature of speech production and perception and to the properties of the acoustic signal that is transmitted from speaker to listener. Goals of this course are: a, to understand fundamental principles of phonetic theory and phonetic representation. We will look at current theories of the complicated tasks accomplished by speakers and listeners and arrive at a representation of speech sounds in terms of their articulatory, acoustic and perceptual properties; b, to introduce students to techniques of phonetic experimentation and modeling. Small-scale experiments will provide training in physiologic measurement, acoustic analysis, and perceptual-data analysis, and reinforce theoretical principles by serving as empirical tests of claims made by such theories; c, to reflect on the relationship between the physical instantiation of speech and its representation in the mind. Our exploration of this issue will serve as a bridge between phonetics and phonology; d, to provide practical experience in hearing, producing, and transcribing sounds of the world's languages. Such experience can prepare students for field research on poorly documented or under-described languages or for work involving populations who speak different languages.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

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**LING7009. Language Structure for Teaching and Learning Languages**

Learning a foreign language can be daunting; teaching a foreign language to bewildered students can be frustrating. This course is for the teacher and learner alike; we will look at general properties of how language is structured -- both generically and through specific examples -- starting with the sounds that make up languages and moving to how those sounds form word, how those words form sentences, and how those sentences are interpreted to have both specific and contextual meanings.

Assessment: 100% coursework.