

Helen White  
Class of 2023  
Advisor: Kari Lie Dorer  
Date: 11/20/20

Working title of individual major: Applied Linguistics

Description:

What I plan to study is the field of linguistics and how it can be applied to everyday life. Applied linguistics entails fields of linguistics education, translation, speech therapy, discourse analysis, and more. For my own particular purposes, I want to pursue applied linguistics in the area of speech pathology, as I am hoping to continue my study in graduate school in this discipline. In order to understand this field of study, I will have to develop my discourse analysis skills, learn more about the brain's processing of language, work on translation projects, examine the role of linguistics in the classroom, and find out more about the ways in which linguistic theory can be applied to real life situations. I am particularly interested in linguistics processing in the brain and children's language acquisition, as these are relevant topics to the field of speech pathology. This major will incorporate courses from a variety of departments and programs, including Education, Norwegian, Linguistics, Spanish, and Psychology. This multidisciplinary combination of linguistic theory, education, foreign language, and science results in a deep dive into multiple sides of applied linguistics.

Questions:

As I consider my major, the questions driving my study include:

- How do children process and produce language?
- What are the causes for the impediments that children face in regards to language?
- How does bilingualism play a role in language processing?
- How does language influence society's perception of certain groups?
- Why is linguistics important when examining human communication?

Throughout my course of study, I will aim to answer these questions using the courses and resources available to me through the college.

Course grid:

**Year 1 Semester 1**

Course #	Title	major	GE
<i>GCON 113</i>	<i>Greeks and Hebrews</i>		
<i>SPAN 250</i>	<i>Family/Gender Roles in Spain</i>		<i>FOL, WRI</i>

<i>NORW 253</i>	<i>Advanced Conv &amp; Comp</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>FOL, ORC</i>
<i>CSCI 121</i>	<i>Principles Comp Sci</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>AQR</i>

**Year 1** Interim course major GE

<i>GCON 115</i>	<i>Romans and Christians</i>		<i>BTS-B, WRI</i>
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**Year 1** Semester 2

<i>LNGST 250</i>	<i>English Language and Linguistics</i>	<i>X</i>	
<i>LNGST 245</i>	<i>Roles of Language/Equity&amp;Diversity</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>HBS, ORC</i>
<i>NORW 371</i>	<i>Norwegian Literature: An Overview</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>ALS-L, FOL, WRI</i>
<i>GCON 116</i>	<i>Medieval Synthesis</i>		<i>FYW, HWC</i>
<i>DANCE 141</i>	<i>Top: The Body Eclectic</i>		<i>SPM</i>

**Year 2** Semester 1

<i>EDUC 250</i>	<i>Second Language Acquisition</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>WRI</i>
<i>GCON 217</i>	<i>New Forces of Secular</i>		<i>ALS-L, WRI</i>
<i>NORW 372</i>	<i>Top: NORSK HUMOR</i>	<i>N</i>	
<i>SPAN 276</i>	<i>Spanish 1st/2nd Lang</i>	<i>X</i>	

**Year 2** Interim course major GE

<i>NORW 260</i>	<i>Intro to Germanic Linguistics</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>HBS</i>
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**Year 2 Semester 2**

NORW 244 + FLAC	Sami: Tradition/Transition	X N	HBS, ORC, MCG
GCON 218	Dissenters/Defenders		ALS-A, HWC, ORC, WRI
BIO 150	Biodiversity Foundations		IST, SED
NORW 396	Res: Norwegian Multi Ethnolect	X N	

Summer class or internship?

EDUC 250	Language in Media Internship	X	
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**Year 3 Semester 1**

SPAN 273	Heritage/Hispanic US		MCD
REL 232	Multiculturalism/Beloved Community		BTS-T
CHEM 121	General Chemistry		SED
STAT 110	Principles of Statistics		AQR
ESAC 151	Badminton		SPM

**Year 3 Interim course**

major GE

NORW 296	Oslo Internship Reflection Seminar	X	
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**Year 3 Semester 2**

PSYCH 241	Developmental Psych	X	HBS
FAMST 132	Intro: Family Studies		HBS
BIO 121	Biological Science		IST, SED
STAT 272	Statistical Modeling		

**Year 4 Semester 1**

STAT 270	Interim Stat: Soc Research		
SPAN 311	Top: TBD	X	
NORW 372	Top: TBD	N	
PSYCH 237	Cognitive Psychology	X	SED

**Year 4 Interim course** major GE

PSYCH 222	Psychology of Hearing	X	
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**Year 4 Semester 2**

<b>IS392</b>	<b>Senior Project II (1.0 credit)</b>	<b>X</b>	
NORW 282	Ibsen	N	EIN, WRI
PSYCH 238	Biopsychology		
FAMST 242	Family Relationships		

CHEM 107	Forensic Sci With Lab		IST, SED
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Notes for course planning and registration:

Italics indicate courses already taken.

X indicates individual major. N indicates Norwegian major.

High school credits:

4.00 credits- 1.00 HBS, 1.00 WRI

### Courses:

#### Notes

- The total number of courses counting towards this major are at least 12 of the 14 listed below. This allows for some flexibility if not all will be offered, or if time overlaps occur.
- The attached four-year plan includes all of these courses, however, some may not be offered during the semester I have assigned them to, in which case courses may be moved around or changed depending on offerings.
- The course list does not rely on any individual studies, all are courses that already exist and count towards the Linguistics concentration.

### Linguistic theory

These courses include instruction about official linguistic theory, terminology, and research. Areas of interest include first and second language acquisition, the International Phonetic Alphabet, linguistic theory specific to English, Germanic languages, and Spanish, language change, and other research areas. This is the background needed in order to get to the “applied” part of “applied linguistics”.

### ***LNGST 250 - English Language and Linguistics***

This course is at the core of the linguistics program at St. Olaf. It touches on a variety of subjects in linguistics theory, including, but not limited to, phonology, morphology, language acquisition, language variation, and phonetic transcription. This course provides the backbone of linguistic theory for my major.

### ***LNGST 245 - Roles of Language in Equity and Diversity***

This course examines the role of linguistics in discrimination and social justice. It covers ways in which educators should go about teaching language as well as the values of varieties of English, such as African American vernacular English. This course provides the theory needed to go about linguistic study in an ethical way.

### ***EDUC 250 - Second Language Acquisition***

This course delves into the ways in which children and adults learn a second language. In applied linguistics, there is a high chance of working with individuals who are speaking English as a second language. This course provides a background in the most effective methods to help those individuals as well as ways to improve your own second language, touching on several of my research questions.

### **SPAN 276 - Spanish as a First and Second Language**

The vast majority of people in this country whose first language is not English have Spanish as a native or heritage language. Therefore, it is important to examine linguistics from a Spanish-speaking point of view. This course, taught in Spanish, looks at linguistic theory applied to Spanish rather than English, which helps to interpret the reasons why some individuals who speak Spanish communicate the way that they do.

### **NORW 260 - Introduction to Germanic Linguistics**

As a fluent speaker of both English and Norwegian, Germanic linguistics heavily applies to my areas of study. Rather than focusing on just one language, this course incorporates theory from an entire group of languages and teaches about the common ancestor between them. This results in an examination of the origin of certain languages and, in turn, why certain linguistic patterns may emerge in speech.

#### Application: linguistics in action

These courses are intended to take linguistic theory and show how it can be used in the real world. This includes areas such as linguistics and social justice, the societal impact of language, research on minority speech, and more. How language impacts society is crucial to my major. With a better understanding of this, I can take my further linguistic studies and try to understand marginalized groups that might be experiencing isolation because of their language use. Applied linguistics and sociolinguistics overlap in this area, creating an important application of my studies.

### **NORW 396 - Research: Norwegian Multi Ethnolect**

This Directed Undergraduate Research, led by Kari Lie Dorer, examines the use of a variety of Norwegian often used by minority youth, known as *kebabnorsk*. This applies linguistic theory to critical analysis of Norwegian discourse surrounding minorities and minority language. Language discrimination is a prevalent phenomena, which this course attempts to conclude more about in the context of Norway.

### **NORW 244 - The Sámi: Traditions in Transition**

This course takes a look at the Sami, or the Norwegian indigenous groups. They have their own language and culture that has been systematically erased and undermined throughout history, by their own government. Their language is a large part of their identity, as it differs from classic Norwegian. Examining the marginalization of this group once again attempts to examine the ways in which linguistic discrimination and language itself function within society.

### **SPAN 311 - Language in Society (Topic TBD)**

Though the topic is unknown at this point in time, this Spanish-language course takes a look at the ways in which language (particularly Spanish language) functions in society and culture. The focus involves issues such as language contact, gender discrimination, linguistic variation and change, and language and power. All of these apply to my examination of linguistic social justice and the necessity of being cognizant of language and power.

#### Logistics of linguistics and psychological theory

These courses entail biological and cognitive reasons behind language use, including linguistic delays, hearing and speech disorders, developmental disorders, and other cognitive processes and stages of language development that contribute to a body of speech. This provides more insight into the science behind language and why it might develop the way that it does.

### **PSYCH 237 - Cognitive Psychology**

This course outlines the science of thinking, with a special emphasis on remembering and producing speech, and other performative activities. This study builds upon my questions about the production and processing of language as well as impediments that may arise. This examination of the brain and cognitive processes highlights the practical elements of linguistics.

### **PSYCH 241 - Developmental Psychology**

A large part of child development entails language acquisition and the composition of a mental grammar. This course also discusses external factors that may influence the behavior of a child, and therefore their speech production and habits.

### **PSYCH 222 - Psychology of Hearing**

This course is crucial to my major. It provides a large portion of the biological and psychological basis of hearing, a major process in linguistics, and in particular speech-language pathology. The course integrates areas of psychological theory with applied linguistics, giving an overview of the potential reasons behind developmental delays and language development disorders, as well as the brain's language processing abilities.

### Additional supplementation

These courses do not directly count towards my major, but are related in that they somehow support applied linguistics. They either tangentially involve linguistics or are additional opportunities in the field, but do not completely fit in with my desired course of study.

### ***Language in Media Internship***

This internship is an applied study in which different news media sources are scoured for language revolving around BIPOC individuals and communities. The discourse analysis takes a look at the ways in which the media talks about minority groups and how that might have an impact on public perception of said groups. Linguistics has the potential to influence how we view people, which is the main idea of this internship. Ultimately, students write an article about the findings.

### **NORW 296 - Oslo Internship Reflection Seminar (abroad)**

NOTE: I am not 100% sure I will be taking this course as of yet. This course, taken in Norway, is an internship opportunity that can be arranged in any area of my interest. For my purposes, I would find an area of linguistics to do my internship in, which would vary according to availability. Notably, it would be a Norwegian-language opportunity, potentially involving translation or another form of discourse analysis, with the intention of applying my knowledge of linguistic theory.

### **CSCI 121 - Principles of Computer Science**

This course makes a distinction between a formal language and a natural language. Python, the coding language employed by the course, is a formal language, or a language that computers can read and understand. Much of this course involves semantics, syntax, and other important details that denote meaning to the computer. This adds to my major and is tangentially related, as it counts towards the linguistics concentration and involves learning another type of language and examining elements of language that encode meaning.

### Rationale:

My intended major is important because speech is the basis of human communication. Illiteracy is still prevalent, but spoken or signed language is found among virtually all people. Studying the ways in which language works and is important in our society is crucial for these reasons. For me personally, applied linguistics gives me an overview of the field that I hope to enter into: speech pathology. My intended major does not tweak an established major, but rather builds a substantial major out of an existing concentration, combining the courses and resources available through this department into an entire line of study. No existing majors at St. Olaf include this high of a volume of courses involving linguistics and examining its application.

Though using courses from many departments, my intended major does build up from 100 and 200-level courses to 300-level. Some of my selected courses are prerequisites for others. For example, LNGST 250 is a prerequisite for LNGST 245, SPAN 276 is a prerequisite for SPAN 311. All four of these courses count towards my major and build on the previous course to facilitate a deeper dive into applied linguistics. My 300-level courses, which include NORW 396, IS 392, and SPAN 311 all used applied linguistic theory and build upon earlier courses. Courses like LNGST 250, NORW 260, and SPAN 276 all provide a theory basis which I will use in later courses. Courses from a variety of departments such as Education, Norwegian, and Psychology use a broad scope of applied linguistics and linguistic theory, later narrowed down to the application at the 300 level. For example, psychology courses include a more scientific look at language, foreign language courses include areas of linguistics not only in English but also in other languages, linguistics and education courses give a theoretical approach, etc. When combined, they answer the questions raised as the driving force behind my major. Projects that involve discourse analysis and research, like the Language in Media Internship and Kari Lie Dorer's Directed Undergraduate Research, are not introductory, but are rather in-depth looks in the field of my major.

As mentioned earlier, my major combines and builds off the course offerings at St. Olaf to create a unique major and course of study. The particular offerings at my time here, as listed above, provide me with these creative opportunities that help enrich my study. Applied linguistics fits right into the mold of liberal arts, and into St. Olaf as a whole. Many faculty members specialize in applied linguistics, such as Kari Lie Dorer, Maggie Broner, Rika Ito, Ying Zhou, and Jeremy Loebach. Using their courses, I am able to put together a major that investigates the same questions that many of them do in their research. As for a liberal arts approach, applied linguistics, once again, examines the role of language in society and how we can better our language and communication by taking linguistic theory into the real world. This encompasses areas of critical interpretation (eg. looking at what people say and how they say it, the meaning behind words), questions about values (eg. what is considered "correct" language? How can we fix language impediments?), and an appreciation for contexts (eg. historical language use, codeswitching, using different "tones"). Most of all, applied linguistics helps us understand and help one another.



My intended major fits right in with St. Olaf's values. By examining linguistics in regards to multiple languages, and aiming to help others communicate more effectively, I am developing a "global perspective". I see my intended career in speech pathology as being more than simply "of worth and service". I strive to provide others with the means to communicate, the most basic form of human connection, and to help them discover the ways in which they may use language to find a place in society. I truly believe that my major will further St. Olaf's goal of preparing students for fulfilling and enriching careers.

### Life and learning experience:

I have always been very independent when it comes to my learning and career choices. Firstly, I went to high school in both Norway and the United States, as a part of my four years living abroad from 2012-2016. I also applied for and got a job at Skogfjorden, Concordia's Norwegian Villages, where I have taught over 200 children for two summers thus far, and have led events managing over 50 staff members. As a Texas native, I chose to attend a small liberal arts college in Minnesota, something none of my peers in high school did. Over quarantine, I got multiple jobs teaching Norwegian, through the University of Iowa, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, an online platform called Outschool, and my own private tutoring. Through these jobs, I have personally taught over 75 students of Norwegian online. I am well-versed in language teaching and applying linguistic theory to my own life.

I have also 8 years of experience learning Norwegian, and 12+ years of experience learning Spanish, starting in early elementary school. Languages have always been a passion of mine, and living abroad only deepened my understanding of the vitality of being able to communicate in 2+ languages. In order to be an effective global citizen, linguistics and understanding human communication is very important. As outlined earlier, I also hope to study speech pathology after having graduated from St. Olaf. Because of my goal of becoming a speech therapist, this major fits perfectly with my purposes. My past experiences, many of which have been unique and crafted by me, make me equipped to carry out this individual major and everything that it entails. I am deeply passionate about the subject and have a great interest in linguistics, both personally and professionally.

### Ideas for senior project:

In a brief sense, the senior project is the culmination of my work examining applied linguistics and is the cornerstone of this major.

My first choice for my senior project would involve a study about the long-term effects of speech therapy on adult survey participants. I would compose a survey asking the participants to rate their experience with speech therapy as a child and how they perceive the therapy to have helped them. Potential questions include:

- What age(s) did you attend speech therapy?
- How long did you attend speech therapy?
- What was the main perceived issue of your language use when you attended speech therapy?
- On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate your speech therapist, 1 being "I did not like them at all" and 5 being "I loved them"?

- On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate your speech therapy's effectiveness in aiding your pronunciation?
- On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate your speech therapy's effectiveness in aiding your fluidity?
- On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate your speech therapy's effectiveness in aiding your grammar?

Other questions would focus on what kind of activities were done in speech therapy and how effective the participant felt that they were. For example:

- Did your speech therapist have you read aloud or repeat different texts?
- On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate the effectiveness of this activity?
- Did your speech therapist model correct sounds for you through interaction and play?
- On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate the effectiveness of this activity?

Finally, I would collect information such as the age of the participant, and their role (student, faculty, staff, etc.)

All of this information would be combined in a google form survey and sent out to aliases like St. Olaf Extra that would provide a method of random sampling. The results of this survey would point to what people felt were the most important functions of speech therapy and the most effective methods of treatment. For me personally, this would greatly aid my aspiring career, as it would give me better insight into the ways in which linguistic theory can be applied most efficiently to patients seeking aid from speech pathology. This relates to other areas of my study in that it applies educational and linguistic theories to the real world and attempts to seek out answers in regards to the ways in which people process language, and what their perception of their own language processing is like. I would also hope to establish links between the reasons that people went into speech therapy and/or the duration of their treatment and their opinions about said treatment. I would make sure to focus on current opinions rather than their perceptions of what they thought about speech therapy in the past, as this is prone to error.

Ultimately, I would hope to turn this project into an oral presentation that could be given as an event on campus. I would be delighted to speak to the St. Olaf community and all those who are curious about this topic. I would prepare a comprehensive report that could be published on my web portfolio as accompaniment.

My second option would be a discourse analysis on the topic of language. Ideally, I would choose two major news sources on opposing sides of the political spectrum, say, Fox News and CNN, and compare the two on their discussion of language, or metalinguistic analysis. Collecting samples from written articles and oral broadcasts, I would seek to analyse and possibly reconcile the differences in how these two sides might talk about different linguistic issues. This may include, but is not limited to: hate speech, slurs, foreign language (particularly in regards to Islamic and Hispanic immigrants, Arabic and Spanish), and education. I would monitor the news daily for stories that spark my interest with mentions of these topics, taking out quotes that are particularly impactful and using discourse analysis to determine underlying meaning. In conducting my research, I would focus heavily on the way that we as a society talk about language and the ways in which our understanding of language can better our compassion for one another. As I am in the Language in Media Internship, led by Jill Watson, I have experience with this type of data collection from the media, with a focus on discussions around BIPOC. However, if I were to

do this project option, I would broaden my research to include bigger news sources as well as a distinctly different topic.

In presenting my findings for this project, I would write a report that I could present on campus or simply have printed in a news source, similar to my other project idea. I would be happy to publicly present my findings.

#### Web portfolio outline:

In my web portfolio, I would include, as required, my proposal, my senior project, and an annotated bibliography of research done both independently and with my assigned reference librarian. In addition to this, I would include projects from classes that have counted towards my major. In classes that I have already taken, a few examples would be my analysis of Southern versus Northern speech I did via survey as a final project for LNGST 250. This data would be presented in a Powerpoint presentation and accompanying video that I put together to share my findings. Another example would be my final project from LNGST 245, which was an analysis of a Norwegian novel about the immigrant experience in Norway, *Tante Ulrikkes vei*. My analysis was another presentation and video about the sociolinguistic impact of the novel as well as a commentary on the status of language use of immigrants and minority-background groups in Norway. I anticipate including my final literature review from Linguistics 250, the results of the DUR through the Norwegian department (NORW 396), the final project in NORW 244, and the Learner Language Analysis done in SPAN 276. I have a rich collection of projects done in multiple courses and will have more when I put together my web portfolio. Many of these projects are directly related to applied linguistics and can be related to outside work and resources which I can also link to my portfolio. It would be a comprehensive look at my coursework and study of applied linguistics in a presentable and explorable format.

#### Consultations:

In meeting with my assigned reference librarian, Maggie Epstein, I learned more about the resources available to me through the college in terms of research pertaining to my major. Notably, she directed me towards BrowZine, an online search engine for scholarly journals. She noted that I would benefit from reading up on studies in the fields of Applied Linguistics and Speech-Language Pathology in particular, in order to better understand the methods and findings of researchers in those areas. She also showed me a few databases, including the Linguistics Collection and PSYCInfo, that make searching on my specific topics easier. The *Encyclopedia of Linguistics* is another good resource, which can be used for any background research that I might need for any of my linguistics courses. Finally, if I were to do my second suggestion for my final project, she suggested using a newspaper database that could help me find articles pertaining to metalinguistic commentary. All of these resources will enrich my knowledge in many areas and allow me to successfully and cohesively incorporate additional information into my major.

In meeting with Jeremy Loebach, who is head of the Linguistics Program and a consultant for careers in speech and hearing sciences, I received feedback about my potential senior project. Maggie Epstein had a similar opinion to him in that the wording of the survey should make sure to distinguish that participants should answer based on their current opinions on speech pathology rather than their past opinions, as these are likely to have changed. In specifying this and putting more focus on the reasons that brought people into speech therapy and the duration of their treatment, I hope to find out about perception

of speech therapy in relation to these factors. I incorporated this feedback by adjusting my idea of the survey I would produce.

I have also met a variety of times with Kari Lie Dorer, who has provided me with continuing invaluable feedback in the development of this major. She has helped me hone in my focus, changing the topic to the more broad linguistics title to applied linguistics. She has also helped me clarify my writing and has given me many suggestions as to how to strengthen my proposal.