

LANGUAGE SCIENCES (LSCI)

A NEW MAJOR IN THE BACHELOR OF ARTS AND BACHELOR OF COMMUNICATION



Study New Zealand's first Language Sciences major, ranked within the top 100 Linguistics programs worldwide. Develop a broad understanding of language, how it is used and learned, and its impact on society and culture.

By doing the Language Sciences (LSCI) major, you will gain language expertise relevant to careers in language and communication, language teaching and planning, cognitive science, artificial intelligence, and more – offering many opportunities to make a global impact. By selecting certain courses within the major, you can gain a Specialisation in **Applied Linguistics (ALIN, including TESOL)** or **Linguistics (LING)** to tailor your major to your career goals.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

Green cells indicate courses for the major (regardless of specialisation).

Yellow cells indicate courses required for the Applied Linguistics specialisation.

Blue cells indicate courses that are part of the Linguistics specialisation.

Courses in **bold** are required.

LANGUAGE SCIENCES (LSCI)	
▶ LSCI 101 Language and Society ▶ LSCI 111 Introduction to Language Sciences ▶ LSCI 130 Special Topic: Foundations and Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence ▶ LSCI 210 Languages in the Life of Aotearoa New Zealand and Asia-Pacific ▶ LSCI 220 Introduction to Computational Linguistics and Natural Language Processing	
Applied Linguistics (ALIN)	Linguistics (LING)
▶ A language paper or language learning experience ▶ LSCI 201 Vocabulary and Grammar for Language Learners ▶ LSCI 301 Language Teaching: Principles to Practice ▶ LSCI 310 Understanding Language Learning	▶ LSCI 211 The Structure and Design of Languages ▶ Choose three of the below: a. LSCI 310 Understanding Language Learning b. LSCI 311 Linguistic Typology: Uniformity and Variation in Language Patterns c. LSCI 312 Psycholinguistics d. LSCI 313 Language Variation and Change e. NZSL 311 Structure and Use of New Zealand Sign Language

Further info about LSCI:

www.wgtn.ac.nz/explore/study-areas/language-sciences/overview

Contact us: lals@vuw.ac.nz

- a. LSCI 101, 111
- b. LSCI 210, LSCI 201 or 211
- c. 40 points from LSCI 301-399, NZSL 311
- d. 20 further points from LSCI 101-399, COMS 201, or in any language other than English in the BA schedule or equivalent language learning experience including learning English as an additional language

► **Applied Linguistics (ALIN) specialisation** include:

LSCI 201, 301, 310 and 20 points in any language other than English in the BA regulations or equivalent language learning experience including learning English as an additional language

► **Linguistics (LING) specialisation** include:

LSCI 211, 60 points from LSCI 310-399, NZSL 311

In 2026, the following special topic is offered:

LSCI 130 Special Topic – Introduction to using and evaluating generative AI

COURSES

Courses for 2027 are provisional, special topics may be offered in some years.

	Trimester 1	Trimester 2	Trimester 3
2026	LSCI 101: Language & Society	LSCI 111: Introduction to Language Sciences	LSCI 130 (Special Topic): Foundations and Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence
	LSCI 210: Languages in the Life of Aotearoa New Zealand and Asia-Pacific	LSCI 201: Vocabulary and Grammar for Language Learners	
	LSCI 211: The Structure and Design of Languages	LSCI 301: Language Teaching: Principles to Practice	
	LSCI 310: Understanding Language Learning	LSCI 312: Psycholinguistics	LSCI 220: Intro to Computational Linguistics & NLP
	LSCI 313: Language Variation and Change	NZSL 311: Structure and use of New Zealand Sign Language	
	Trimester 1	Trimester 2	Trimester 3
2027	LSCI 101: Language & Society	LSCI 111: Introduction to Language Sciences	LSCI 130 (Special Topic): Foundations and Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence
	LSCI 210: Languages in the Life of Aotearoa New Zealand and Asia-Pacific	LSCI 201: Vocabulary and Grammar for Language Learners	
	LSCI 211: The Structure and Design of Languages	LSCI 311: Uniformity and Variation in Language Patterns	
	LSCI 310: Understanding Language Learning	LSCI 312: Psycholinguistics	LSCI 220: Intro to Computational Linguistics & NLP
	LSCI 301: Language Teaching: Principles to Practice	NZSL 311: Structure and use of New Zealand Sign Language	

Language matters. *It's hard to imagine human life without language. We use language for almost everything we do—from making friends and sharing stories to asking a smartphone for directions. Language fundamentally shapes our history, culture, and technology. That's why knowing how language works can be an asset in so many fields. Why do kids tend to sound like their friends and not their parents? How do we store language in our minds? Why do languages vary so much across the globe? These are the kinds of questions you'll explore in Language Sciences.*

► **LSCI 101 Language and Society**

This course introduces students to the major roles and uses of language in human society from linguistic and applied linguistic perspectives. Students will learn to understand key connections between language, society, the mind, and education, amongst other areas. Students will also learn how professional linguists and applied linguists research language and then contribute to knowledge and society.

► **LSCI 130 Topics in Computer and Language Science: Foundations and Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence**

This course provides a conceptual and practical foundation for understanding various artificial intelligence technologies. Students will learn how these technologies function and were developed and how to use them effectively and ethically. This course is open to all and requires no prior experience with AI or linguistics.

► **LSCI 211 The structure and design of languages**

Every language is a system that conveys thoughts and meaning. This course explores the building blocks of human language in a broad spectrum of languages—in terms of sound and sentence structure. You will dive into the fundamentals of grammatical rules, word formation, the sounds of speech, and sound patterns, gaining insights into the rich diversity of language systems worldwide. This exploration is tailored for those curious about how languages are structured and function at their core. The course lays the groundwork for a deeper appreciation and understanding of linguistic principles.

► **LSCI 111 Intro to Language Sciences**

Language is the 'operating system' of human beings, shaping our history, culture and technological achievements. This course introduces students to the scientific understanding of how language is designed, how it evolved, how it is learnt and cognitively processed. Students will gain core skills in analysing the sounds (phonetics), sound systems (phonology), word structures (morphology) and sentence structures (syntax) used across human languages.

► **LSCI 201 Vocabulary and grammar for language learners and teachers**

The course explores the key features and patterns of English vocabulary and grammar from the perspective of the challenges they present to learners and teachers. It examines the implications for planning teaching and assessing learning. Students will evaluate the content of courses and published teaching materials.

► **LSCI 210 Languages in the Life of Aotearoa New Zealand and Asia-Pacific**

This course focuses on the history and current status of languages in Aotearoa New Zealand and in Asia-Pacific. Students in this course will learn how linguists study the origins of languages in this region and document their use, as well as how applied linguists contribute to work on language maintenance and revitalisation, language policy, and language education.

► **LSCI 220 Introduction to Computational Linguistics and Natural Language Processing**

This course introduces fundamental natural language processing concepts including pre-processing, text analytics, lexical annotation, and language models in order to understand how language is represented computationally. Students will learn how to use the Python programming language, with an emphasis on natural language processing libraries. No prior knowledge of programming is assumed.

► **LSCI 301 Language Teaching: Principles to Practice**

This course aims to develop an applied understanding of principles for language teaching and learning. It explores materials selection and design, and procedures and techniques for teaching language lessons, focusing on teaching the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Course members will participate in peer teaching and peer observation.

► **LSCI 311 Linguistic Typology: Uniformity and Variation in Language Patterns**

This advanced linguistics course investigates the core of syntax, morphology, phonology, and phonetics with a typological emphasis, focusing on uniformity and variation across different language families. You will explore universal language principles and unique linguistic features, addressing the balance of uniformity and variation in human languages.

Through comparative analysis, the course aims to deepen understanding of language complexity and enhance critical analysis skills in studying human communication.

► **LSCI 313 Historical Linguistics: Language Variation and Change**

This course analyses how languages evolve through time and split into multiple varieties through human migration. It introduces two standard methods in Historical Linguistics, the comparative method and internal reconstruction. With these two methods we will study three core practices in Historical Linguistics: 1) reconstructing the structure of a proto-language that is no longer spoken, 2) determining the locus of the homeland of a language family, and 3) re-constructing human prehistory.

► **LSCI 310 Understanding Language Learning**

This course examines the cognitive and social processes involved in the learning of first and second/additional languages, including the study of bilingualism and multilingualism, and focusing on the implications for language learners and teachers.

► **LSCI 312 Psycholinguistics**

An exploration of the psychological processes involved in producing and understanding language, including topics such as how we mentally represent words and multi-word expressions, how we use prediction and inferencing to comprehend language, and how prosody shapes speech production and comprehension. Students will get hands-on experience with experimental approaches to the study of language processing.

► **NZSL 311 Structure and Use of New Zealand Sign Language**

This course surveys how concepts in linguistic structure are applied to the analysis of sign language, at the levels of phonology, morphology, lexicon and syntax. Sociolinguistic issues in the use of sign language use will be explored, including variation and language contact, and the status of NZSL in society.

FIND OUT MORE

 www.wgtn.ac.nz/explore/study-areas/language-sciences/overview

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