Module Sign-up Brochure 2025-26

Q100: Linguistics

Stage 2 going into Stage 3

1. Do your research

Read through the information on the SELLL website carefully and ask if you have any questions. If you're unsure of what modules you should be choosing, email UGOffice.elll@newcastle.ac.uk.

2. Sign up Online: Wednesday 30th April, from 9am

- Have the rules for your programme, from this brochure, with you when you log onto The Student Portal. https://studentportal.ncl.ac.uk/.
- Compulsory modules will already be selected and optional modules will be listed for you to choose.
- The portal will close on **12th May at 8:00pm**.
- Further guidance and screenshots are available here: https://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/student-portal/.

FAQs

How do I take an outside module?
Modules not listed on your degree regulations will not appear in this brochure and will not be available to you in the Student Portal. Instead you will need to select 'HSS dummy module(s)'. Then you will need to fill in a module change form at the beginning of Semester 1 to change from the dummy module to your chosen outside module.

How long will module selection take?
A few minutes.

What if I suffer technical problems?
Please don't panic. You can call IT on 0191 208 5559 to log the issue. Alternatively, you can email elll@ncl.ac.uk and we will try to assist you.

Will I get my first choice of modules?
Not necessarily. We recommend that you login and submit your choices as soon as possible. We'd also recommend having back-up modules in mind, in case your first choices are full. This is why it's important to read the module descriptions and make your decisions before the portal opens.

I need further advice and guidance. Who should I ask?
If your question is in regard to a specific module, please contact the module leader listed in the module descriptions, via email. If the module leader is to be confirmed (TBC), the head of subject is listed and will also be able to answer your questions. If you don't understand your programme regulations please contact your Degree Programme Director (DPD): Daniel.Duncan@newcastle.ac.uk. If, after reading the module descriptions, you're struggling to decide which modules to take you can contact your personal tutor via email.

I had arranged to have a semester abroad next year. What should I do?
If you haven't done so already, please contact Aditi Nafde (adite.nafde@newcastle.ac.uk) to discuss your options.

What if I change my mind or make a mistake?
If your choices do not comply with your regulations, they will be rejected and we will contact you to choose all your modules again – if you do not respond by the given deadline, modules will be chosen for you. If you change your mind you will be given the opportunity to change your modules at a later date. Further information will be released closer to the time.

Rules of your Programme

You must have a total of 120 credits with either a 60/60, 50/70 or 70/50 credit split across the semesters

Circle or highlight your choices, then add up your credits in the total column

Rules	Code	Module Title	Total Credits	Sem 1	Sem 2
Example	SEL1234	Example	20		20
Independent Work **Pick 1**	SEL3326	Short-form Dissertation 1: Linguistics and English Language	20	20	
	SEL3327	Short-form Dissertation 2: Linguistics and English Language	20		20
	SEL3329	Long-form Dissertation: Linguistics and English Language	40	20	20
	SEL3413	Language and Ageing	20	20	
	SEL3430	Advanced Second Language Acquisition	20		20
	SEL3431	Laboratory Phonology	20		20
	SEL3441	Medieval and Early Modern Meaning: English Historical Semantics	20		20
	SEL3448	Current Issues in Linguistics	20	20	
	SEL3454	New Words in English	20	20	
Additional Options (if not already studied at Stage 2) **Pick 0 or 1**	SEL2000	Phonological Theory	20	20	
	SEL2089	Syntactic Theory	20	20	
	SEL2091	Sociolinguistics	20	20	
	SEL2212	Early English: Texts, Patterns and Varieties	20		20
	SEL2234	Pragmatic Theory	20	20	
	SEL2235	CHiLD: Current Hypotheses in Language Development	20		20
	SEL2237	Introduction to Second Language Learning and Teaching	20	20	
	SEL2239	Experimental Practicum	20		20
	SEL2441	Philosophy of Linguistics	20		20
Optional Outside Modules **Pick no more than 20 credits**	NCL3007	Career Development for Final Year Students	20	10	10
	HSS3110	Outside Dummy Module: 10 credits in semester 1*	10	10	
	HSS3210	Outside Dummy Module: 10 credits in semester 2*	10		10
	HSS3120	Outside Dummy Module: 20 credits in semester 1*	20	20	
	HSS3220	Outside Dummy Module: 20 credits in semester 2*	20		20
TOTAL					

**requires DPD approval. If you have selected a HSS dummy module, you will also need to complete a module change form at the beginning of Semester 1 in October 2025 to change your HSS code into your chosen outside module.*

Module Descriptions

Further details of each module can be found in the module catalogue:
https://www.ncl.ac.uk/module-catalogue/

SEL3326/7: Extended Study: Linguistics and English Language

Module Leader: Dr Heike Pichler

Semester 1 or 2, 20 credits
No pre-requisites

This module aims to allow students to develop in depth a topic which may draw on but also extend material studied in one (or more) of their English Language and Linguistics modules. To foster independent thinking and develop research skills in critical thinking, writing and presentation. These aims will be achieved by students doing independent research in an English language/linguistics topic, and writing up their results in an extended essay (5000 words). In this, they will be helped by a supervisor, i.e. a member of staff with relevant expertise in the general topic area that the student is working in.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Essay	End	100	5000 words

SEL3329: Long-form Dissertation: Linguistics and English Language

Module Leader: Dr Heike Pichler

Semesters 1 & 2, 40 credits total
No pre-requisites

- The dissertation is an extended piece of research on an English Language/Linguistics topic that:
- Gives you the opportunity to investigate a substantial topic and is led by your intellectual interests. While it doesn't need to fit within the range of a module, it may grow out of a module you've studied.
- Develops a research question informed by an awareness of scholarship in the fields of English Language/Linguistics.
- Shows an understanding of and ability to work with methods and practices appropriate to the disciplines of English Language/Linguistics.
- Is developed over a period of time in dialogue with a supervisor.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Dissertation	End	100	10,000 words (written throughout both semesters)

SEL3413: Language and Ageing

Module Leader: Dr Heike Pichler

Semester 1, 20 credits
Pre-requisites: SEL1032 - Students who did not take SEL2091 Stage 2 are strongly advised to consult the module leader before registering for this module.

Incoming exchange students need a good foundation variationist sociolinguistics (esp. in terms of fieldwork methods & data analysis).

This advanced module in sociolinguistics takes a multi-disciplinary approach to examining patterns of language variation and change in later life. It teaches students the key methodological challenges and theoretical imperatives for studying the language use of older adults, and explores with them how insights from gerontology, geriatrics and cognitive psychology can enrich our understanding of the mechanisms underpinning language variation and change

in older adults. Students will learn to apply the following to the analysis and interpretation of vernacular speech data from older adults: advanced methodological tools from variationist sociolinguistics; ongoing discoveries about language and ageing from across the language sciences; and multi-disciplinary insights into the complexity of age and ageing from the health and social sciences. Students will also participate in reciprocal intergenerational learning activities with older community members, which will enhance their intergenerational communication skills and support their development as socially responsive and responsible citizens in age-friendly communities. These activities will also ensure that students' findings from their project work reach a wider audience of non-linguists.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Research paper	Mid	75	2750-word essay reporting results of data analysis exercise
Report	End	25	500-word report (prepared as a group or, where appropriate, individually)
Written exercise	Mid	Formative	500-word research paper outline or abstract

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SEL3430: Advanced Second Language Acquisition

Module Leader: Dr Sujeewa Hettiarachchi

Semester 2, 20 credits

Pre-requisites: SEL1027 & SEL2237

This module will advance students' understanding of different aspects and theories of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). It will explore how different acquisition contexts (e.g. classroom learning vs. community acquisition), different external factors (e.g. cognitive, psychological, social), and different literacy levels affect second language development. It will also examine how universals and first-language transfer affect second language acquisition across different linguistic domains (morpho-syntax, phonology, lexicon). Students will acquire advanced knowledge of SLA theories and develop advanced skills in analysing second language data.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Essay	Mid	30	1500 words
Essay	End	70	2500 words
Report	Mid	Formative	500-word report on an aspect of SLA

SEL3431: Laboratory Phonology

Module Leader: Dr Rory Turnbull

Semester 2, 20 credits

Pre-requisites: SEL1027 & SEL2000

This module aims to develop students' research skills by bringing together phonological theory and experimental techniques. The module will cover skills related to reading literature in Laboratory Phonology, becoming familiar with experimental techniques in the field, and designing experiments.

This course examines the relationship between phonological theory and experiments. The specific topics covered will vary from year to year. The topics covered may include one or more of the following: intonation and prosody, phonation, speech perception, typological patterns in phonology, computational linguistics, statistical techniques, among others. A detailed schedule will be provided at the start of the module.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Research paper	End	75	2500-3000 words
Lab report	Mid	25	1000 words

SEL3441: Medieval and Early Modern Meaning: English Historical Semantics

Module Leader: Dr Adam Mearns

Semester 2, 20 credits

Pre-requisites: SEL1028

This module gives you the chance to explore a fundamental aspect in the history of the English language: the meanings of words and the ways in which they have changed across the centuries, from Old English (c.500-1100 AD), through Middle English (c.1100-1500), and into Early Modern English (c.1500-1750). We will examine both the evolving meanings of individual words and the crucial issue of how groups of related words work together in lexical and semantic fields, with changes in individual terms often having much wider implications for the way in which certain areas of life and human experience were conceived, discussed, and represented in the literature of earlier periods. To add depth to our investigation of these issues, we will also consider the sociohistorical contexts and their impact, e.g. in terms of the way in which key events established channels for loanwords from other languages to enter, and change, the vocabulary of English. As well as helping you to develop a detailed understanding of the English lexicon in its historical context, this module provides an opportunity for you to enrich your understanding and skills in the wider study of language and linguistics in two key areas. First, it will introduce you to current frameworks that inform not only the study of English historical semantics, but of lexical semantics in general and linguistic features more broadly, encouraging you to make a critical evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses as you apply them to the study of medieval and early modern English words. Second, with the module's focus on empirical data, you will be further enhancing your general analytical skills and your familiarity in working with cutting-edge digital resources, in the form of the online dictionaries, thesauruses, databases, and corpora of historical English texts that will be at the heart of your research.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Written exercise	Mid	20	750-word 'lexical sketch'
Essay	End	80	3000-word essay

SEL3448: Current Issues in Linguistics

Module Leader: Dr Gabriel Martinez Vera

Semester 1, 20 credits

Pre-requisites: SEL2230 or SEL2237

This module examines current debates and cutting-edge scholarly research in linguistics, focusing primarily on key research from the last 5-10 years. Each year this module covers a specialist topic spanning the subject area's world-class research expertise in linguistic theory, language evolution, acquisition and development, and language variation and change. Primary literature in the chosen topic will be discussed at length, building critical thinking skills by concentrating on current state-of-the-art research in the field. Students will take an active role in leading the discussion, gaining key skills in presentation of complex research and an in-depth understanding of knowledge creation within the field. The core topic for academic year 2025-26 is Multilingualism.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Portfolio	Mid	60	A portfolio including oral presentation about current primary research and written reflections regarding engagement with primary research, 1500-2000 words
Written exercise	End	40	Mock academic peer review exercise, 1000 words

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SEL3454: New Words in English

Module Leader: Dr William van der Wurff

Semester 1, 20 credits

Pre-requisites: SEL1027

The themes to be covered in the lectures (further discussed/applied in the small group classes) will include: data and methods of data collection, the structure of different types of new words, the issue of morphological productivity, issues in measuring lexical frequency, new lexis in recent English, and theoretical issues involved in the study of these topics. Special attention will be paid to practical issues arising in doing actual research on new words.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Written examination	Mid	35	50-minute examination testing knowledge and understanding of methods and concepts of new-word analysis
Essay	End	65	Final essay, testing ability to collect and analyse data for the purpose of answering a research question

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SEL2000: Phonological Theory

Module Leader: Dr Rory Turnbull & Dr Niamh Kelly

Semester 1, 20 credits

Students may take up to one stage 2 module, students may not take the same module twice.

Pre-requisites: SEL1027

A course in intermediate phonology, this module builds on the foundations laid in SEL1027, introducing theoretical models of phonology. The aim is for students to investigate a number of phonological models, including both derivational and optimality theoretic, in order for them to come to an understanding of how evidence and argumentation are used in phonological theory building.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Problem solving exercise	Mid	20	This will consist of a data analysis problem set
Essay	End	80	2000-word essay

SEL2089: Syntactic Theory

Module Leader: Dr Geoffrey Poole

Semester 1, 20 credits

Students may take up to one stage 2 module, students may not take the same module twice.

Pre-requisites: SEL1028

Following on from SEL1028, this module provides a more comprehensive and deeper understanding of the syntax of natural language with modern English as the main object of study. Topics to be addressed may include phrase structure (X'-Theory), argument structure (theta-roles), Case, agreement, noun phrase structure, binding, various kinds of movement, architecture of grammar and syntactic variation. Not necessarily all of these are covered every year.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Written exam	End	100	24 hr take-home exam (3000 words)
Written exercise	Mid	Formative	Portfolio of semi-weekly problem sets (pre and post seminar)

SEL2091: Sociolinguistics

Module Leader: Dr Daniel Duncan

Semester 1, 20 credits

Students may take up to one stage 2 module, students may not take the same module twice.

No pre-requisites

This module builds on the knowledge of language variation & change and data analysis skills obtained in SEL1032 in order to develop a fuller understanding of sociolinguistics. It introduces this domain of linguistics from two perspectives:

- Microsociolinguistics, the study of language variation and change at the level of individuals, groups, and communities. With particular emphasis on the framework of variationist sociolinguistics, the module explores how linguistic variation is influenced by societal factors like social class and ethnicity.
- Macrosociolinguistics, the study of language at the societal level. With particular emphasis on the sociology of language, the module explores how society shapes broader linguistic outcomes like language maintenance or shift, language endangerment, and the development of pidgins and creoles.

This module refines data analysis skills by further developing quantitative reasoning skills. It adds basic inferential statistics to the analytical toolkit and explores how these are used to refine and test linguistic hypotheses.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Reflective Log	Mid	20	Sociolinguistic interview and reflection, 500 words in total.
Portfolio	End	80	Quantitative and qualitative research write-up, 3000 words in total.
Problem Solving Exercises	Mid	Formative	N/A

SEL2212: Early English: Texts, Patterns and Varieties

Module Leader: Professor Karen Corrigan

Semester 2, 20 credits

Students may take up to one stage 2 module, students may not take the same module twice.

Pre-requisites: Students must have completed **SEL1032** or have the permission of the module leader to enrol on this module. For incoming exchange students: basic introductory course(s) in linguistics.

Module aims:

- To develop students' competence in reading texts from a variety of periods in the history of English;
- To develop students' ability to analyse linguistic features of texts;
- To build on the knowledge and skills relating to language change gained in SEL1032 (Language Variation and Change);
- To enhance students' knowledge of the processes by which the English language has evolved into its present-day state;
- To develop competence in using dictionaries, historical corpora and other electronic resources.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Essay	Mid	40	1500 words
Written Exercise	End	60	Section 1: Text Analysis. Section 2: Essay (c.2500 words total)

SEL2234: Pragmatic Theory

Module Leader: Dr Gabriel Martinez Vera

Semester 1, 20 credits

Students may take up to one stage 2 module, students may not take the same module twice.

Pre-requisites: SEL1027 & SEL1028

This module concentrates on the study of meaning at the level of pragmatics, i.e., on how we create meaning from the linguistic expressions that we utter in context (e.g., in exchanges). It introduces foundational notions in pragmatics and provides tools to analyse phenomena in the field. It further discusses pragmatics and its relation to other domains of grammar and introduces different research methods to collect and annotate data.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Written exercise	Mid	25	1000-word written exercise
Essay	End	75	2500-word essay

SEL2235: CHiLD Current Hypotheses in Language Development

Module Leader: Dr Emma Nguyen & Dr Rebecca Woods

Semester 2, 20 credits

Students may take up to one stage 2 module, students may not take the same module twice.

Pre-requisites: SEL1027 & SEL1028

Language is an incredibly complex system of knowledge. Not only are there multiple levels of representation - sounds and words and phrases and whole utterances and meanings - but within a given level, even simple forms can be derived from multiple interacting pieces of knowledge. Yet as speakers of any given language, we are often blissfully unaware of how much we need to know in order to be able to communicate with language.

One of the most striking things about language is that all typically-developing children learn their native language flawlessly, especially when compared to adults trying to accomplish the same task. This is true despite adults' superior cognitive skills. Children of the world seem somehow suited for language acquisition in a way that adult humans - and other animals - are not.

In this module, we survey the broad topic of language acquisition, focusing not only on children's developmental trajectory, but also on what knowledge of language is, how language acquisition relates to cognition in general, and acquisition of language by speakers with sensory or cognitive deficits.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Written exam	Mid	60	In-person exam to objectively test student understanding of foundational notions and empirical discoveries in Child Language Acquisition
Written exercise	End	40	Abstracts written exercise: Students will write two conference-level abstracts distilling two linguistic studies reporting on child language acquisition. 1000 words or equivalent
Written exercise	End	75	3000-word research project

SEL2237: Introduction to Second Language Learning and Teaching

Module Leader: Dr Sujeewa Hettiarachchi

Semester 1, 20 credits

Students may take up to one stage 2 module, students may not take the same module twice.

Pre-requisites: SEL1027

This module introduces students to the fundamental theories and practices involved in learning and teaching second languages. It explores the relationship between key concepts in second language acquisition (SLA) and the dominant approaches and methods in English language teaching (ELT), situating them within their theoretical and historical contexts. By engaging with both learning and teaching perspectives, this module equips students with the knowledge and skills to critically evaluate SLA theories and teaching methodologies, preparing them for advanced academic and professional roles in language education.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Problem solving exercise	Mid	50	2000-word problem-solving exercise
Essay	End	50	2000-word essay

SEL2239: Experimental Practicum

Module Leader: Dr Rebecca Woods and Dr Emma Nguyen

Semester 2, 20 credits

Students may take up to one stage 2 module, students may not take the same module twice.

The job of a linguist is to scientifically study language in order to capture and explain patterns of linguistic structures and language usage. In order to do this, a linguist makes use of certain tools in their toolbox. The aim of the Practicum module is to provide students with practical research experience and skills while working under the supervision of an established researcher. Additionally, students would be introduced to the methodologies and approaches to data analysis used in formal linguistic investigations of language acquisition.

Students will gain hands-on research experience by being able to contribute to at least one of the following elements of the research process:

- Information gathering, including systematic literature searches and evidence synthesis

- Aspects of data collection, including building studies to be run in the Linguistics Lab and/or Science Adventures and/or on data collection platforms

- Data manipulation, including data screening and cleaning, data entry/ transcription/coding, and data analysis

Whereas a course on language acquisition and development (e.g. SEL2235 and SEL3438) may focus on the process of development and what it means to become a speaker of a language, this course focuses specifically on how we experimentally investigate acquisition and the competence of language learners through carefully designed linguistic experiments and the practical application of this knowledge.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Oral presentation	Mid	30	Present in person a 10-minute small group presentation for a proposed CLA experiment with 5 minutes for questions
Reflective log	End	70	A structured research diary completed throughout the semester

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SEL2441: Philosophy of Linguistics

Module Leader: Dr Geoff Poole

Semester 2, 20 credits

Students may take up to one stage 2 module, students may not take the same module twice.

Pre-requisites: SEL1028

The first part of the module (prior to the Easter break) considers two fundamental and interrelated philosophical questions about language: (1) What is it, really? and (2) How do we (or should we) study it? It examines a number of different approaches, particularly as they were developed during the course of the 20th century: language as a physical object, language as behavior, language as a property of communities, and language as a property of mind.

The post-Easter weeks will apply the pre-Easter foundational/philosophical discussion to various past and present controversies in language and linguistics (e.g., linguistic determinism (aka the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis), whether generative AI systems actually do (or even could) 'have language' (or 'be intelligent'), and linguistic issues connected to class, gender, and disability).

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Essay	Mid	75	2500-word essay
Written exercise	End	25	1000-word blog entry
Essay	Mid	Formative	500-word formative essay

NCL3007: Career Development for Final Year Student

Module Leader: Dr Darrin Beattie

Semesters 1 & 2, 20 credits total

Pre-requisites: Details of pre-requisite requirements can be found at: https://www.ncl.ac.uk/careers/modules/cdm/registration/

This is a Careers module offered as an optional / additional module.

The Career Development module offers students the opportunity to undertake work-related learning in a variety of environments, both on and off the University campus. Through engagement with the module, students will learn about themselves, enhancing their employability and personal enterprise skills as well as contributing towards meeting the aims of the host organisation.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Portfolio 1	Mid	50	N/A
Portfolio 2	End	50	N/A