Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology

LINN15, Linguistics: Language in the Visual Modality - Gestures and Sign, 7.5 credits

Lingvistik: Visuellt språk - gester och tecken, 7,5 högskolepoäng

Second Cycle / Avancerad nivå

Details of approval

The syllabus was approved by The pro-dean for First-Cycle Studies at the Faculties of Humanities and Theology on 2010-10-25 and was last revised on 2026-08-17 by The Pro Dean of First and Second Cycle Studies at The Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology (U 2026/440). The revised syllabus comes into effect 2026-09-01 and is valid from the spring semester 2027.

General information

The course is an elective component of the Master of Arts programme in Language and Linguistics. The course is also offered as a free-standing course and can be included as part of a first- or second-cycle degree.

Language of instruction: English
The course can be taught in Swedish if an agreement is reached by both the teacher and the students. Such an agreement would depend on both the lecturer and the students having a good knowledge of Swedish.

Main field of study	*Specialisation*
Linguistics with specialization in General Linguistics	A1N, Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements

Learning outcomes

On completion of the course the student shall

Knowledge and understanding

- be able to explain visuospatial forms of language and their theoretical relevance
- be able to account for how they affect our understanding of language production and comprehension (psycholinguistic and neurolinguistic)

- be able to account for the interactional consequences of visual forms of language
- be able to account for basic patterns of bimodal language development

Competence and skills

- be able to assess theoretical and empirical aspects of the primary literature (research articles) in the field,
- be able to perform qualitative and quantitative analyses of multimodal data,

Judgement and approach

- be able to explain how visuospatial forms of language function in a scientific, analytical and critical manner.

Course content

So far language research has primarily concerned itself with speaking and writing. However, language users also perform meaningful body movements called gestures. Furthermore, deaf language users express themselves by means of sign language that can only be perceived in the visuospatial modality. This course focuses on the close connection between multimodality and language use, both as spoken language and as sign language. It introduces and discusses multimodality in relation to different linguistic levels (for instance prosody, semantics, syntax), the effects of linguistic variation, language learning (in children and adults), bilingualism, as well as the neurocognitive underpinnings of multimodal. The course also discusses the relationshop between gestures and sign language.

Course design

Teaching consists of lectures, practical exercises, reading exercises, and oral presentations.

Assessment

The assessment consists of two oral presentations and two individual written assignments.

The examiner, in consultation with Disability Support Services, may deviate from the regular form of examination in order to provide a permanently disabled student with a form of examination equivalent to that of a student without a disability.

Grades

Grading scale includes the grades: Fail, Pass, Pass with distinction
The final grade for the course is determined through an overall assessment of the individual examination components.

Entry requirements

To be admitted to the course, students must have either a) 60 credits in linguistics or a language subject, or b) both 60 credits in psychology or cognitive science and 30 credits in linguistics, or c) the equivalent.

Further information

- The course is offered at the Centre for Languages and Literature, Lund University.
- The credits allocated for course content that in whole or in part is commensurate with another course can only be credited once for a degree.
- For further details see the current registration information and other relevant documentation.