Jeffrey Green-*Alumni*

Visiting Assistant Professor in the Linguistics Department at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH
DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS

What does your education background look like?

I graduated from the U in 2013 with a major in Linguistics and a minor in Russian. I started as a PhD student in Linguistics at the University of Maryland that fall, and graduated this summer (2018). My dissertation focused on the syntax and processing of adjunct control (how we understand who did the drinking in sentences like "Harry tasted the pizza after drinking root beer." or "The pizza tasted better after drinking root beer.").

What current project are you working on?

I just started as a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Linguistics Department at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. I will be teaching courses and directing the Electrophysiology and Language Processing Lab. One of the projects I hope to work on here will deal with how quickly the interpretation of a pronoun can change our predictions about upcoming words in online sentence processing. I expect to use both electroencephalography (EEG) and eyetracking.

How has your degree from the University of Utah helped you get your current job?

My degree at the U was foundational for where I am now. The Ling department at the U is where I first fell in love with linguistics and learned that I could make a career of it. Working in Rachel's lab and trying to do syntax with Aniko got me started in doing linguistic/psycholinguistic research. I believe this was a huge part of how I got into my graduate program at UMD, and helped me springboard into research in both theoretical and experimental sides of linguistics. And this, I believe, helped me get the job at Illinois, where I will be teaching both psycho/neurolinguistics and syntax.

Share your experience!

Our alumni spotlights focus on people just like you; diligent go-getters who have worked, found, and sometimes stumbled their way into jobs they love.

Whether you ended up in a linguistics career or built a different road for yourself, we would love to hear and share your story.

Send us your experience at linguistics@utah.edu
If you have any questions, please call 801-581-8047

Recent Graduates

Taylor Anne Barriuso

Postdoctoral Associate at Iowa State University

This year I am working as a Postdoctoral Associate with Dr. John Levis at Iowa State University in the Applied Linguistics program where I have the opportunity to work on grants from the National Science Foundation for Robust Intelligence and Cyberlearning. Together with a cohort of computer scientists at Texas A & M, we are investigating whether the model of a "golden speaker" (that is, one that has the same voice characteristics of a nonnative speaker but the accent of a native speaker) raises learners' awareness of their non-targetlike pronunciation, and in turn how we can use this for pronunciation training. I also get to teach a section of Introduction to Linguistics for education majors.

I am excited to use my training in experimental research methods with Rachel and Shannon in the Speech Acquisition Lab to help develop and conduct experiments to test this cutting-edge technology. Having the opportunity to attend and present at conferences like Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching while I was a graduate student at the University of Utah helped me to meet and stay in touch with other scholars in the field, which is what led me to this job. The best advice I can give is to keep in touch with your professors and advisors - you never know where these connections may lead!

Cate Showalter

Assistant Teaching Professor at Northeastern University

I am currently an Assistant Teaching Professor at Northeastern University. I teach English language courses and assist with curriculum and program development, as well as conduct second language acquisition research. With a background in linguistics, I am able to assess and troubleshoot language difficulties, examining first-to-second language differences and similarities and language knowledge/systems as a greater whole. Being an instructor of classes during my graduate studies was greatly beneficial for understanding class design, teaching, and classroom management. The time spent in the Speech Acquisition Lab provided a base for assessing questions regarding language learning and how to approach problems language learners may have.

The level of involvement that the linguistics department at Utah offers—conferences (at the university and elsewhere), colloquia and speakers, interdepartmental collaboration, etc.—and support provided by my advisor and committee for growth in research, presenting, and writing articles provided me with a well-rounded foundation for my present position which should serve as an excellent springboard for future endeavors.

Katherine Matsumoto-
Alumni, Product Manager at Recursion Pharmaceuticals

What did you work on while you were at the University of Utah?

I worked at the Shoshone Language Research Project while I was working on my Masters and PhD from 2006-2012. There I worked on database organization of Shoshone dictionary entries, facilitated translation and transcription of the Wick R. Miller texts with Dr. Mauricio Mixco, and created and ran a summer research program for Shoshone teenagers called the Shoshone/Gosiute Youth Language Apprenticeship Program (SYLAP). I also was a TA for Intro to Linguistics, Typology, and Language and Cognition from 2010-2012. My dissertation was on the structural effects of language death where I researched language change in Shoshone as demonstrated in several morphological features and analyzed them in context of language contact, language simplification, and language communities of practice.

What is your most memorable experience while getting your Linguistics Degree at the University of Utah?
One specific highlight was my being interviewed for NPR, Weekend Edition for our work with teenagers on Shoshone language learning and preservation. This was just one moment that exemplified a very memorable aspect of my time in the PhD program at the U -- that is, that it was very intellectually free, creative, and our group working on minority languages did a lot of great work alongside each other. My cohort of students who all worked on minority languages all had offices together in Fort Douglas. We worked very closely there on coursework, research, and discussing theories and the situation of endangered minority languages. We ran conferences and brought speakers to our workspace. The environment, my peers, and our mentors created a tight community where we all felt that we were doing important work, supported by like-minded scholars.

What would you tell students who are interested in getting a Linguistics Degree?

I don't work in linguistics anymore; I work in the tech industry. I find that the structured reasoning of linguistics applies all the time in diverse fields and daily in my current work as Product Manager for a software engineering team. If you are interested in linguistics, but not sure where it's going to take you, there are lots of paths that a linguistics base sets you up for. I have former colleagues that are academics and they are very happy. If you think that might not be for you, try to expose yourself to other intersections of language and the business world to see what you may like. For me, the tech industry has continued to indulge my curiosity while being quite a bit less structured than the traditional academic path. I do wish I would have seen this path earlier and taken advantage of relevant interdisciplinary coursework while I was at the U. My advice to students pursuing linguistics is to explore overlapping and related areas that will give you experience with how a linguistics degree could/would set you up for an interesting and fulfilling career. There are very few jobs for 'linguists'; when they do exist, they are in academia or technology. But that doesn't mean that linguistics degrees haven't created extremely successful careers. Ask your mentors for guidance or contacts of past students and find out what the overlaps are. Then, take advantage of the breadth of expertise at the U of U to test the waters in some of these interdisciplinary areas and see what makes sense to you.

Message From Department Chair- Scott Jarvis

The 2018-2019 academic year is off to a great start for Linguistics. The Department is offering a new upper-level undergraduate course in forensic linguistics, co-taught by myself and Prof. Bill Eggington (BYU), who is one of the foremost forensic linguists in the United States and happens to live right here in Salt Lake County. The Department is also working together with the University of Utah School of Computing to create an undergraduate certificate in Computational Linguistics that will be available to both Linguistics and Computer Science majors—starting next fall, we hope.

Also, we have been working with Salt Lake Community College (SLCC) to make it possible for SLCC students to begin their linguistics studies there and then transfer seamlessly into our Department to complete their BA in Linguistics.

All of these exciting developments are part of the overall progress we are making in bringing talented students into the Department and giving them the knowledge, skills, and experience they will need to be competitive in the job market and to really make a difference in their chosen careers. I am very pleased with the excellent, cutting-edge research that our faculty and students have been conducting, presenting, and publishing, and am likewise thrilled with the awards and grants they have been receiving. I am also thankful to our alumni, including but not limited to Rob Hunter, Stephen Sovinsky, Emily Sharp Rains, and Cliff Miller, for their ongoing support of the Department and the valuable advice they have recently offered regarding the things we are trying to accomplish in relation to computational linguistics and forensic linguistics. One of our alumni, Mara Haslam, will be speaking to the Department as part of our 2018-2019 colloquium series. The invited speakers for our colloquium series this year include, in chronological order, Mara Haslam (Stockholm University, L2 phonology, Sep 13), Nick Sobin (UTEP, syntax, Oct 18), Eve Zyzik (UC Santa Cruz, bilingualism, Nov 15), Christina Tortora (CUNY, syntax, Jan 17), and Hyeonjeong Jeong (Tohoku University, Japan, bilingual language processing, Mar 7). I hope you will be available to join us for one or more of these exciting talks.

-Scott Jarvis, Department Chair

Remember when you were a starving student?

Our students are in constant need of funding for opportunities to grow, learn, and research.

Your contribution will help budding linguists take advantage of academic opportunities that would otherwise be out of reach.

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For more information, or to be added to the Ling email list, please contact us at
801-581-8047 or
linguistics@utah.edu

Fall Events Calendar

Colloquium: Mara Haslam
September 13th, 2018
3:30-5:00pm LNCO 2110

Colloquium: Faculty 5-minute Presentations
September 27th, 2018
3:30-5:00pm LNCO 2110

Colloquium: Nick Sobin
October 18th, 2018
3:30 pm-5:00pm LNCO 2110

Colloquium: Eve Zyzik
November 15th, 2018
3:30pm-5:00pm LNCO 2110

Recent News:

Johanna Watzinger-Tharp Publishes Article
The Department of Linguistics is proud to announce that Johanna Watzinger-Tharp has published an article titled, "Linguistic Performance of Dual Language Immersion Students." This article has been published in *Foreign Language Annals.*

Linguistic Student becomes UROP Scholar this Semester
The Department of Linguistics would like to congratulate Julia Vonessen on becoming a UROP Scholar for the Fall semester 2018. Julia's project is titled, "The Impact of Listener Attitudes on the Comprehension of Nonnative-Accented Speech."

Dr. Kaplan Awarded Tenure and Promoted to Associate Professor
The Department on Linguistics is excited to announce that Dr. Aaron Kaplan has received tenure and has been promoted to the rank of Associate Professor.