Linguistics Research Apprenticeship Practicum (LRAP)

Overview
• The Linguistics Research Apprenticeship Practicum (LRAP) matches Linguistics graduate mentors with undergraduate research apprentices.
• LRAP provides graduate students with research advising and mentoring experience and gives undergraduates the opportunity to participate in original linguistic research. The program is similar in concept to the SMART program, administered by Graduate Division and open to students from Chemistry, History, Physics, School of Public Health, and Sociology (http://grad.berkeley.edu/smart/).

Basics
• A linguistics graduate student mentor supervises and mentors an undergraduate student research apprentice, who assists with a research project headed by the mentor.
• Neither party is paid, but they get course credit, via Ling 197 (undergraduates) /Ling 297 (graduate students).
• Graduate student participation in LRAP is subject to the approval of the Head Graduate Advisor, in consultation with the graduate student’s faculty advisor. Undergraduate student participation in LRAP is subject to the approval of a faculty undergraduate advisor, in consultation with the staff undergraduate advisor. The Head Graduate Advisor is the instructor of record for Ling 197/Ling 297.
• Each mentor will be provided with up to $200 per semester in department funding to cover essential incidental research expenses (e.g. photocopying, subject fees, poster for presentation of the research, but not equipment). Unspent funds will not roll over to subsequent semesters.

Responsibilities
• The mentor and apprentice(s) should meet weekly for at least half an hour.
• An apprentice should work 3 hours per week, including the weekly meeting, for every Ling 197 unit in which he/she is enrolled (1-3 units). The course is repeatable for credit.
• The mentor should enroll in Ling 297 for a number of units commensurate with the number of hours spent in meetings with, or preparing for meetings with, the apprentice (normally 1-2 units per apprentice).
• The tasks performed by the apprentice will depend on the nature of the mentor’s research project and the apprentice’s abilities and interests. Tasks might include coding data, entering field notes into a database, parsing texts, gathering data from written sources (including library research), performing statistical analyses, running subjects for a study, etc.
• At least some of the tasks performed by the apprentice should hold intellectual interest; the tasks should not all be clerical or menial, though every research project involves some work of this kind.
• The mentor will address general matters of research and scholarship, but will not assist the apprentice with coursework or with linguistic questions unrelated to the research project. (In other words, the mentor shall not provide general tutoring to the apprentice.)
• The mentor-apprentice pairs will all meet during the 7th week and at the end of the semester (during RRR week) to share their experiences. This will create a community of practice and will help the LRAP program gain a sound footing.
Administrative implementation

• Ling 197 and Ling 297 “Field Studies Research Practicum” are new courses for the department, but use a standard course number employed for not unrelated purposes by other departments.
• Undergraduates enroll in Ling 197; graduate mentors enroll in Ling 297. The Head Graduate Advisor is the instructor of record for Ling 197/Ling 297.
• Graduate participation in LRAP is subject to the approval of the Head Graduate Advisor, in consultation with the graduate student’s faculty advisor.
• Undergraduate student participation in LRAP is subject to the approval of a faculty undergraduate advisor, in consultation with the staff undergraduate advisor.
• Apprentices must have completed Ling 100 with a grade of B or better, be a level 3 or 4 student (junior or senior) and have a minimum GPA of 2.0.
• Apprentices should keep a log of hours worked during the semester, reviewed at each weekly meeting by the grad student. This will help ensure that apprentices do the appropriate amount of work for the number of units being earned.
• Before the beginning of the semester, grad students wishing to participate will provide an outline of their project, and undergrads will apply to work on a specific project. Proposal and application forms will be distributed as writable pdfs.
• Apprentices and graduate students will produce a brief joint report at the end of the semester, detailing the research tasks completed, and skills and experience gained.
• The Head Graduate Advisor (HGA) will supervise the program. Apprentices with concerns can approach either the HGA or the faculty or staff undergraduate advisors. Graduate students with concerns can consult either the HGA or their own faculty advisor.

Benefits

Apprentices will:

• gain skills and experience with independent linguistic research and a body of linguistic data
• gain proficiency in discipline-specific methods, equipment, and software
• gain a better general understanding of the general research and scholarship process and what it is like to be a linguistics graduate student
• become more competitive candidates for admission to graduate school
• gain experience relevant to future jobs
• have a graduate student mentor to go to for advice, references, etc.

Mentors will:

• gain experience with supervision and mentorship
• be more productive through having some of their research tasks completed by an assistant
• become more competitive on the academic and non-academic job markets

The department will:

• have a mentorship program that may entice more undergraduates to major in linguistics and more graduate students to apply to Berkeley
• produce more experienced and competitive BA graduates