

## 2018 New Linguistics Graduate Student Orientation

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### 1. Where we are

- Totem Field Studios (“TFS”)
  - main department office, faculty offices, grad student workspace, lounge/kitchenette, seminar room, reading room, elicitation facilities
- Stores Road Annex (“Stores”)
  - ISRL = Interdisciplinary Speech Research Lab; Speech in Context Lab; Language & Learning Lab; other lab space
  - also: a shower!
- Brock Hall Annex (near bus loop and The Nest)
  - offices for holding office hours (more accessible location than TFS for our undergraduate students)
- graduate LING classes will often happen at TFS (seminar room or reading room); but occasionally in classroom buildings elsewhere
  - the latter is true for most classes that are cross-listed as advanced undergraduate courses (e.g. 510/410, 520/420, ...)

TFS is **far** from many parts of campus, where you may have to attend classes (or hold office hours, once you start working as a Teaching Assistant)

- Tip #1: Give yourself ample time to walk from A to B (listen to a podcast, enjoy the fresh air, practice mindfulness, shake off the frustration over that rejected conference abstract, get a brilliant idea for your thesis project, ...)
- Tip #2: Get a bicycle! But beware of bike theft – use the many secure bike cages on campus, incl. at TFS. If you live far from campus and don’t feel like biking all the way in (or home at the end of the day), city buses have a bike rack in front that holds up to two bikes.
  - Tip #2 1/2: Or participate in UBC’s brand new bike share program! (<https://transportation.ubc.ca/home-page/cycle/dropbike/>)
- Tip #3: For those days when you just can’t, the #68 and #70 buses (free with your U-Pass) both stop nearby; they don’t run very frequently, though.

**Security** is important, and is everyone’s responsibility! There have been security incidents (break-ins, theft, etc.), both at TFS and Stores.

- TFS doors (and gate, if no cars left inside) are locked when Vicki leaves (~5 pm); you will need your key to enter the building after that time
- When you leave the building, check (upstairs and downstairs) if you are the last one to leave
  - If not, then you don’t need to do anything

- but if you can see that someone else is the last one left, it's good practice to make them aware of that
- If you are the last one, then you need to set the alarm (follow instructions posted on wall)
  - If you accidentally set off the alarm, don't panic! Deactivate it, and call Campus Security (604-822-2222) to let them know; they may need to come out and check your ID
- Note that the alarm **activates automatically** in the evening (check with Vicki on the exact time)
  - if you are in the building and don't deactivate it, you might accidentally set off the alarm (motion sensors)
- If you are the last **car** to leave the TFS parking lot, close and lock the gate behind you (large padlock); but don't lock someone else in!

**Cleanliness** is also everyone's responsibility! This is true for all shared spaces, but especially the kitchenette

- Don't leave garbage (paper, crumbs, spills) or dishes/cups behind in shared workspaces or classrooms
- Wash up after yourself (and wipe down any kitchen equipment you use); don't leave your dirty dishes in the sink for someone else to wash!
- If you find (someone else's) unwashed dishes in the sink, wash them!
- If you find clean dishes in the drying rack, put them away!
- If you think the microwave is getting a bit dirty, clean it!
- If you find something (clearly) old and smelly in the fridge, throw it out!

## 2. Who we are

There have been many changes to the personnel in the department since you submitted your application for the graduate program! (And there are even more changes to come in the next year or two!) Here are some highlights of those changes:

- New administrative staff
  - Vicki Ferguson (Manager of Administration)
  - Will Sarmiento (Graduate Program Assistant)
  - Claudia Chan (Administration Coordinator)
- New faculty members
  - Márton Sóskuthy (Assistant Professor)
    - phonetics, cognitive systems
  - Muhammad Abdul-Mageed (Assistant Professor; from Library, Archival and Information Studies, now 50% in Linguistics)
    - computational linguistics
  - Julian Brooke (Instructor)
    - computational linguistics
  - Anne-Michelle Tessier (Assistant Professor; **starting Jan. 2019**)
    - phonological acquisition

- Marcin Morzycki (Assistant Professor; **starting Jan. 2019**)
  - semantics
- Amanda Cardoso (Instructor [part-time]; **starting Jan. 2019**)
  - phonetics, sociolinguistics
- Faculty members who have left us
  - retired in 2018: Joseph Paul Stemberger (Professor Emeritus)
    - phonological acquisition, psycholinguistics
  - passed away in 2018: Michael Rochemont (Professor)
    - syntax, information structure
  - passed away in 2017: Eric Vatikiotis-Bateson (Professor)
    - speech science, cognitive systems
- Ongoing searches in 2018–2019
  - Assistant Professor (tenure-track) in computational linguistics
  - Assistant Professor (tenure-track) in formal semantics; not yet advertised

### **3. What you need**

Contact the department office staff (Will, Claudia, Vicki) for help in obtaining any of these:

- keys to Totem Field Studios
  - you may also need keys to Stores Road Annex (labs)
  - as a Teaching Assistant, you may also need keys to the TA office in Brock Hall Annex (to hold office hours)
- alarm code(s)
  - learn how to activate/deactivate the alarm! (instructions on wall by panel)
- a Campus-Wide Login (CWL)
- a UBC email address
  - make sure you have been included on the relevant email lists (esp. [ling-dept@lists.ubc.ca](mailto:ling-dept@lists.ubc.ca) and [ling-grad@lists.ubc.ca](mailto:ling-grad@lists.ubc.ca))
- your UBC Card (<http://ubccard.ubc.ca/>)
- U-Pass for transit (buses, SkyTrain)
  - <http://ubccard.ubc.ca/u-pass-and-compass-card>
- get access (with your UBC Card) to the bike cage at TFS and elsewhere
  - <http://www.bikecoop.ca/services/bike-cages/>

### **4. Important Resources**

The *UBC Linguistics Grad Guide*:

<https://linguistics.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2017/10/GradGuide2017.pdf>

- massive resource (70+ pp.), written by grad students for grad students
- most recent version: May 2017
  - planned 2018 update has not yet happened
  - many things have changed since 2017, so some information is out of date (Reader beware! Ask for confirmation on anything that you are unsure of!)

- most obvious discrepancies: staffing changes
  - Edna Dharmaratne → Vicki Ferguson
  - Shaine Meghji → Will Sarmiento
  - Ø → Claudia Chan (new position)
  - Masaru Kiyota (Research Technology Support) → Ø
    - now need to contact Arts Instructional Support and Information Technology (ArtsISIT) directly: <https://isit.arts.ubc.ca/>

Websites you should know and make frequent use of:

- Department of Linguistics official website: <https://linguistics.ubc.ca/>
  - events; program requirements; past dissertations/theses; much other information!
  - set up your own homepage!
  - contact Web Committee (chair: Kathleen Hall) for help with login, etc.
- Internal department site: <https://ling.air.arts.ubc.ca/>
  - log in with your CWL
  - administrative resources: meeting minutes, policies, forms, committee/job assignments, etc.
  - on-line room booking system (needs some post-renovation updates)
- Linguistics Graduate Advising blog: <https://blogs.ubc.ca/linggrads/>
  - intended as a less ephemeral communication channel than emails; relevant information posted occasionally
  - can subscribe to as RSS feed
- Linguistics Repository for Graduate Students: <https://canvas.ubc.ca/courses/1056>
  - materials shared by grad students: accepted QP proposals, thesis prospectuses (MA and PhD), successful scholarship applications, materials from job applications
  - set up as course website on Canvas; contact Will to get added to the site (if you aren't able to join it on your own)
- Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (G+PS): <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/>
  - esp. under *Current Students*
  - in particular: *Current Students* > *Managing your Program*
- International Student Advising: <https://students.ubc.ca/about-student-services/international-student-advising>
- Graduate Student Society (GSS): <http://gss.ubc.ca/>
  - advocacy organization
  - venue for connecting with grad students in other fields
- UBC Library: <https://www.library.ubc.ca>
- UBC Research Commons: [http://guides.library.ubc.ca/library\\_research\\_commons](http://guides.library.ubc.ca/library_research_commons)
  - research support resources for graduate students (e.g. workshops, drop-in support, consultation)

## **5. Your community**

UBC Linguistics is a community, and you are an integral and valued member of that community! Be a good “department citizen”, by actively engaging in the life and workings of our unit! There are many ways of doing this:

- attend Colloquium talks (some Fridays @ 3:30–5:00 pm)
- attend Research Seminar presentations (Thursdays @ 12:30–2:00 pm)
  - and, once you feel comfortable (which you should!), present in the Research Seminar yourself!
- attend Ph.D. dissertation / M.A. thesis defences
- attend the Ph.D. Qualifying Paper mini-conferences (during December and April final-exam periods)
- attend, and help organize, social events (BBQs, post-defence parties, etc.)
  - **attend the BBQ party this Friday!**
- volunteer to take on graduate student “jobs” (e.g., being on committees, organizing events, editing working papers, running “skill-swapping” workshops)
  - **attend the student jobs meeting this Friday!**
- explore and participate in lab/research groups, reading groups, etc.
  - even if you are not an active member of a particular “lab”, you may be welcome to attend meetings
- get to know other department members: faculty, sessional instructors, staff members, postdoctoral fellows, visiting scholars, graduate students, undergraduate students, ...
  - strike up a conversation! introduce yourself! don’t be shy!
  - find people who share your interests or hobbies!
- rather than work from home, choose to make Totem Field Studios (and/or Stores Road Annex) a regular work environment for you; it’s just been renovated for exactly that purpose!
  - have lunch/coffee breaks in the TFS lounge! entice others to do the same!
- take initiative! be a leader, not (just) a follower!
  - launch a reading group; propose a workshop; suggest and spearhead a committee; etc., etc.
  - identify any concerns you may have; bring them to the attention of people who can potentially do something to address them
- be respectful and considerate (and help others do the same)
  - as a department, and as a community, we do not tolerate harassment or discrimination of any kind
  - call out what you see as harassing, disrespectful or inappropriate behaviour on the part of others; don’t “enable” such behaviour by being a silent by-stander; if the situation is serious enough, bring it to the attention of relevant people (e.g. the Graduate Advisor, the Equity representative, the Department Head).

- if you have a concern that comes up in class, use the ‘Chain of Command’: Instructor → Graduate Advisor → Head of Department. (Obviously, if the problem is the instructor, skip Step 1, etc.)

## **6. Your career**

Throughout your program, keep thinking about your plans/goals/options **beyond** the degree (M.A. or Ph.D.), and keep revisiting, developing and modifying these plans.

Reality check:

- The academic job market is increasingly tough and competitive, esp. for conventional, permanent (tenure-track) positions at research universities
  - few positions; many highly-qualified applicants
  - unfair advantage (bias) favouring applicants from high-profile institutions; this is true across most disciplines, not just linguistics
  - BUT: do not let this dissuade you from applying for prestigious jobs! (e.g. one of our PhD students just got a tenure-track position at Yale!)
- Even teaching-oriented positions are few and far between (and are typically not well paid)
  - disturbing trend: increasing “casualization” of the workforce in post-secondary education (temporary and/or part-time positions, etc.)
- Postdoctoral fellowships are limited in linguistics, as compared to many fields
  - although they can be a valuable opportunity to strengthen your record of publications and research (which is good for job-market purposes), they are inherently temporary and short-term
- Important question #1: How long would **you** be prepared to stay on the job-market “treadmill”?
  - some potential factors: finances, age, family situation, geographic mobility, resilience, ...
- Important question #2: Is a conventional academic job **really** the dream job you envisage it as being?
  - make sure you have a realistic picture of what such a job is like (there are both pros and cons...)

Bottom line: **Every** graduate student who is aiming for a conventional academic career needs to also develop for themselves a “Plan B” (and maybe a “Plan C”, etc.)

- Treat that alternative career option as a realistic, valuable and attractive one!
- Actively prepare for that alternative, in just the same way as you prepare for the academic job market (building a CV/resume, acquiring skills, etc.)
- That being said, don’t shy away from actively pursuing your “Plan A”, whatever it may be! (Follow your dreams! Be ambitious! Believe in yourself! And be very, very persistent!)

### Resources on career preparation:

- “Professional Development” section of UBC G+PS website (<https://www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/professional-development>)
  - especially the *Graduate Pathways to Success* program (workshops, etc.)
- “Career Resources for Graduate Students” on UBC Student Services website (<https://students.ubc.ca/career/career-resources/career-resources-graduate>)
- A couple of non-UBC resources:
  - *University Affairs* magazine (<https://www.universityaffairs.ca/>); check the subcategories under the “Career Advice” tab
  - *From PhD to Life* (<https://fromphdtolife.com/>); also check out the many links under the “Resources for PhDs” tab

## **7. Your well-being**

Academia, and graduate school in particular, can be an isolating, stressful environment

- Many of its structural aspects can contribute to, or exacerbate, feelings or tendencies like “impostor syndrome”, perfectionism, anxiety, low self-esteem, depression
- People who do as well in academia (as you evidently have) are more likely than average to already be predisposed to certain such traits (e.g. perfectionism)
- Jump from undergraduate to graduate work can often be surprisingly difficult and seem overwhelming, particularly early on
  - workload and expectations
  - responsibility for looking after yourself academically and personally
- Transition from another country or region of Canada can add difficulties
  - culture/weather shock: Vancouver is beautiful, but in the winter it can be a depressing (dark, wet, lonely) place

Take care of yourself! Be on the lookout for symptoms of mental health problems, and don’t hesitate to seek help!

Some things **not** to neglect:

- Sleep
- Physical exercise
- Social interaction
- Things to take your mind off school/work/linguistics (e.g. hobbies)

Focus on the positive!

- Pay attention when you get praise, and believe that it’s deserved!
- Don’t internalize criticism; build resilience!

- Rejection is a routine fact of life in academia (submitted abstracts, manuscripts; drafts of papers, thesis chapters; applications for scholarships, grants, jobs); **learn** to deal with it in a constructive way!
- Recognize and absorb **constructive** (justified, helpful/useful) criticism; turn it into a learning experience; improve your work by benefitting from another person's perspective/expertise/insights/ideas
- Recognize and ignore/externalize **non-constructive** (unfair, unjustified) criticism; try to view it as if you were a dispassionate, third-party observer; but be careful not to equate **uncomfortable** criticism with unfair criticism...
- Remember: The target of the criticism/evaluation is the **work** (e.g. hypothesis, argumentation, choice of methodology, strength of evidence, presentation), not **you** as a researcher, much less as a person
- Also remember: Your critics are only human (like you); they can be mistaken (like you) or stressed out (like you), and they can misunderstand or misread what you are saying/doing — which often means that you could perhaps have expressed yourself better...

Sometimes things do get bad. In which case: Do not hesitate to **SEEK HELP!**

Here are some resources you should be familiar with, and be prepared to make use of:

- UBC Student Services: *Health and Wellness* website (<https://students.ubc.ca/health-wellness>)
  - **mental health support** resources (<https://students.ubc.ca/health-wellness/counselling-services>)
    - Counselling Services
    - other on- and off-campus contacts (e.g. crisis hotlines)
    - information, self-help tools, etc.
  - **crisis support** resources (<https://students.ubc.ca/health-wellness/crisis-support>)
    - emergency situations (call 911!)
    - urgent help (for yourself or a friend)
    - sexual violence (support for survivors)
  - **self-help** resources and information (<https://students.ubc.ca/health-wellness/self-help>), covering many topics:
    - sexuality and sexual health
    - drugs and alcohol
    - sleep
    - food and nutrition

- physical activity
- physical health and illness
- stress and anxiety
- relaxation and mindfulness
- depression
- self-confidence
- sexual assault
- suicide prevention

Last but not least: look out for **each other**!

- Look to the people around you for support, and be prepared to support them if necessary.
- Do not hesitate to ask a faculty or staff member for help. If we do not have the relevant expertise, we can quickly put you in touch with someone who does.