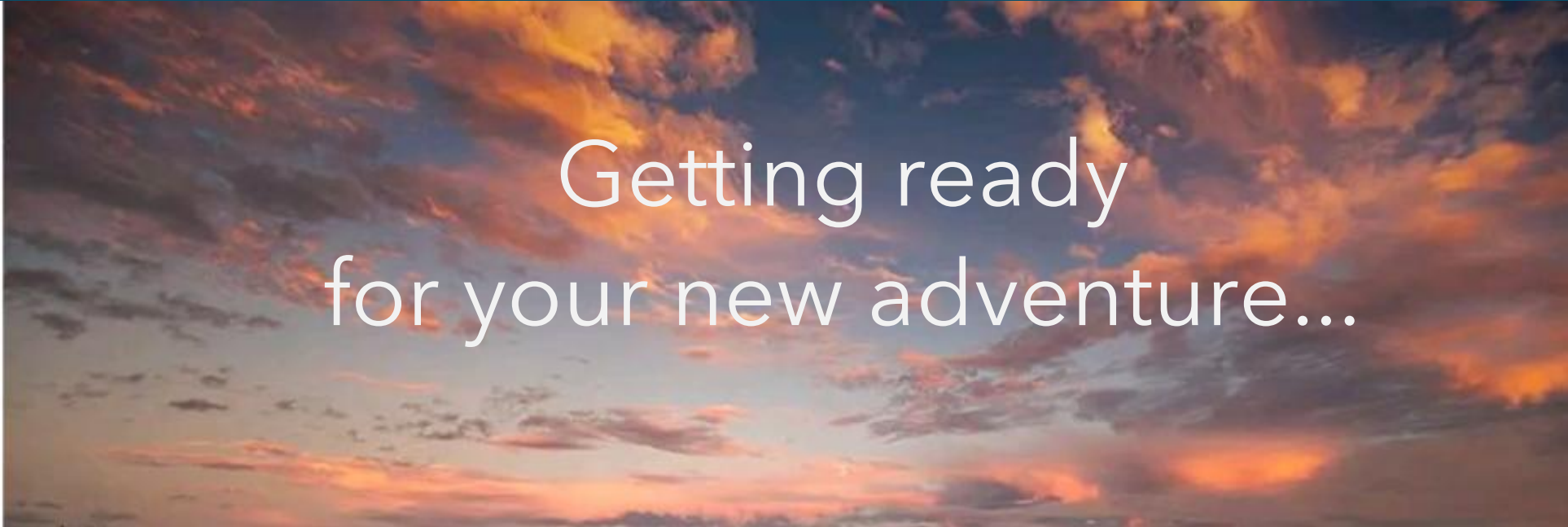




Getting ready
for your new adventure...

MA program Language and Mind: Linguistics and Cognitive Studies

<https://language-mind.unisi.it/en>



UNIVERSITÀ
DI SIENA
1240

DIPARTIMENTO DI
**SCIENZE SOCIALI,
POLITICHE E COGNITIVE**
— DISPOC

Who are we? The L&M community

An international community of 179 students (as of now) and 12 professors

multidisciplinary studies in linguistics, theoretical philosophy, cognitive and social psychology

tightly connected to the theoretical and experimental research at the inter-university Center for Cognitive Studies on Language (www.ciscl.unisi.it)

and the Experimental Linguistics and Syntactic Cartography Lab

Our challenges, and our aims

A wide variety of backgrounds:

different didactic systems in different countries

different BAs (linguistics; philosophy; psychology; speech & hearing)

We aim to create a **common basis** of multi-disciplinary competences in formal linguistics and theoretical philosophy (first year courses)

we aim to create **individual learning paths**, leading to MA thesis projects that are relevant for the research interests and professional objectives of each student

through **close interaction** between students and professors.

Linguistics and cognitive studies

Language as a core component of the human cognitive system, manifested in concrete natural languages

- language variation across communities

 - across populations (e.g. typical vs. atypical)

 - across individuals

- language acquisition and processing

 - reveal aspects of this cognitive faculty.

Why formal linguistics?

Analyse natural languages by using technical meta-languages

- to formulate precise and testable (predictive) hypotheses

- to capture the creativity of the language faculty:
in each natural language, potentially infinite expressions through
a finite vocabulary

- to capture the logical structure inherent to human language

GET READY FOR DIAGRAMS, FORMULAS, SIMPLE ALGORITHMS
(only tough at the beginning!)

Why philosophy of mind and of language?

Ancient and new themes:

Language as learned behavior vs. language as part of the cognitive system

- cognitive neuroscience
- philosophy of artificial intelligence

Natural languages vs. artificial (logic) languages

- logicity and multi-dimensionality of meaning
- general theories of rationality

Linguistic relativism: perception of the natural and the social world

- cognitive and social psychology

Why psycholinguistics and experimental psychology?

Our hypotheses about the language faculty, and its connection with other cognitive mechanisms, must be **testable**.

Learning how to move from a research question to testable hypotheses,
and from a hypothesis to a sound experimental design.

Learning how to interpret experimental results, recognize possible confounding factors, then refine and expand from there.

Why corpus studies and computational linguistics?

Besides experiment, building **structured linguistic corpora** and analysing them with **natural language processing** tools

- allows us to extract robust generalisations from naturalistic data

- allows us to explore subtle aspects of linguistic variation

- paves the way for computational applications.

Preparing for the beginning of courses

Read the papers (one for formal linguistics, two for philosophy) whose references are on the MA webpage:

<https://language-mind.unisi.it/en/content/notice/suggested-readings-prospective-students-and-candidates>

If you have no background in linguistics, it is advisable to read a manual of general introduction to linguistics. One useful open access textbook is:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/essentialsoflinguistics2/>
chapters 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 up to section 6.12.

Two curricula

When enrolling, you must select one curriculum:

Linguistics and cognition, or

Philosophy and cognition

Later change of curriculum is possible.

The two curricula are identical in the first year, except for one course.

They are different for the second year courses (but with flexibility, to pick two exams from the other curriculum).

The other second year activities are the same (training to research, 3 credits; language proficiency, 3 credits; thesis, 18 credits)

First semester 2026-27

Phonetics and Phonology (Bocci)

Syntactic structures and Compositional Semantics I : Syntax (Casalicchio)

Language Acquisition (Moscati)

Philosophy of mind I (Varnier)

Philosophy of Mind II (Romano)

Second semester 2026-27

Philosophy of Logic and Philosophy of Natural Languages I : Logic (Noguera + Pistoia Reda)

Philosophy of Logic and Philosophy of Natural Languages II (Pistoia Reda)

Syntactic structures and Compositional Semantics II: Semantics (Bianchi)

Corpora, cognition and language learning (Cilibrasi)

Linguistics and Cognition: Multilingualism (Cilibrasi)

Philosophy and Cognition: Language and thought (Varnier)

Linguistics and Cognition, second year (2027-28)

II ANNO Curr.Linguistics and Cognition (2 ANNO 2027-2028)	SSD	TAF	CFU	ORE	SEM	TIP	INS
Computational linguistics	L-LIN/01	B	6	36		OBB	c.s.
n. 2 teachings chosen from:							
Morphosyntax and experimental studies and language	L-LIN/01	C	6	36		OPZ	c.s.
Corpora, language and translation	L-LIN/12		6	36		OPZ	c.s.
Advanced issues in phonology and syntax	L-LIN/01		6	36		OPZ	c.s.
Theory of grammar	L-LIN/01		6	36		OPZ	c.s.
Issues in intensional semantics	L-LIN/01		6	36		OPZ	c.s.
n. 1 teaching chosen from:							
Logic of natural languages	M-FIL/05	C	6	36		OPZ	c.s.
Psycholinguistics	M-PSI/01		6	36		OPZ	c.s.
Methodology of research in cognitive and social psychology	M-PSI/01		6	36		OPZ	c.s.
Courses chosen by the student		D	12			OBB	
Suitability second language level C1 o C2		F	3			OBB	
Job training and guidance		F	3			OBB	
Final test		E	18			OBB	

Philosophy and Cognition, second year (2027-28)

<i>Second year curr. Philosophy and Cognition2027-2028)</i>	<i>SSD</i>	<i>TAF</i>	<i>CFU</i>	<i>ORE</i>	<i>SEM</i>
Philosophy of cognition (Romano)	M-FIL/01	C	6	36	
Logic of Natural languages (Pistoia Reda)	M.-FIL/05	B	6	36	
Issues in intensional semantics (Bianchi)	L-LIN/01	C	6	36	
n. 1 teaching chosen from:		C			
The limits of rationality (Noguera)	MAT/01		6	36	
Methodology of research in cognitive and social psychology (Guidi)	M-PSI/01		6	36	
Psycholinguistics (Moscati)	M-PSI/01		6	36	
Courses chosen by the student		D	12		
Suitability second language level C1 o C2		F	3		
Job training and guidance		F	3		
Final test		E	18		

Second year: Common activities

Two «free choice» courses

12 credits

chosen by the student among MA-level courses offered in English:

- if chosen from within L&M courses, they are automatically accepted
- if chosen from another program, the choice must be approved by the teaching committee

- from the Dept. Of Mathematics and Engeneering (DISIIM):
 - Logic of artificial intelligence (Noguera)
 - Natural Language Processing (Maggini)
- from the other curriculum curriculum
- from other international programs of our University

Second year: Common activities

Suitability English C1 (or C2) 3 credits

See the language courses offered at the CLA (<https://www.cla.unisi.it/en>)

NB. Italian language courses can be registered as extra credits

Job training and guidance 3 credits

- presentation of personal thesis project
- participation in research seminars and students' thesis presentations

Thesis project 18 credits

supervised by one L&M professor (*relatore*)

possibly with the support of another professor (*correlatore*)

reviewed by one L&M professor (*contro-relatore*)

and discussed in a public defense.

Other opportunities (to be discussed in the first annual meeting)

- Up to 24 extra credits (courses or internships)
- Internships at the Lab → 3 extra credits + “Open Badge Collection and processing of linguistic data”
- External internships (supervised by one L&M professor!) → 3 extra credits
- Erasmus and Overseas programs for study abroad
- Erasmus traineeship
- Double degree, master Philosophie, parcours « Logique et Philosophie des Sciences» (Université Paris I) (minumum French B1)



Looking forward to meeting you in Siena!