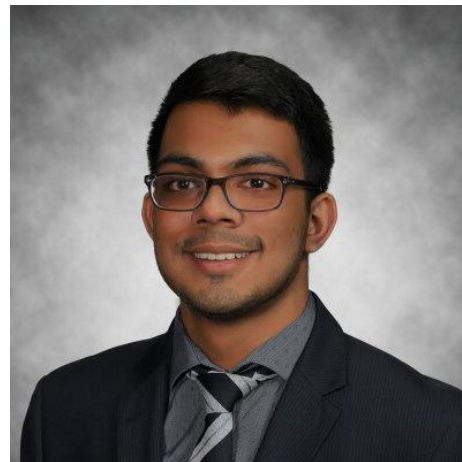


Linguistics Demoz Prize Winners 2020

Swapnanil Deb:



- **How did you first become interested in linguistics?**

Watching the movie Arrival was an introduction to the concept of Linguistics as a field of study and I became curious about what it actually entailed. When I came into my first semester freshman year, I got to take an introductory course which I thoroughly enjoyed and drove me to continue pursuing the field.

- **How have you been involved in the Linguistics Department outside of your coursework?**

I have been a contributing Research Assistant at Professor Jennifer Cole's Prosody and Speech Dynamics lab since my sophomore year and am currently working on my senior thesis.

- **Can you briefly describe any research projects in linguistics that you've been involved with?**

One project I assisted was Professor Cole and Eleanor Chodroff's Nuclear Tunes experiment. I helped with data collection, sound file tagging and contributed to the discussion of the experimental results. I got to see how a lot of phonetics experiments are designed and implemented from the top down and more generally became familiar with experimental procedures.

- **How do you see your linguistics major fitting into your career plans after graduation?**

As a Computer Science and Linguistics major, ideally I would like to work with companies that are trying to implement linguistic processes using software. The most common example would be Natural Language Processing efforts but also applies to applications like text to speech synthesis, artificial writing projects and many more!

- **What advice would you have for students considering a linguistics major?**

For those considering linguistics as a major, I would highly recommend taking some introductory classes to get an understanding of what the major entails. If they are seriously considering it, at Northwestern they should take 250, 260 and 270 because those classes cover three of the most general branches of experimental linguistics. If the student enjoys the subject matter of any one of the classes, they can spend more time working with a lab specializing in that field and doing their own work.

Marshall McDorman:

- How did you first become interested in linguistics?

Languages have always been interesting to me, particularly things like etymology, but I never had the opportunity to study anything like Linguistics in high school. So when I entered Northwestern, I was excited to have the opportunity to learn the new things Linguistics offered. I actually entered as an engineering major planning to minor in linguistics, then I did a bit of a 180 and changed to English literature, but eventually I've settled on Linguistics, what I wanted to study all along.



- How have you been involved in the Linguistics Department outside of your coursework?

Honestly, it took me a while to come out of my shell and get involved past just coursework, but luckily I've met some great faculty. I joined Professor Cole's prosody lab (ProsD), first sitting in on lab meetings, then volunteering to help run participants. I've also joined Professor Yoshida's syntax lab (SSSLab) and Syntax Club here at Northwestern.

- Can you briefly describe any research projects in linguistics that you've been involved with?

In addition to helping run a few participants in the ProsD lab, I've written stimuli for an experiment to determine participants' on-line responses to certain island violations in the SSSLab, where I have also begun conducting my own independent research project studying structure and extraction from the Double Object Construction.

- How do you see your linguistics major fitting into your career plans after graduation?

My tentative plan after graduation is law school, where I foresee the critical analytic tools I've developed through studying Linguistics coming in hand. If my plans change, however, grad school seems appealing as an avenue to pursue a career in Linguistics.

- What advice would you have for students considering a linguistics major?

Go for it! That said, Linguistics is a broad field, and Sound is quite different from Meaning, which is different from Syntax, not to mention Sociolinguistics, Computational Linguistics, and everything in between. My advice is to find what you're most excited about or interested in, and give it a go. From there, you can continue studying that field, or branch out and learn new stuff! Also, don't be afraid to ask faculty about getting involved in research.

Thank you for your continuing support to the Linguistics Department!

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