

Module Sign-up Brochure 2026-27

Q302: English Language

Stage 1 going into Stage 2

1. Do your research

Read through the information on the SELLL website carefully and ask if you have any questions. If you're unsure of what modules you should be choosing, email UGOffice.e111@newcastle.ac.uk.

2. Sign up Online: Wednesday 29th April, from 9am

- Have the rules for your programme, from this brochure, with you when you log onto The Student Portal. <https://studentportal.ncl.ac.uk/>.
- Compulsory modules will already be selected and optional modules will be listed for you to choose.
- The portal will close on **11th May at 8pm**.
- Further guidance and screenshots are available here: <https://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/student-portal/>.

FAQs

How do I take an outside module?

Modules not listed on your degree regulations will not appear in this brochure and will not be available to you in the Student Portal. Instead, you will need to select 'HSS dummy module(s)'. Then you will need to fill in a module change form at the beginning of Semester 1 to change from the dummy module to your chosen outside module.

How long will module selection take?

A few minutes.

What if I suffer technical problems?

Please don't panic. You can call IT on [0191 208 5999](tel:01912085999) to log the issue. Alternatively, you can email e111@ncl.ac.uk and we will try to assist you.

Will I get my first choice of modules?

Not necessarily. We recommend that you login and submit your choices as soon as possible. We'd also recommend having back-up modules in mind, in case your first choices are full. This is why it's important to read the module descriptions and make your decisions before the portal opens.

I need further advice and guidance. Who should I ask?

If your question is in regard to a specific module, please contact the module leader listed in the module descriptions, via email. If the module leader is to be confirmed (TBC), the Head of Subject is listed and will also be able to answer your questions. If you don't understand your programme regulations, please contact your Degree Programme Director (DPD) William van der Wurff (w.a.m.van-der-wurff@newcastle.ac.uk). If, after reading the module descriptions, you're struggling to decide which modules to take you can contact your Personal Tutor via email.

I had arranged to have a semester abroad next year. What should I do?

If you haven't done so already, please contact Geoff Poole (geoffrey.poole@newcastle.ac.uk) to discuss your options.

What if I change my mind or make a mistake?

If your choices do not comply with your regulations, they will be rejected and we will contact you to choose all your modules again – if you do not respond by the given deadline, modules will be chosen for you. If you change your mind you will be given the opportunity to change your modules at a later date. Further information will be released closer to the time.

Rules of your Programme

You must have a total of 120 credits with either a 60/60, 50/70 or 70/50 credit split across the semesters

Circle or highlight your choices, then add up your credits in the total column

Rules	Code	Module Title	Total Credits	Sem 1	Sem 2
Example	SEL1234	Example Module Text	20	20	
Compulsory	SEL2091	Sociolinguistics	20	20	
	SEL2212	Early English: Texts, Patterns and Varieties	20		20
Language / Linguistics Pick 1	SEL2000	Phonetics and Phonological Theory	20	20	
	SEL2089	Syntactic Theory	20	20	
	SEL2234	Pragmatic Theory	20	20	
Language / Linguistics Pick 3	SEL2000	Phonetics and Phonological Theory	20	20	
	SEL2089	Syntactic Theory	20	20	
	SEL2219	Monsters, Misery & Miracles	20	20	
	SEL2229	Experimental Methods in Linguistics	20		20
	SEL2234	Pragmatic Theory	20	20	
	SEL2235	CHiLD: Current Hypotheses in Language Development	20	20	
	SEL2236	Prosody and Intonation	20		20
Optional Outside Modules Pick 0 or 1/2	HSS2110	Outside Dummy Module: 10 credits in Semester 1*	10	10	
	HSS2210	Outside Dummy Module: 10 credits in Semester 2*	10		10
	HSS2120	Outside Dummy Module: 20 credits in Semester 1*	20	20	
	HSS2220	Outside Dummy Module: 20 credits in Semester 2*	20		20
TOTAL					

**requires DPD approval. If you selected a HSS module, you will also need to complete a module change form at the beginning of Semester 1 in October 2026 to change your HSS code into your chosen outside module.*

Module Descriptions

Further details of each module can be found in the module catalogue:
<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/module-catalogue/>

SEL2091: Sociolinguistics

Module Leader: Dr Daniel Duncan

Semester 1, 20 credits

No pre-requisites

This module builds on the knowledge of language variation & change and data analysis skills obtained in SEL1032 in order to develop a fuller understanding of sociolinguistics. It introduces this domain of linguistics from two perspectives:

- Microsociolinguistics, the study of language variation and change at the level of individuals, groups, and communities. With particular emphasis on the framework of variationist sociolinguistics, the module explores how linguistic variation is influenced by societal factors like social class and ethnicity.
- Macrosociolinguistics, the study of language at the societal level. With particular emphasis on the sociology of language, the module explores how society shapes broader linguistic outcomes like language maintenance or shift, language endangerment, and the development of pidgins and creoles.

This module refines data analysis skills by further developing quantitative reasoning skills. It adds basic inferential statistics to the analytical toolkit and explores how these are used to refine and test linguistic hypotheses.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Reflective Log	Mid	20	Sociolinguistic interview and reflection, 500 words in total.
Portfolio	End	80	Quantitative and qualitative research write-up, 3000 words in total.
Problem Solving Exercises	Mid	Formative	N/A

SEL2212: Early English: Texts, Patterns and Varieties

Module Leader: Professor Karen Corrigan

Semester 2, 20 credits

Pre-requisites: SEL1032

Lecture material provides a chronological survey of English, examining the major features of Old English, Middle English, and Early and Late Modern English. It also explores special topics related to the socio-historical and linguistic context in the areas of standard languages, variation and language contact, with examples potentially drawn from Scots, Irish and American varieties, as well as English varieties. Small group classes focus on the detailed examination of the language in action, with an emphasis on the reading and analysis of texts which range across the centuries and across genres, including literary texts and personal letters.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Essay	Mid	40	1500-word essay
Digital exam	End	60	Closed book examination

SEL2000: Phonetics and Phonological Theory

Module Leader: Dr Rory Turnbull & Dr Niamh Kelly

Semester 1, 20 credits

Pre-requisites: SEL1027

A course in intermediate phonetics and phonology, this module builds on the foundations laid in SEL1027, introducing practical phonetic analysis and theoretical models of phonology. The aim is for students to investigate a variety of phenomena in order for them to come to an understanding of how data, evidence and argumentation are used in scientific thinking.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Problem solving exercise	Mid	20	This will consist of a data analysis problem set
Essay	End	80	2000-word essay

SEL2089: Syntactic Theory

Module Leader: Dr Gabriel Martinez Vera

Semester 1, 20 credits

Pre-requisites: SEL1028

Following on from SEL1028, this module provides a more comprehensive and deeper understanding of the syntax of natural language with modern English as the main object of study. Topics to be addressed may include phrase structure (X'-Theory), argument structure (theta-roles), Case, agreement, noun phrase structure, binding, various kinds of movement, architecture of grammar and syntactic variation. Not necessarily all of these are covered every year.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Written exercise	End	100	24 hr take-home exam (3000 words)
Portfolio	Mid	Formative	Portfolio of semi-weekly problem sets (pre and post seminar)

SEL2219: Monsters, Misery & Miracles

Module Leader: Dr Aditi Nafde

Semester 1, 20 credits

No pre-requisites

This module introduces you to the poetry of the early Middle Ages in the original Old English, thereby giving you the opportunity to study the very beginnings of literature in the English language.

Old English poetry covers a wide range of genres, including wisdom literature, religious verse, heroic and elegiac poetry, and innuendo-laden riddles. From this range of material, we will explore literature that negotiates between the Germanic, heroic, Christian, and quotidian cultures that pervaded the age and were especially relevant to the North of England. As such, this module is uniquely placed to address topics of race, gender, and othering, which have a deep and sometimes troubling association with an English past.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Essay	End	100	3000-word essay
Written exercise	Mid	Formative	Close reading commentary

SEL2229: Experimental Methods in Linguistics

Module Leader: Dr Emma Nguyen

Semester 2, 20 credits

Pre-requisites: SEL1027 & SEL1032

Linguists face the dual challenge of trying to understand language as a set of behaviours and as a system of knowledge, and as such, linguists often base their descriptions and analyses on some combination of naturalistic observation and introspection. Various experimental methods are being employed to more rigorously test the accuracy of linguistic data and/or gather novel sorts of data.

The purpose of this class is to introduce students to influential experimental methodologies and approaches to data analysis used in formal linguistic investigations. We will engage hands on with some of these techniques, and students will learn about core aspects of experimental design, details of experimental techniques that have been used with language, and the types of conclusions that can be drawn from them. Students will gain experience constructing their own experiments, as well as analysing and interpreting experimental data.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Practical/lab report	Mid	30	Data wrangling and analysis.
Portfolio	End	70	A portfolio of written work. 2000 words or equivalent expanding upon a chosen linguistic topic and detailing a proposed novel experiment including stimuli design and discussion of anticipated data analysis.

SEL2234: Pragmatic Theory

Module Leader: Dr Gabriel Martinez Vera

Semester 1, 20 credits

Pre-requisites: SEL1028

This module concentrates on the study of meaning at the level of pragmatics, i.e., on how we create meaning from the linguistic expressions that we utter in context (e.g., in exchanges). It introduces foundational notions in pragmatics and provides tools to analyse phenomena in the field. It further discusses pragmatics and its relation to other domains of grammar and introduces different research methods to collect and annotate data.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Written exercise	Mid	25	1000-word written exercise
Essay	End	75	2500-word essay

SEL2235: CHiLD Current Hypotheses in Language Development

Module Leader: Dr Emma Nguyen

Semester 1, 20 credits

Pre-requisites: SEL1027 & SEL1028

Language is an incredibly complex system of knowledge. Not only are there multiple levels of representation - sounds and words and phrases and whole utterances and meanings - but within a given level, even simple forms can be derived from multiple interacting pieces of knowledge. Yet as speakers of any given language, we are often blissfully unaware of how much we need to know in order to be able to communicate with language.

One of the most striking things about language is that all typically-developing children learn their native language flawlessly, especially when compared to adults trying to accomplish the same task. This is true despite adults'

superior cognitive skills. Children of the world seem somehow suited for language acquisition in a way that adult humans - and other animals - are not.

In this module, we survey the broad topic of language acquisition, focusing not only on children's developmental trajectory, but also on what knowledge of language is, and how language acquisition relates to cognition in general.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Written exam	Mid	60	In-person exam to objectively test student understanding of foundational notions and empirical discoveries in Child Language Acquisition.
Written exercise	End	40	Abstracts written exercise: Students will write two conference-level abstracts distilling two linguistic studies reporting on child language acquisition. 1000 words or equivalent.

SEL2236: It's not what you say, it's how you say it: Prosody and Intonation

Module Leader: Dr Niamh Kelly

Semester 2, 20 credits

Pre-requisites: SEL1027

This module provides an overview of the functions of prosody and intonation in English and other spoken languages. Students will develop an understanding of both the abstract theory and practical methods used in investigating this multifaceted aspect of spoken language.

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Written exercise	Mid	30	1200-word research project.
Written exam	End	70	In-person paper examination to test knowledge of the foundational concepts of the module, including (among others) the phonetic, syntactic and semantic aspects of prosody.

SEL2239: Experimental Practicum

Module Leader: Dr Emma Nguyen

Semester 2, 20 credits

Pre-requisites: SEL2235

The job of a linguist is to scientifically study language in order to capture and explain patterns of linguistic structures and language usage. In order to do this, a linguist makes use of certain tools in their toolbox. The aim of the Practicum module is to provide students with practical research experience and skills while working under the supervision of an established researcher. Additionally, students would be introduced to the methodologies and approaches to data analysis used in formal linguistic investigations of language acquisition.

Students will gain hands-on research experience by being able to contribute to at least one of the following elements of the research process:

- Information gathering, including systematic literature searches and evidence synthesis
- Aspects of data collection, including building studies to be run in the Linguistics Lab and/or Science Adventures and/or on data collection platforms

- Data manipulation, including data screening and cleaning, data entry/ transcription/coding, and data analysis

Whereas a course on language acquisition and development (e.g. SEL2235 and SEL3438) may focus on the process of development and what it means to become a speaker of a language, this course focuses specifically on how we experimentally investigate acquisition and the competence of language learners through carefully designed linguistic experiments and the practical application of this knowledge.

This will provide students with the opportunity to embed and build on existing research skills from Stage 1 and 2 courses such as **SEL1032** and **SEL2235**, and to learn new skills that may not be covered in typical coursework. For students contemplating postgraduate studies (such as Speech and Language Therapy with children) or a research career, this module will allow them to experience aspects of the research process within academia, diversify their research experience while fostering strong relationships with participating staff members who can provide strong letters of recommendation for future work/study, and gain the valuable experience required for masters study. It also provides the students with an opportunity to be part of the wider research community within the School (such as the Language Evolution, Acquisition, and Development Research Group (LEAD)) and the wider University (such as the cross-faculty Science Adventures programme).

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Oral presentation	Mid	30	Present in person 10-minute small group presentation for a proposed CLA experiment with 5 minutes for questions.
Reflective log	Mid	70	A structured research diary completed throughout the semester.

SEL2241: Philosophy of Linguistics

Module Leader: Dr Geoff Poole

Semester 2, 20 credits

Pre-requisites: SEL1028

The first part of the module (prior to the Easter break) considers two fundamental and interrelated philosophical questions about language: (1) What is it, really? and (2) How do we (or should we) study it? It examines a number of different approaches, particularly as they were developed during the course of the 20th century: language as a physical object, language as behavior, language as a property of communities, and language as a property of mind.

The post-Easter weeks will apply the pre-Easter foundational/philosophical discussion to various past and present controversies in language and linguistics (e.g., linguistic determinism (aka the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis), whether generative AI systems actually do (or even could) 'have language' (or 'be intelligent'), and linguistic issues connected to class, gender, and disability).

Component	When Set	%	Comment
Essay	Mid	75	2500-word essay
Written exercise	End	25	1000-word blog entry
Essay	Mid	Formative	500-word formative essay