

## MALFL Program FAQ

**Master of Arts in Linguistics: Forensic Linguistics (MALFL)**

**Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY 11549 USA**

**Director: Robert A. Leonard, Ph.D.**

[www.hofstra.edu/linguistics](http://www.hofstra.edu/linguistics)

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INFORMATIVE VIDEOS featuring Dr. Leonard and forensic linguistics:

### **Television Shows**

- *A Tight Leash*, an episode of *Forensic Files* about the Hummert murder case tried in 2006. Full episode: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ftXKPINIunk> . This is also available on Netflix.
- “Facebook Murders” case: *Too Pretty to Live: The Catfishing Murders of East Tennessee* on Investigation Discovery 2016. Full show: <http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x40ybzbb>

### **Short Forensic Linguistics Clips**

- <http://www.mtv.com/video-clips/f89wxd/unlocking-the-truth-sneak-peek-disfluency> is a 2:06 clip from MTV’s 2016 series *Uncovering the Truth*: Byron Case and Michael Politte exoneration cases. Here Dr. Leonard recounts evidence that helped convict Mr. Case of murder and presents the findings from Hofstra MALFL interns’ detailed analysis demonstrating that the case was seriously flawed.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=acHg0L5ky30> is a 4:24 video clip discussing forensic linguistics for Investigation Discovery Channel
- <http://abcnews.go.com/Nightline/video/missing-ariz-girl-911-tapes-released-16354671> is a 5:37 *Nightline* clip that includes Leonard discussing the analysis of 911 calls in criminal investigations

### **Short MALFL Program Clips**

- <http://www.hofstra.edu/Academics/Colleges/Hclas/FLP/MAFLP/index.html> is a 4:14 clip discussing the graduate program and forensic linguistics in general
- <http://www.hofstra.edu/academics/colleges/hclas/cll/linguistics/ma-forensic-linguistics/> are video clips from Hofstra University.

### **Sample Presentation**

- “The Groundbreaking Science of Forensic Linguistics: Solving Crimes by Analyzing Language.” At the Third Annual World Polyglot Conference, New York City, October 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-01uO3uTrgk&t=1225s>

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## **A. Background on the Program and Faculty**

### **1) Can you describe the Master of Arts in Linguistics: Forensic Linguistics program?**

The program combines a broad-based academic experience with applied workshops and internship opportunities so that, upon graduation, students are prepared to bring to their workplace an array of skills and experiences in the analysis of language in legal and other real-world settings.

Linguistics is the systematic, scientific study of language. “Forensic” linguistics refers to linguistics applied to any use of language with legal relevance. The MALFL is designed to meet a growing demand for advanced training in scientific language analysis.

At Hofstra, a student trains first and foremost to become a linguist and learn the core tools and competencies that serve as the base of linguistics including: phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, corpus linguistics, dialectology, and sociolinguistics. However, unlike other linguistics programs, real life illustrations and teaching examples are, wherever possible, drawn from forensic applications—often from the extensive array of law cases originally consulted on by the Hofstra faculty.

Advanced courses explore the specific application of linguistic science to cases involving criminal activity of all kinds, including extortion, bribery, murder, espionage, weapons of mass destruction, as well as to civil cases of trademark protection, the meaning of contracts and statutes, and defamation. Students learn how to perform analyses that investigate the authorship of different sets of documents and also learn to critique common interrogation procedures from a linguistic standpoint. In short, while they master the science of linguistics, they also practice applying it to a multiplicity of issues in the real world—in this case, the legal arena.

The M.A. program prepares students:

- for public or private sector employment in the United States and international arenas in careers relating to or associated with law, law enforcement, intelligence, and the forensic sciences; or,
- to continue on for a Ph.D. in theoretical or applied linguistics or a related field.

Graduates of the program will be able to pursue employment in organizations that seek professionals with research and linguistic skills or in any field in which people work with language, including government and academic institutions, business, industry, and communications. See the section below on job opportunities.

### **A prime feature of the program is real-world experience through internships.**

One prime internship opportunity is with the recently instituted Hofstra Forensic Linguistics Capital Case Innocence Project, through which graduate linguists, law students, and professional analysts revisit language evidence that was used to put people on Death Row. Other serious

crime pro bono cases are analyzed by graduate linguists through the Institute. (See section 18 for more information on internship opportunities.)

## 2) When did the program begin?

Hofstra launched the M.A. program in the fall of 2010, and it is the first of its kind in the Americas.

## 3) Who are the faculty?

**Dr. Robert A. Leonard**, the Program Director, is internationally recognized as a foremost expert in this field of study. He has worked as a consultant for the FBI and police, counter-terrorism, and intelligence agencies throughout the U.S., U.K. and Canada, training agents in the use of forensic linguistics in law enforcement, threat assessment, and counter-terrorism. Other clients have included Apple, Inc., Facebook, the Prime Minister of Canada, the NYPD Hate Crimes Task Force, and the U.S. Dept. of Justice. Dr. Leonard has testified in both state and Federal District courts around the U.S. His testimony has been pivotal in investigating and prosecuting several high-profile cases, including the JonBenet Ramsey case, death threats to U.S. Congress members, and the Coleman family triple homicide in Illinois. He has also consulted to numerous defense teams and heads the Forensic Linguistics Capital Case Innocence Project.

In addition to being a leading expert in forensic linguistics, Dr. Leonard has also received much attention for being a rock star in the 60s and 70s as the founding leader of the group Sha Na Na (who would later cameo in the movie *Grease*). As vocalist, he and his group opened for Jimi Hendrix at Woodstock. Rock 'n' roll ignited his interest in forensic linguistics – analyzing the group's recording contract, he proved they were not receiving money due them. Dr. Leonard left the music business for his Fulbright Fellowship and a Ph.D. from Columbia.

**Dr. Tammy Gales**, Director of Research at the Forensic Linguistics Institute at Hofstra, has a reputation as an expert in threat and stalking cases and teaches a variety of innovative courses that incorporate forensic linguistic data and social science methods, including corpus linguistics, discourse analysis, and sociolinguistics, and is an established member of the litigation research team of Dr. Leonard and Dr. Shuy. Since earning her Ph.D. in Linguistics from the University of California, Davis, Dr. Gales has specialized in research on various linguistic aspects of assault cases, false confessions, and threatening communications. She has collaborated on projects with faculty at Brooklyn Law School and, as a Washington D.C. Graduate Fellow, conducted research with The Academy Group, the world's largest privately-owned behavioral analysis firm, comprised of former FBI Supervisory Special Agents and Agents of the Secret Service. She has presented her findings to international audiences of linguists, psychologists, lawyers, and law enforcement agents at language and law conferences and at universities such as Georgetown, Princeton, and Yale. She has published in leading international peer-reviewed journals such as *Discourse and Society*, *Discourse Studies*, *Corpora*, and *Language and Law*. Dr. Gales has also conducted forensic linguistic training of federal and regional law enforcement agents within the U.S. and Canada.

**James R. Fitzgerald**, retired FBI chief of Forensic Linguistics and Supervisory Special Agent in the Behavioral Analysis Unit-1: Counterterrorism and Threat Assessment, pioneered and developed Forensic Linguistics for the Critical Incident Response Group of the FBI. He is the only fully credentialed profiler and forensic linguist in the history of the FBI. Among his many notable cases, Mr. Fitzgerald worked on the Washington D.C. Sniper, Anthrax letters, 9/11 attack, and the Unabomber case (see the scripted multipart Discovery series about him, *Manhunt: Unabomber*). He holds an M.S. from Georgetown in linguistics. He and Dr. Leonard have worked together on cases and have conducted training workshops in forensic linguistics for the FBI and other law enforcement and counterintelligence professionals in both the U.S. and internationally.

Dr. Leonard and Mr. Fitzgerald co-direct the Institute for Forensic Linguistics, Threat Assessment, and Strategic Analysis at which Dr. Gales is Director of Research.

#### **4) How many students are in the program?**

The program maintains a level of approximately 30-40 students.

#### **5) Do you offer any online courses or have an online degree?**

At present, the only course we offer online is the undergraduate LING 101: Introduction to Linguistics. This runs once a year for students who need to fulfill this program prerequisite (see section 11).

#### **6) Juris Doctor (JD) and Master of Linguistics: Forensic Linguistics (MALFL), Joint-Degree Program**

The JD/MALFL is a joint degree program offered by the Maurice A. Deane School of Law (Hofstra Law School) and the Hofstra College of Liberal Arts & Sciences (HCLAS).

The well-established science of linguistics analyzes all aspects of human language. It has a sub-field, “forensic linguistics,” which arose from the fact that **language is at the basis of most legal problems** – whether they arise in statutory or contractual interpretation, the authenticity of confessions, the clarity of jury instructions, the meaningfulness of product warnings, the truthfulness of advertising, the originality of an infringing work, the sting of a defamatory statement, or innumerable other contexts. Forensic linguistics augments legal analysis by applying rigorous, scientifically accepted principles of language analysis to such problems.

Experts in the field are employed in a variety of institutions, including law enforcement agencies and academia, and they testify regularly in court. From the legal side, forensic linguistics has been attracting increasing attention from professors, courts, and litigators.

The joint program allows students to obtain a JD and an MALFL in four years, rather than the five that are ordinarily required. More importantly, as an educational matter, **students are able**

**to integrate both fields** by participating in internships and coursework that specifically link legal and forensic linguistic training. For example, through Hofstra's Forensic Linguistic Capital Case Innocence Project and the Institute for Forensic Linguistics, law students and linguistics students analyze live case data, participate in the drafting of reports, and provide consultation to criminal lawyers.

[Professor Eric M. Freedman](#), Program Co-Director, 516-463-5167

[Professor Robert Leonard](#), Program Co-Director, 516-463-5440

See [https://bulletin.hofstra.edu/preview\\_program.php?catoid=92&poid=15789&returnto=11777](https://bulletin.hofstra.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=92&poid=15789&returnto=11777) for more details.

## **B. Professional Applications of an M.A. in Linguistics: Forensic Linguistics**

### **6) Will I be qualified to testify in court as an expert witness?**

To be accepted in court one typically needs a terminal degree (the highest degree in a field—for us it is the Ph.D.) or have a combination of graduate degrees and extensive experience (like Jim Fitzgerald's thousands of cases worked while in the FBI). Our field is growing so quickly that there will doubtless be professionals who will need to hire paraprofessionals to do preliminary analyses and data handling with them. As the need for forensic linguistic experts continues to grow, Hofstra graduates will be first in line, as no other institution in the Americas offers this training.

### **7) In terms of career potential, what is the advantage of studying forensic linguistics versus a more general linguistics degree or other liberal arts field?**

To be a forensic linguist you must be a linguist first. Thus, first and foremost, our degree is specifically designed to train you as a linguist (which prepares you, if you desire, for further linguistics study, e.g., in a Ph.D. program, whether forensic-related or not). We have worked carefully on that aspect of our M.A.—we aim to produce linguists. As we noted above, the program combines a broad-based academic experience with applied workshops and required internships so that, upon graduation, students are prepared to bring to their workplace an array of skills and experiences in the analysis of language in legal and other real-world settings.

A Hofstra MALFL graduate can demonstrate skills that are valuable to a broad variety of potential employers: that he or she is trained in *linguistics*, the very useful knowledge base of how language works; how and why people understand and misunderstand each other; how people create meaning using words; how people report facts, deceive, misinterpret, reanalyze; how conversational patterns may differ between males and females; how dialects work; how second languages are learned and not learned; and much, much more about language.

What differentiates the forensic linguistics program from a general linguistics program is that our degree has additional practical, real-life applied knowledge of a type that may be even more valuable to a variety of potential employers, for our degree focuses on *the scientific application of linguistics*. Hofstra graduates will additionally know how the criminal and civil justice

systems work—how and why it is adversarial; how the courts work, and how language analysis uncovers the legal maneuvering of rules, interrogations, eyewitnesses, and confessions.

**Our graduates learn how to analyze large amounts of case data and our graduates learn how to apply theory to the real world.**

One prime internship opportunity is with the recently instituted Hofstra Forensic Linguistics Capital Case Innocence Project, through which graduate linguists, law students, and professional analysts revisit language evidence that was used to put people on Death Row. Other serious crime pro bono cases are analyzed by graduate linguists through the Institute. (See section 18 for more information on internship opportunities.)

It may be instructive to look at the results of a major 2013 survey of hiring in companies. While its focus was on the BA, the same principles should hold for MA holders as well:

...half of those [companies] surveyed recently by The Chronicle [of Higher Education] and American Public Media's Marketplace said they had trouble finding recent graduates qualified to fill positions at their company or organization. Nearly a third gave colleges just fair to poor marks for producing successful employees. And they dinged bachelor's-degree holders for lacking basic workplace proficiencies, like adaptability, communication skills, and the ability to solve complex problems... Sine Nomine Associates, Mr. Boyes's firm, works with high-tech companies like Cisco and IBM. However, he says, **it is fundamental abilities that recent graduates lack, like how to analyze large amounts of data or construct a cogent argument. "It's not a matter of technical skill," he says, "but of knowing how to think."**

... [companies] grumbled that colleges weren't adequately preparing students in written and oral communication, decision-making, and analytical and research skills... although business and higher education may use the same language, it doesn't always have the same meaning. Educators often think of such competencies "in a purely academic context," Mr. Alssid says, while **employers want "book smarts to translate to the real world."** **"It's a matter of how to apply that knowledge,"** he says. (emphasis added)

[http://chronicle.com/article/The-Employment-Mismatch/137625/?cid=wb&utm\\_source=wb&utm\\_medium=en#id=overview](http://chronicle.com/article/The-Employment-Mismatch/137625/?cid=wb&utm_source=wb&utm_medium=en#id=overview)

In addition, our unique program strives to teach students using the extensive real-world experience of the faculty. The cases Dr. Leonard and his colleagues have recently participated in are increasingly numerous and quite varied in type: training counter-terrorist experts in the U.S. and the U.K.; legal trademark cases; homicides—sometimes being retained by the prosecution, sometimes the defense; criminal cases of fraud, solicitation to murder, espionage; training threat assessment professionals who protect corporations and those who protect celebrities; death penalty appeals; reversing wrongful convictions. The faculty members draw on these experiences in order to demonstrate how students' linguistic skills can be directly applied to real situations



Thus, in this program, you will first become a linguist; second, you will become well-versed in the practical specialty of applying that knowledge to legal evidence: forensic linguistics.

### **8) What are the degree's applications to the fields of government and law?**

Forensic linguistics is a relatively new field, so the full range of career possibilities is not yet entirely clear. Where forensic linguistics has already shown great demand is in the fields of government and law. A specialty in forensic linguistics would be a strong asset for those who plan to attend law school or work in law enforcement (e.g., working as an entry-level FBI Crime Analyst or Intelligence Analyst). People currently working in law enforcement, threat assessment, or other related fields will no doubt be helped in their job and advancement possibilities.

A number of our graduates have become paraprofessionals in law firms and brokerage houses, and report they had an advantage with our training. There are applicants who have entered the program while working as intelligence and counter-terrorism officers, and in other military and investigative positions, and it is easy to imagine their using the degree to further their work within their agencies.

We train active agents, especially in Forensic Linguistic Applications (LING 220 and 230), our one-week courses which are geared as much to working professionals as to our own graduate students. The past few years we have trained special agents from NCIS, Army, Commerce, FBI, RCMP, etc. Regarding job searches, virtually all these agents have said that a good path for our students might be to enter a Federal (or other) agency even in an entry-level position (such as Intelligence Analyst at the FBI or Capitol Police), and then demonstrate ability in analyzing linguistic evidence.

### **9) What kinds of jobs are your graduates obtaining?**

While we have only recently begun graduating students, so far our graduates have successfully been accepted into prestigious Ph.D. programs and academic careers. Some highly-motivated graduates have found positions with intelligence and counterintelligence agencies such as the FBI, CIA, and the Dept. of Homeland Security Intelligence Division, and with other special law enforcement agencies like the Capitol Police. Others have secured positions with large financial firms as intelligence analysts. All have said their forensic linguistics training was instrumental in their obtaining their positions.

Others have found employment with state and local police departments, in law firms, and in a great variety of other jobs in which they use their linguistics training, such as translation, editing, interpretation, naming products, and as onstage performers. For further possible applications of the degree, refer to sections 7 and 8.

## **C. Recommended Readings on Forensic Linguistics**

### **10) What good books dealing with Forensic Linguistics can you recommend for potential students to learn more about the field?**



Roger Shuy's *Language Crimes* and *Creating Language Crimes* are excellent to begin with, as they are well written and interesting and contain many case studies. When Dr. Leonard uses just one book to train professionals, it is Shuy's *Language of Confession, Interrogation and Deception*, a superbly written book and a great introduction to the field. See references in the list below for some other good books:

- Shuy, Roger. *Language Crimes*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1993 (reprinted 1996).
- Shuy, Roger. *Creating Language Crimes: How Law Enforcement Uses (and Misuses) Language*. Oxford University Press, USA, 2005.
- Shuy, Roger. *The Language of Confession, Interrogation and Deception*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998.
- Solan, Lawrence and Peter Tiersma, *Speaking of Crime: The Language of Criminal Justice*. Chicago: University Press, 2005.
- Coulthard, M. and Johnson, A., *An Introduction to Forensic Linguistics*. New York: Routledge, 2007.
- Oxburgh, G., Myklebust, T., Grant, T., & Milne, R. (eds). *Communication in investigative and legal contexts: integrated approaches from forensic psychology, linguistics and law enforcement*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2015.
- Shuy, Roger. *Linguistic Battles in Trademark Disputes*. New York: Macmillan, 2002.
- Shuy, Roger. *Linguistics in the Courtroom: A Practical Guide*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2006.
- Shuy, Roger. *Fighting Over Words: Language and Civil Law Cases*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2008.
- Shuy, Roger. *The Language of Defamation Cases*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2009.
- Shuy, Roger. *The Language of Perjury Cases*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2011.
- Shuy, Roger. *The Language of Sexual Misconduct Cases*. New York: OUP, 2012.
- Tiersma, Peter, *Legal Language*. Chicago: University Press, 1999.
- Solan, Lawrence and Tiersma, Peter (eds), *Oxford Handbook of Language and Law*. Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Coulthard, Malcolm and Johnson, Alison (eds), *the Routledge Handbook of Forensic Linguistics*. New York: Routledge, 2010.

Additionally, the Oxford Studies in Language and Law series--Dr. Leonard serves as member of the editorial board--has some excellent publications on specific areas within the field: <https://global.oup.com/academic/content/series/o/oxford-studies-in-language-and-law-oxsll/?cc=us&lang=en&>

#### **D. Application Requirements and Procedures**

**11) What are the application requirements?** (note: the GRE is not required)

1. Bachelor's degree (or equivalent) with a GPA of 3.0 or better.
2. Two letters of recommendation.
3. Interview with program director (in person, by phone, or via videoconference).

4. Written statement of professional interests and goals or an academic essay from a past college-level class.

Applicants to the MALFL will ideally have completed a BA with a specialization in linguistics or a related field that contained a strong language analysis component, but applications are also invited from students with a background in other disciplines allied to forensic linguistics.

Accepted students who do not have a recent or sufficient level of linguistic training are required to take an additional undergraduate introductory course in linguistics. Students can satisfy this requirement by taking an undergraduate Introduction to Linguistics course 1) at an accredited institution other than Hofstra prior to the MALFL program start date, 2) at Hofstra during a summer session prior to the MALFL program start date, if offered, or 3) at Hofstra during the first semester of the MALFL program in addition to the student's regular MALFL courses. The Introduction to Linguistics course is preparation and does not count as part of the student's 36 required credit hours for the MALFL program. A minimum grade of B is required to satisfy this prerequisite. Please contact the Linguistics Adviser for more information about this requirement.

## 12) How and when do I apply?

To apply, go to [http://www.hofstra.edu/Academics/grad/grad\\_apply.html](http://www.hofstra.edu/Academics/grad/grad_apply.html). Once an application and all supporting credentials are received, the application is reviewed in the very next round of meetings by our Admissions Committee.

Candidates for the Master of Arts in Linguistics: Forensic Linguistics are considered on a rolling basis. Thus, there is no strict cut-off date for applications. While this may put less pressure on the timing of your application, it also means that once there are no spaces left, applications will only be considered for the subsequent academic year.

Further, be aware that we strongly recommend that all students enter in the fall (as opposed to the spring). The course schedule is designed to enable full time students to take the courses in a logical sequence and move through the program as a cohort. (However, if special circumstances exist, highly qualified students may be allowed to begin the program in the spring.)

## 13) What financial aid opportunities are there?

Aside from the Linguistics Graduate Fellowship and the Provost's Scholarship described below, there are few other sources of scholarship funding available. One possible solution is **off campus** employment. Many students work full-time off campus, a main reason we have limited all our class meetings to Tuesdays and Thursdays afternoons and early evenings.

**On campus** opportunities also exist. Once applicants have been admitted and enrolled, they may check Hofstra pages as well as the entire student employment site.

As you check the pages, *beware of confusing names for jobs and types of jobs*. e.g., graduate student *assistants* may receive \$10/hour, while graduate student *assistantships* provide far more, including free tuition:

Graduate assistantships are opportunities for matriculated students in a Hofstra graduate program. The assistantships typically last from 9 to 10 months, and require working 20 to 25 hours per week. Evening and weekend work may be required, depending upon the position. Most positions offer up to nine (9) credits [a full-time graduate student typically takes 9 credits per semester] of tuition remission each semester (unless otherwise noted), with no more than 18 credits per academic year. Some assistantships also offer on-campus housing, and some provide a stipend as well.

A number of our students have competed for and obtained Assistantships in departments that advertise them (like Financial Aid, and Audio-Visual) and have therefore not had to pay tuition.

For more information about Graduate Fellowships, Assistantships, and Scholarships see:

- [http://www.hofstra.edu/ACADEMICS/grad/grad\\_fa\\_stdemp.html](http://www.hofstra.edu/ACADEMICS/grad/grad_fa_stdemp.html)
- [http://www.hofstra.edu/sfs/financialaid/financialaid\\_scholarships.html](http://www.hofstra.edu/sfs/financialaid/financialaid_scholarships.html).
- <http://www.hofstra.edu/StudentAffairs/StudentServices/stdemp/index.html>
- [https://www.hofstra.edu/studentaffairs/stdaff\\_gradasst\\_opportunities.html](https://www.hofstra.edu/studentaffairs/stdaff_gradasst_opportunities.html)

### **Linguistics Graduate Fellowship**

The program in Linguistics offers one Graduate Fellowship per year, pending university approval of funding. This position is only available to a full-time second year MA student in our program and is awarded by committee on a competitive basis.

The linguistics Graduate Fellow (GF) is required to successfully complete at least 9 credit hours each term toward the degree. The GF will work 15-20 hours per week assisting faculty with program administration, minor teaching duties, and other program-related tasks, as needed.

In order to maintain the Fellowship, the GF is expected to keep a minimum of a 3.0 GPA and satisfactorily perform all duties each term. The appointment of a GF may be terminated at any time due to unsatisfactory academic performance or evaluation by the program director of the GF's service.

The GF will be awarded \$10,000 per academic year (i.e., \$5,000 fall semester and \$5,000 spring semester), pending university approval of funding. The award will be applied directly to the GF's tuition each semester.

To apply for the Graduate Fellowship, a first year student submits the following to the Linguistics Adviser:

- the linguistics program's GF application form,
- a current printout of your unofficial transcript,
- a list of the courses you plan to take during the year of the Fellowship, and
- two sample course assignments (from two separate courses) that demonstrate your attention to detail, your ability to think creatively, and your level of professionalism.

The announcement for the Fellowship is made in the spring and is awarded for the subsequent fall. Any student who wishes to receive full consideration for the Fellowship should make sure to submit all application materials to Calkins 322 in hard copy by April 1.

### **Provost's Scholarship**

The Provost's Scholarship is awarded annually to a first-year MALFL graduate student who has demonstrated excellence in linguistics, in particular, for innovative approaches to the analysis of language, as judged by the linguistics faculty. The recipient of the award will receive a one-time sum of approximately \$3,500 in the fall semester of the second year, which will be applied directly to the student's tuition.

In order to be considered for the award, a student must have a GPA of 3.5 or higher, be in good standing, and be enrolled as a full-time student (i.e., with a minimum of 9 s.h.). Joint BA/MA students are eligible for the award as long as they have graduate status at the time of nomination.

#### **14) I've been accepted into the program. What is my next step?**

Students who have been accepted and enrolled can register for courses after being advised by a linguistics adviser. For help with initial enrollment, direct questions to Fred Koromi, Associate Dean of Graduate Admissions, at (516) 463-6707, [Frederick.J.Koromi@Hofstra.edu](mailto:Frederick.J.Koromi@Hofstra.edu).

Also, check out this webpage aimed at new grad students:

- [http://www.hofstra.edu/Academics/grad/grad\\_newgrads.html](http://www.hofstra.edu/Academics/grad/grad_newgrads.html)

### **E. Program Length, Cost, and Requirements**

#### **15) How many classes does a student typically take per semester? How long does it take to complete the program?**

One normally takes three (or four) classes—three classes (that is, nine credits) is officially considered “full-time.” Full-time students will typically complete the program in two years. Part-time students can complete the program in three years; however, the course schedule is designed to enable full time students to move through the program as a cohort and take the courses in a logical sequence. Scheduling may not be as straightforward for part-timers. See the suggested schedule for full-time students below to determine when each course is offered.

Graduate classes meet once or twice a week for approximately two to three hours. Class times are limited to Tuesday and Thursday midday to early evening. This helps students who need to schedule full- or part-time work schedules.

#### **16) How much does the program cost?**

As of January, 2019, the cost per graduate credit is \$1344. For 36 credits, the cost is \$48,384. There are no additional fees of which we are aware. For the authoritative up-to-date figures, go to [http://www.hofstra.edu/sfs/bursar/bursar\\_tuition.html#GradTuition](http://www.hofstra.edu/sfs/bursar/bursar_tuition.html#GradTuition)

### 17) What are the program requirements?

The program requires 36 semester hours of graduate-level credits. The program is comprised of 3 components: the core curriculum, electives, and capstone requirements.

Core Curriculum Courses - Semester Hours: 24

- LING 202 - Phonetics and Phonology\*
- LING 203 - Morphology and Syntax\*
- LING 205 - Semantics and Pragmatics
- LING 206 - Sociolinguistics
- LING 221 - Linguistic Field Methods
- LING 231 - Discourse Analysis
- LING 239 - Language and the Law: Language as Evidence
- LING 250 - Corpus Linguistics

*\*For those entering with a background in Linguistics, place-out tests may be taken for LING 202 and LING 203. Students who receive a B+ or better may substitute an elective from the list below (36 s.h. are still required). Consult the linguistics adviser for availability. See the suggested alternative schedule in section 19 for those who place out of one or both courses.*

Elective Courses - Semester Hours: 6

One course from the following in linguistics or, with the adviser's permission, one course in another relevant discipline:

- LING 204 - Historical Linguistics
- LING 207 - Dialectology
- LING 220 - U.S. Investigatory and Litigation Applications of Forensic Linguistics
- LING 230 - Multinational Investigatory and Litigation Applications of Forensic Linguistics
- LING 281 A-Z - Special Topics in Linguistics (varies)
- LING 290 - Internship (that is, a second internship in addition to the one required)

Capstone Requirements - Semester Hours: 6

- LING 290 - Internship in Forensic Linguistics
  - (*LING 290 may be repeated once for elective credit.*)

*and one of the following:*

- LING 301 - Thesis (Master's Essay)

- *(Students who do not complete the Capstone Project within the semester they first registered for it, must re-register in a subsequent semester. The additional semester hours do not count toward any degree requirements.)*
- LING 303 - Capstone Project
  - *(Students who do not complete the Capstone Project within the semester they first registered for it, must re-register in a subsequent semester. The additional semester hours do not count toward any degree requirements.)*

Students must maintain a B average with no more than one C per semester. No more than two Cs count may be counted toward the MA. Students who do not maintain a B average, or who receive a D or an F in any course, will be dismissed from the program.

### **18) What kinds of internships are available to students?**

There are two types of internships: those internal to Hofstra and those external to Hofstra.

#### 1. Internal Internships: several types

- a. Students work on pro bono cases, typically ongoing serious crime cases, that Dr. Leonard has accepted through the Institute for Forensic Linguistics, Threat Assessment, and Strategic Analysis. Working as a group and individually, students conduct forensic linguistic analyses of case evidence under the supervision of Dr. Leonard and other faculty. For example, in 2016, Dr. Leonard and the Hofstra MALFL pro bono interns were recruited by the Midwest Innocence Project and MTV to review evidence that had resulted in the convictions of two men about whom MTV was producing a show.
  - <http://www.mtv.com/video-clips/f89wxd/unlocking-the-truth-sneak-peek-disfluency> is a 2:06 clip from that MTV 2016 series *Uncovering the Truth* about exoneration cases. In this clip, Dr. Leonard recounts evidence that helped convict Mr. Case of murder and presents the findings from Hofstra MALFL interns' detailed analysis demonstrating how the case was seriously flawed.
- b. Under the aegis of the Forensic Linguistics Capital Case Innocence Project, run by Dr. Leonard and Constitutional Law Professor Eric Freedman, forensic linguistic interns work side-by-side with Hofstra Law School interns in an Innocence Project specializing in capital and other serious crime cases in which language evidence was crucial.
- c. Through the research arm of the Forensic Linguistics Institute, students work on current research projects under the supervision of Dr. Gales. Projects are exploratory in nature and address a current societal issue. The culmination of these projects are professional presentations to various public service communities. Previous projects have included analyses of language in sexual assault witness statements – presented to witness advocates and the NYPD – and analyses of parole board hearings in which certain populations have been disproportionately denied parole – presented to the ACLU.

2. External Internships: there is no set list of internships; students are encouraged to find and/or create their own. Virtually any professional situation in which students interact with language data can be a potential internship. In the past, our students have successfully interned with the Office of Emergency Management at their emergency command center; New York City's Civilian Complaint Review Board, the Forensic Panel, law firms, a range of law enforcement agencies, and consulting forensic linguists. Be aware that deadlines for external internships can close very early, so plan ahead.

**19) Is there a suggested schedule of courses for full-time students?**

*Course scheduling subject to change.*

<b>Suggested 2-year Course Schedule (36 credits required)</b>	<i>For students who place out of LING 202 and/or 203, the following 2-year Course Schedule is Suggested (36 credits required)</i>
<p><b>FALL</b> – first semester (9 hrs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 202 Phonetics/Phonology</li> <li>• 206 Sociolinguistics</li> <li>• 239 Language and Law</li> <li>• (101 Intro to Linguistics, if needed)</li> </ul>	<p><b>FALL</b> – first semester (9 hrs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 206 Sociolinguistics</li> <li>• 239 Language and Law</li> <li>• One of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 290 Internship</li> <li>○ 230 Multinational FL Applications</li> <li>○ 281 Special Topics in Linguistics</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>SPRING</b> – second semester (9 hrs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 203 Morphology/Syntax</li> <li>• 205 Semantics and Pragmatics</li> <li>• 221 Field Methods</li> </ul>	<p><b>SPRING</b> – second semester (9 hrs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 205 Semantics and Pragmatics</li> <li>• 221 Field Methods</li> <li>• 250 Corpus Analysis</li> </ul>
<p><b>FALL</b> – third semester (9 hrs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 231 Discourse Analysis</li> <li>• 290 Internship</li> <li>• One of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 230 Multinational FL Applications</li> <li>○ 281 Special Topics in Linguistics</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>FALL</b> – third semester (9 hrs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 231 Discourse analysis</li> <li>• 290 Internship</li> <li>• One of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 230 Multinational FL Applications</li> <li>○ 281 Special Topics in Linguistics</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>SPRING</b> – fourth semester (9 hrs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 250 Corpus Analysis</li> <li>• 301 Thesis or 303 Capstone Project</li> <li>• One of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 290 Internship</li> <li>○ 220 U.S. FL Applications</li> <li>○ 281 Special Topics in Linguistics</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>SPRING</b> – fourth semester (9 hrs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 301 Thesis or 303 Capstone Project</li> <li>• Two of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 290 Internship</li> <li>○ 220 U.S. FL Applications</li> <li>○ 281 Special Topics in Linguistics</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



**Scheduling Notes:**

1. Students may also take an internship, if offered, during the summer term.
2. If students wish to speed up the progress of their courses, they may take the intensive LING 220 and/or LING 230 in addition to 3 other courses (i.e., 12 credits instead of 9 credits per term).
3. Some students have chosen to study abroad during the January session as an elective course, for example, in the Hofstra in Venice program. Permission for graduate-level work must be granted by the study abroad professor and the project must be linguistic in nature. For study abroad options, contact Dr. Maria Fixell, Asst Dean of Study Abroad Programs at 516-463-4765.

## **F. One-week Intensive Forensic Linguistic Course Descriptions**

### **LING 220**

#### **SPRING ONE-WEEK INTENSIVE FORENSIC LINGUISTICS COURSE**

#### **FORENSIC LINGUISTICS IN COUNTER-TERRORISM, INTELLIGENCE, COUNTERINTELLIGENCE, THREAT ASSESSMENT, AND LAW ENFORCEMENT**

**Hofstra University in the New York City Metropolitan Area  
Institute of Forensic Linguistics, Threat Assessment, and Strategic Analysis**

Usually offered in March or April – for dates in any given year, email  
[ForensicLinguistics@Hofstra.edu](mailto:ForensicLinguistics@Hofstra.edu)

The Institute and the Graduate Program in Linguistics: Forensic Linguistics at Hofstra University is proud to announce that James R. Fitzgerald, MS, former FBI Supervisory Special Agent and program director of forensic linguistic services for the FBI's Behavioral Analysis Unit (BAU) of the Critical Incident Response Group, National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime, will join Dr. Robert Leonard as co-instructor of this unique one-week long experience.

#### **About the course**

This course predates the formal Forensic Linguistics program at Hofstra. It is a reprise of an FBI Forensic Linguistics week-long intensive “boot camp” course that Supervisory Special Agent Jim Fitzgerald conceived, organized, and taught (and recruited Leonard to also teach) at Quantico.

The course was run by the Behavioral Analysis Unit (BAU) to teach agents of the FBI and other agencies such as the ATF, Secret Service, Capitol Police, etc. When Fitzgerald retired from the FBI, he and Leonard moved the week-long intensive course to Hofstra, where it attracts professors and grad students as well as professionals.

#### **Cases**

Case studies and class participation exercises are largely from those worked by Fitzgerald or Leonard, which include the JonBenet Ramsey Case, UNABOM Case, National Football League Terrorism Threat Case, Philadelphia Bombing Case, Anthrax Case, Daniel Pearl Case, Barbie Doll Case, Washington, DC Sniper Case, UK School Bus Bombing Threat/Extortion Case, Coleman triple homicides, the Facebook Catfishing Executions, and the Hummert Murder Case.

#### **Course content**

A case-based approach to solving legal and law enforcement problems through linguistic analysis:

- Demographic Linguistic Profiles: Dialectology, sociolinguistics and linguistic variation analyses can indicate a writer's regional and local geographic origin, education level, occupational training, and other demographic features.
- Authorship Analysis: Text comparisons can indicate whether two sets of texts have common authorship. The role of authorship analysis in investigation and litigation is exemplified and discussed through several cases.
- Threat Level Analysis: State-of-the-art techniques, based on thousands of FBI cases, assess the probability of harm. How likely is the threat to be carried out? What are the overlaps between Threat Assessment and Forensic Linguistics? How can corpora such as CTAD and CTARC best be used?

Through lecture, case study, and workshop formats, this course elucidates forensic linguistic responses to challenges of:

- Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence.
- Domestic and foreign terror campaigns.
- Threats to government, officials, workplace, schools, and private individuals.
- Criminal Communications such as extortion, ransom notes, criminal intelligence disinformation, intercepted communications.

## Instructors

Robert Leonard and James Fitzgerald are the Directors of the Institute for Forensic Linguistics, Threat Assessment and Strategic Analysis at Hofstra University.

**James R. Fitzgerald, MS**, is a violent crime consultant and forensic linguist. Formerly an FBI Supervisory Special Agent and program director of forensic linguistic services for the FBI's Behavioral Analysis Unit (BAU) of the Critical Incident Response Group, National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime, Mr. Fitzgerald focused his efforts on counterterrorism, threat assessment, and other forensic linguistics services. He created and developed the CTAD, a one-of-a-kind computer repository for all criminal-oriented communications in the United States. It was Fitzgerald's groundbreaking forensic linguistic work on the Unabomber case that led to the FBI's recognition of the strategic necessity of forensic linguistics, and prompted his real-life persona to be the central character in the recent Discovery Channel scripted series *Manhunt: Unabomber* which starred Sam Worthington as Jim Fitzgerald, Paul Bettany as Ted Kaczynski, and Chris Noth as Fitzgerald's FBI superior. He the author of a three-book memoir series titled *A Journey to the Center of the Mind*.

**Robert A. Leonard, PhD**, Professor of Linguistics, is Director of the Graduate Program in Linguistics: Forensic Linguistics at Hofstra as well as the Institute for Forensic Linguistics, Threat Assessment, and Strategic Analysis. The *New Yorker Magazine* calls Leonard "One of the foremost language detectives in the country". A Fulbright Fellow for his doctoral work at Columbia University, he has consulted to the FBI and police, counter-terrorism, and intelligence agencies throughout the U.S., Canada, the U.K., and continental Europe, as well as to many defense teams. Other clients include Apple, Facebook, the NYPD Hate Crimes Task Force, and the Prime Minister of Canada. Leonard's testimony proved pivotal in investigating and prosecuting several high-profile cases, including the JonBenet Ramsey murder, death threats to

judges and U.S. Congress members, and the triple homicide of the Coleman family in Illinois. He has been qualified as a forensic expert witness in linguistics and language in courts in 12 states and 6 U.S. federal district courts, and has also testified before International Tribunals in Washington DC and Paris.

### **Requirements and credits**

There are no prerequisites. The course is aimed at both investigative and legal professionals as well as the more academically-oriented student. The costs are \$900 for Continuing Education credit or approx. \$4000 for three graduate credits to be used towards a degree. (Graduate tuition as of spring 2018 – see [https://www.hofstra.edu/sfs/bursar/bursar\\_tuition.html#GradTuition](https://www.hofstra.edu/sfs/bursar/bursar_tuition.html#GradTuition) for the most up-to-date cost.) There are unfortunately no scholarships available, nor can one participate as a distance learner. This is a highly interactive class, both between instructors and participants, and among participants who form small teams for analysis of case evidence.

For Continuing Education credit, register for “H2000 Forensic Linguistics: Applications”

For 3 graduate credits, register for “LING 220 Forensic Linguistics: Applications”

### **Additional information**

Hofstra is 40 min. by train to Brooklyn or Manhattan.

For more information, email Continuing Education coordinator Michael P. Chisena [Michael.Chisena@hofstra.edu](mailto:Michael.Chisena@hofstra.edu) or the office of Robert Leonard at [ForensicLinguistics@hofstra.edu](mailto:ForensicLinguistics@hofstra.edu)

**LING 230**  
**FALL ONE-WEEK INTENSIVE FORENSIC LINGUISTICS COURSE**

**Authorship Analysis; Linguistic Profiling; Discourse, Conversation  
 and Pragmatic Analysis in Criminal and Civil Law Case Evidence;  
 Threat Assessment, Counter-Terrorism, Intelligence,  
 Counter-Intelligence and Law Enforcement**

**Hofstra University in the New York City Metropolitan Area  
 Institute of Forensic Linguistics, Threat Assessment, and Strategic Analysis**

Usually offered in September – for dates in any given year, email  
[ForensicLinguistics@Hofstra.edu](mailto:ForensicLinguistics@Hofstra.edu)

The Institute and the Graduate Program in Linguistics: Forensic Linguistics at Hofstra University is proud to announce that **Dr. Tanya Karoli Christensen**, of Denmark’s University of Copenhagen, will join Hofstra’s **Dr. Robert Leonard** to co-teach this unique one week long learning experience.

### **About the Course**

Our one-week intensive courses predate the formal Forensic Linguistics program at Hofstra and are modeled after the FBI Forensic Linguistics “boot camp” course that Supervisory Special Agent Jim Fitzgerald conceived, organized, and taught (and recruited Leonard to also teach) at Quantico.

The course was run by the Behavioral Analysis Unit (BAU) to teach agents of the FBI and other agencies such as the ATF, Secret Service, Capitol Police, etc. When Fitzgerald retired from the FBI, he and Leonard moved the week-long intensive course to Hofstra, where it became LING 220, now offered each spring.

Ling 230, offered each fall, is a variation on the original model. While there is some overlap with 220, 230 is more broadly introductory to the whole field of forensic linguistics. It covers more foundational linguistic theory, criminal defense strategies, a selection of US civil law cases in addition to criminal cases, and includes European forensic linguistic responses to terrorism, threats, and violence.

### **Cases**

Case studies and class participation exercises are largely from those worked by Christensen or Leonard, which include the JonBenet Ramsey Case, Coleman triple homicides, the Facebook Catfishing Executions, death threats to sitting judges and members of U.S. Congress, the Hummert Murder Case, Apple vs. Microsoft, Apple vs. Amazon, Brooklyn 911 murder, European Syrian ISIS Warrior case, and European threat and extortion letters.

## Course content

A case-based approach to solving legal and law enforcement problems through linguistic analysis:

- Language crimes: Bribery, perjury, solicitation to murder, and threats are all crimes committed through the use of language (in some cases ancillary actions are required for prosecution as well). Select types of language crimes are analyzed and discussed.
- Demographic Linguistic Profiles: Dialectology, sociolinguistics and linguistic variation analyses can indicate a writer's regional and local geographic origin, education level, occupational training, and other demographic features.
- Authorship Analysis: Text comparisons can indicate whether two sets of texts have common authorship. The role of authorship analysis in investigation and litigation is exemplified and discussed through several cases.
- Forensic linguistic analysis of total speech events: Since language vastly underdetermines meaning contextual information is necessary for valid interpretations of any linguistic feature, from conversations to utterances to words and morphemes. The build-up of speech events, the possibly conflicting schemas of participants, their conversational strategies, and speech acts are presented and discussed.
- Legal language: Written text such as contracts, warning labels, and police reports, and spoken data such as police interrogations and courtroom interaction are introduced and analysed in class.

Included will be a special guest lecture by **Dr. Tammy Gales**, Director of Research at Hofstra's Institute for Forensic Linguistics, Threat Assessment, and Strategic Analysis. Dr. Gales will discuss recent threat assessment practices and research that she has spearheaded, such as:

- Examining the differences in markers of commitment between realized vs. non-realized threats.
- Honing threat assessment protocols
- Investigating the linguistic differences between threat types (e.g., stalking vs. harassment) for legal purposes

## Course format and schedule

In addition to lecture and class-based exercises, students will be formed into teams to work on case analyses out of class.

## Instructors

**Dr. Tanya Karoli Christensen**, Associate Professor at the University of Copenhagen, teaches forensic linguistics on the undergraduate and graduate levels and is very active in forensic linguistics, especially on the continent of Europe. The first linguist registered on the Danish National Police's list of forensic experts, she recently helped them secure convictions in a Syrian Warrior case (a Dane traveling to Syria to fight on the side of ISIS) and a hate crime threat case. Dr. Christensen initiated the establishment and expansion of forensic linguistic networks among US universities and law schools as well as in Europe, among academics and police, judges, lawyers, and prison correction services both nationally and internationally. She has presented

extensively in the US, Spain, Italy, Germany, and Denmark, to scholarly audiences, law enforcement professionals, and the public, and she continues to teach police and lawyers in her home country. In Copenhagen, she co-hosted the 2017 Germanic Roundtable in Forensic Linguistics, held for the first time outside of Germany. Dr. Christensen also works with the Danish National Forensic Center in constructing a database of threats and other criminally oriented communications.

**Dr. Robert Leonard**, Professor of Linguistics, heads the Graduate Program in Linguistics: Forensic Linguistics at Hofstra. He also directs the Institute for Forensic Linguistics, Threat Assessment and Strategic Analysis and the Forensic Linguistics Capital Case Innocence Project. The *New Yorker* magazine calls Leonard “One of the foremost language detectives in the country”. A Fulbright Fellow for his doctoral work at Columbia University, he has worked with the FBI and police, protective services, counter-terrorism, and intelligence agencies throughout the U.S., Canada, the U.K. continental Europe, and Asia, as well as with many defense teams. Other clients include Apple, Inc., Facebook, the NYPD Hate Crimes Task Force, and the Prime Minister of Canada. Leonard’s testimony has been pivotal in investigating and prosecuting several high-profile cases, including the JonBenet Ramsey murder, death threats to judges and U.S. Congress members, and the triple homicide of the Coleman family in Illinois.

### **Requirements and credits**

There are no prerequisites. The course is aimed at both investigative and legal professionals as well as the more academically-oriented student. The costs are \$900 for Continuing Education credit or approx. \$4000 for three graduate credits to be used towards a degree. (Graduate tuition as of spring 2018 – see [https://www.hofstra.edu/sfs/bursar/bursar\\_tuition.html#GradTuition](https://www.hofstra.edu/sfs/bursar/bursar_tuition.html#GradTuition) for the most up-to-date cost.) There are unfortunately no scholarships available, nor can one participate as a distance learner. This is a highly interactive class, both between instructors and participants, and among participants who form small teams for analysis of case evidence.

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For more information, email Continuing Education coordinator Michael P. Chisena [Michael.Chisena@hofstra.edu](mailto:Michael.Chisena@hofstra.edu) or the office of Robert Leonard at [ForensicLinguistics@hofstra.edu](mailto:ForensicLinguistics@hofstra.edu)



**Hofstra University** is a private institution whose primary mission is to provide a quality education to its students in an environment that encourages, nurtures, and supports learning through the free and open exchange of ideas, for the betterment of humankind. Hofstra University is fully committed to academic freedom and to the transmission, advancement, and preservation of knowledge for its own academic community and for the community at large. Hofstra University offers undergraduate and graduate programs taught by a research-active and professionally engaged faculty. The same academic excellence guides the curriculum and design of the Master of Art in Forensic Linguistics program at Hofstra University.

The graduate program provides a firm foundation in the linguistics and forensic sciences designed to encourage intellectual curiosity. As with other graduate programs at Hofstra, Forensic Linguistics develops students' analytical and critical thinking, strengthens their communication skills (oral and written), promotes cross-cultural competencies and provides information literacy and technological skills that prepare students to become successful forensic linguistics, among other related professions and aspirations.

The program, like the Hofstra University at large, is devoted to recruiting and retaining a highly qualified and diverse academic community of students and faculty. They are all committed to excellence in teaching, scholarly research and service. The University emphasizes and supports the creation and synthesis of knowledge as well as its dissemination. We believe the best education for students is one informed by their teachers' scholarly and professional pursuits.

The Forensic Linguistics program at Hofstra University recognizes its important role in our local community and in participating in a broader national and international dialogue in forensic and linguistic sciences. It offers programs and seeks opportunities that mutually benefit the Hofstra community and those beyond our campus.

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