

LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING AT SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

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The curriculum at Simon Fraser University (SFU) is varied. At the Linguistics Department there are the following courses: Communication and Language; Introduction to English Vocabulary Analysis; Language, Mind and Brain.; Language, Culture and Society; Introduction to Psycholinguistics; Morphology of English, Cognitive Linguistics, etc.

Usually one semester is allocated per course: 3 hours per week plus office hours – 14 weeks per semester. Students have from 3 to 5 courses per semester. SFU has regular 3 semesters: Fall semester (Sept. – Dec.), Spring semester (Jan. April), Summer semester (May – Aug.). It is a great advantage for students to be engaged in three but not two semesters. They can graduate earlier. Usually students sign in for 4 or even 5 courses per semester. Each course has 3 credit hours, some have 4 credit hours. Students should have minimum 120 credit hours in order to graduate with undergraduate degree. Linguistics department has also Master and PhD programs.

Some of the students major in linguistics, some in TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language), others in other areas: humanities and sciences. There are some international students (many from China, India and some other countries). Their goal is to master English proficiency on a higher level in order to be successful in their majors. The attitude to English is positive.

Practically nobody misses the classes. There are many quizzes, assignments, Mid-term exams and Final exams. Practically all exams are in written form, except practical English. Some of them are taking French (Canada is bilingual) or other languages: Mandarin, Korean, Hindi, Spanish, Italian, Latin, Greek, etc. SFU International is providing great opportunities for students to spend one or two semesters at SFU partner universities in different countries. All credit hours are acceptable and transferable to SFU later: Paris, Prague, Beijing, London, Madrid, etc... There are a couple of field schools in Linguistics in some countries.

Linguistics department has some labs: phonetic, phonology, cognitive linguistics, computational linguistics, psycholinguistics and others. There are special courses in intensive English writing helping students to learn how to write essays, compositions, reports and not only.

TESL program helps students to learn how to teach English as a second and foreign language (phonetics, phonology, morphology, lexicology, text linguistics, etc.) It is followed by very serious practicum when experienced professors observe classes and mark students. In order to be in TESL program students must satisfy special proficiency tests in English.

There are some English proficiency clubs at university for students to be engaged in discussions and debates in English. Many English major students are encouraged to participate as volunteers in some teaching English to children of all ages from immigrant families. Practically all TESL certificate students participate in teaching English as volunteers.

There are some graduate students from Russia and Eastern Europe. Graduate students can be TAs (Teaching Assistants) and earn some money. Some PhD students can apply to teach some courses in linguistics and TESL, but they compete with other instructors. Course and instructor Evaluations happen each semester. The students evaluate instructors and this info is part of each instructor's file. It is one of a very important factors for instructors' future promotions, teenier positions, etc. Office hours are mandatory for each prof and TA. The participation in different linguistic conferences is encouraged, including special research in linguistics.