REGULATIONS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS
(MA)

These Regulations apply to candidates admitted to the Master of Arts curriculum in the academic year 2024-25 and thereafter.

(See also General Regulations and Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula)

Any publication based on work approved for a higher degree should contain a reference to the effect that the work was submitted to the University of Hong Kong for the award of the degree.

The degree of Master of Arts (MA) is a postgraduate degree awarded for the satisfactory completion of a prescribed course of study in one of the following fields: AI, Ethics and Society; Art History; Chinese Historical Studies; Chinese Language and Literature; Creative Communications; English Studies; Hong Kong History; Linguistics; Literary and Cultural Studies; Museum Studies; Music Studies; Philosophy, Politics and Economics; and Translation. These fields of study will not necessarily be offered every year.

MA 1   Admission requirements

To be eligible for admission to the courses leading to the degree of Master of Arts, candidates

(a)   shall comply with the General Regulations;[1]
(b)   shall comply with the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula;
(c)   shall hold
   (i)   a Bachelor's degree of this University; or a qualification of equivalent standard from this University or another comparable institution accepted for this purpose;
   (ii)   in respect of the courses of study leading to the degree of Master of Arts in the field of AI, Ethics and Society, a Bachelor's degree with a major in philosophy; or a Bachelor's degree with a major in another subject with experience of studying issues relevant to AI, Ethics and Society;
   (iii) in respect of the courses of study leading to the degree of Master of Arts in the field of Art History, either a Bachelor's degree with a major in art history; or a Bachelor's degree in another subject and substantial art-related experience;

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[1] In addition to the admission requirement specified in General Regulation G 2, the Faculty also requires:

(a)	TOEFL	:	a Test of Written English (TWE) score of 4 or above or a Writing score of 25 or above in the internet-based TOEFL (not applicable to the MA in the field of Chinese Historical Studies); or
(b)	IELTS	:	(i) a minimum overall Band of 7 with no subtest lower than 5.5 (not applicable to the MA in the fields of Chinese Historical Studies and Translation);
			(ii) a minimum overall Band of 7 with no subtest lower than 6 (applicable to the MA in the field of Translation).

(iv) in respect of the courses of study leading to the degree of Master of Arts in the field of Chinese Language and Literature, a Bachelor's degree with a major in Chinese or a closely related subject;

(v) in respect of the courses of study leading to the degree of Master of Arts in the field of English Studies, a Bachelor's degree with a major in English or a closely related subject;

(vi) in respect of the courses of study leading to the degree of Master of Arts in the field of Hong Kong History, a Bachelor's degree with a major in history; or a Bachelor's degree with a major in another subject with experience of studying history;

(vii) in respect of the courses of study leading to the degree of Master of Arts in the field of Linguistics, a Bachelor's degree with a major in Linguistics or a closely related subject;

(viii) in respect of the courses of study leading to the degree of Master of Arts in the field of Museum Studies, a Bachelor's degree with a major in museum studies or art history; or a closely related subject;

(ix) in respect of the courses of study leading to the degree of Master of Arts in the field of Music Studies, a Bachelor's degree with a major in music; or a Bachelor's degree with a major in another subject with experience studying music;

(x) in respect of the courses of study leading to the degree of Master of Arts in the field of Philosophy, Politics and Economics, a Bachelor's degree with major in Philosophy, Politics and Economics; or a Bachelor's degree with a major in another subject with experience studying either subject;

(xi) in respect of the courses of study leading to the degree of Master of Arts in the field of Translation, a professional qualification deemed to be equivalent to a Bachelor's degree; and

(d) shall satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination if required.

MA 2 Qualifying examination

(a) A qualifying examination and/or interview may be set to test the candidates' formal academic ability or their ability to follow the courses of study prescribed. It shall consist of one or more written papers or their equivalent and may include a project report.

(b) Candidates who are required to satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination and/or interview shall not be permitted to register unless they have satisfied the examiners in the examination and/or interview.

MA 3 Award of degree

To be eligible for the award of the degree of Master of Arts, candidates

(a) shall comply with the General Regulations;

(b) shall comply with the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula; and

(c) shall complete the curriculum as prescribed in the syllabuses and satisfy the examiners in accordance with the regulations set out below.

MA 4   Period of study

(a) The curriculum shall normally extend
  (i) in the fields of Art History, Creative Communications, Linguistics, Museum Studies, and Music Studies, over one academic year of full-time study, with a maximum period of registration of two academic years;
  (ii) in the fields of Chinese Historical Studies, Chinese Language and Literature and Translation, over one academic year of full-time study or two academic years of part-time study, with a maximum period of registration of two academic years of full-time study or four academic years of part-time study; and
  (iii) in the fields of AI, Ethics and Society, English Studies, Hong Kong History, Literary and Cultural Studies, and Philosophy, Politics and Economics over one academic year of full-time study or two academic years of part-time study, with a maximum period of registration of two academic years of full-time study or three academic years of part-time study.
(b) Candidates shall not be permitted to extend their studies beyond the maximum period of registration specified in MA 4(a), unless otherwise permitted or required by the Board of the Faculty.

MA 5   Completion of curriculum

To complete the curriculum, candidates

(a) shall satisfy the requirements prescribed in TPG 6 of the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula;
(b) shall follow courses of instruction and complete satisfactorily all prescribed written work;
(c) shall complete and present a satisfactory capstone experience on a subject within their fields of study;
(d) shall satisfy the examiners in all prescribed courses and in any prescribed form of assessment as prescribed in the syllabuses; and
(e) shall satisfy the examiners in an oral examination if required.

MA 6   Advanced standing

Advanced Standing may be granted to candidates in the field of Translation in recognition of studies completed successfully before admission to the curriculum. Candidates who are awarded Advanced Standing will not be granted any further credit transfer for those studies for which Advanced Standing has been granted. The number of credits to be granted for Advanced Standing shall be determined by the Board of the Faculty, in accordance with the following principles:
(a) a candidate may be granted a total of not more than 20% of the total credits normally required under a curriculum for Advanced Standing unless otherwise approved by the Senate;

(b) application for Advanced Standing will only be considered if the previous studies were done within 5 years before admission to the curriculum;

(c) Advanced Standing will not be granted for elective course and capstone experience; and

(d) credits granted for Advanced Standing shall not normally be included in the calculation of the GPA unless permitted by the Board of the Faculty but will be recorded on the transcript of the candidate.

MA 7 Capstone experience

Subject to the provisions of Regulation MA 5(c), the title of the capstone experience (dissertation, portfolio or individual project) shall be submitted for approval by a date as prescribed in the syllabuses for each field of study. Similarly, the capstone experience shall be presented by a date as prescribed in the syllabuses for each field of study. Candidates shall submit a statement that the capstone experience represents their own work (or in the case of conjoint work, a statement countersigned by their co-worker(s), which shows their share of the work) undertaken after registration as candidates for the degree.

MA 8 Assessment

(a) The assessment for each course shall be as specified in the syllabuses. Only passed courses will earn credits. Grades in all fields of study shall be awarded in accordance with TPG 9(a) or TPG 9(b) of the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula.

(b) Candidates who have failed to satisfy the examiners on the first attempt in not more than two courses, excluding the capstone experience, in an academic year may be permitted to

   (i) present themselves for re-examination in the failed course(s) on a specified date or re-submit their work for the failed course(s) for re-assessment within a specified period determined by the Board of Examiners for Taught Postgraduate Curricula, but no later than the end of the following semester (not including the summer semester); or

   (ii) repeat the failed course(s) by undergoing instruction and satisfying the assessment requirements; or

   (iii) for elective courses, take another course in lieu and satisfy the assessment requirements.

(c) Subject to the provisions of Regulation MA 5(c), candidates who have failed to present a satisfactory capstone experience may be permitted to revise and re-present the capstone experience within a specified period determined by the Board of Examiners for Taught Postgraduate Curricula.

(d) Candidates who have failed to satisfy the examiners in the final review in the field of English Studies may be permitted to present themselves for re-examination on a specified date determined by the Board of Examiners for Taught Postgraduate Curricula, but no later than the end of the following semester (not including the summer semester).

(e)   There shall be no appeal against the results of examinations and all other forms of assessment.

MA 9   Discontinuation

Candidates who

(a)   are not permitted to present themselves for re-examination/re-submission in any written examination or coursework assessment in which they have failed to satisfy the examiners or to repeat the failed course(s); or

(b)   are not permitted to revise and re-present the capstone experience; or

(c)   have failed to satisfy the examiners on second attempt in any coursework assessment, examination, or the capstone experience; or

(d)   have failed more than two courses, excluding the capstone experience, on the first attempt in an academic year; or

(e)   have exceeded the maximum period of registration as specified in MA 4

may be required to discontinue their studies under the provisions of General Regulation G 12.

MA 10   Assessment results

On successful completion of the curriculum, candidates who have shown exceptional merit may be awarded a mark of distinction, and this mark shall be recorded in the candidates' degree diploma.

SYLLABUSES FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS
(MA)

LINGUISTICS

These Syllabuses apply to candidates admitted to the Master of Arts in the field of Linguistics curriculum in the academic year 2024-25 and thereafter.

The objectives of the curriculum are:

1.   To engage students in the field of linguistics, including its scientific, social and human aspects.

2.   To offer postgraduate level education to those who wish to engage as professionals in the study of languages, bilingualism and multilingualism.

3.   To train postgraduate students to conduct research on human language, its theories, empirical methods and applications.

Courses

Candidates must take 2 core courses, 5 elective courses and the capstone experience during the course of study. The candidates must pass the core courses during the period of study.

Not all of the elective courses listed below will be offered each year.

1. Core Courses

LING7004.   Phonetics and Phonology (6 credits)

This course introduces students to two areas of study of the speech sounds of language, phonetics and phonology. In phonetics, students acquire the knowledge of (i) the articulatory and acoustic properties of the speech sound segments, including consonants, glides, vowels, and diphthongs, and (ii) the prosodic characteristics of the suprasegments, such as duration, pitch and stress, associated with the syllables. Students acquire the skills of (i) IPA transcription and (ii) speech analysis, using instruments. In phonology, students learn about (i) the patterns of speech sound systems and (ii) the phonological properties and linguistic functions of the sound segments and suprasegments. Students are required to analyze phonological data, solve phonological problems, and formulate phonological rules.

Assessment: 100% coursework

LING7005.   Grammar: Theories and Applications (6 credits)

This course aims at introducing students to the basic concepts in morphology and syntax. Exercises accompany the topics introduced. Example analyses are drawn from various languages. The following topics in morphology and syntax will be covered: wordhood, word classes, constituency, phrase structure, grammatical relations, semantic roles, and sentence types. The course provides a grounding in grammatical concepts useful for further study in grammatical theory, typology and other areas of linguistics.

Assessment: 100% coursework

2. Elective Courses

LING6014.   The History and Structure of Cantonese (6 credits)

This course offers a wide-ranging account of Cantonese in all of its major facets: its origins, historical development, phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexis, as well as dialectal and social variation. Recent advances in research on Cantonese will also be discussed and reviewed.

Assessment: 100% coursework

LING6017.   Language Development and Language Behavior (6 credits)

The aims of this course are to introduce students to some research methods employed in the

study of language acquisition and language behavior, and to assess the significance of research results in these fields. The main topics to be covered include: stages of language development, reading acquisition, second language learning, language and reading disorders, and the influences of writing systems on language processing.

Assessment: 100% coursework

LING6019.   Grammar and Interaction (6 credits)

This course introduces students to the recent advances in the study of the interface between linguistic structure (grammar) and human interaction (spontaneous communication). It focuses on issues of the identity of basic interactional units and how syntax, prosody, semantics and conversational structure shape one another in naturally occurring talk. Topics include: Syntax of sentences in progress, Adverbial clauses in conversation, Repair and syntax, Conversational turns and their extension.

Assessment: 100% coursework

LING6020.   Advanced Topics in Psycholinguistics (6 credits)

This course will examine issues concerning how language is acquired and processed in the mind. Advanced research topics to be covered in this course are as follows: brain and language development, language and thought, mental systems for words, word segmentation in Chinese and English, dyslexia, language disorders. There will also be practical laboratory classes.

Assessment: 100% coursework

LING6021.   Language Types and Universals (6 credits)

This course introduces linguistic typology as an approach to language structure based inductively on investigation of a wide range of languages. It does not require prior knowledge of many languages, although some knowledge of a language such as German or Japanese is a useful asset. The course includes applications of typology in the field of language acquisition.

Assessment: 100% coursework

LING6022.   Reading Acquisition and Developmental Dyslexia (6 credits)

This course aims to provide a theoretical understanding of reading development and reading disorders in different writing systems, with a specific focus on alphabetic (English) and logographic (Chinese) writing systems. Through attending the course, students will be able to understand how different cognitive processes contribute to the development of skilled word reading and text comprehension and what problems children may encounter during the

course of reading development. Effective treatment and instruction approaches will also be discussed.

Assessment: 100% coursework

LING6023.   Researching Language in Hong Kong (6 credits)

This course introduces students to contemporary research on languages issues with special reference to the study of language and linguistics in Hong Kong. This course will survey recent research on the languages of the HKSAR, and discuss how language research may be critically read and interpreted, with particular attention to research design and methodology. The central aim of the course is to help students to understand the techniques of quantitative and qualitative research, with case studies relevant to Hong Kong. It will be of special interest to students intending to carry out locally-based research for their dissertation.

Assessment: 100% coursework

LING6028.   Topics in Language Acquisition (6 credits)

The course introduces current linguistic approaches to language acquisition in bilingual and multilingual contexts. Topics will include the acquisition of Cantonese and English by bilingual children; acquisition of English as second language by Chinese speakers, and vice versa; and the acquisition of a third or additional language by bilinguals. The course is particularly suitable for those with some experience of language teaching.

Assessment: 100% coursework

LING6029.   Current Issues in Linguistics (6 credits)

In this course current issues in different sub-fields of linguistics are discussed, with an emphasis on new approaches, methodologies and findings. The topics may vary from year to year but will include a selection from such major fields of research as linguistic theory, sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics.

Assessment: 100% coursework

LING6031.   Multilingualism (6 credits)

This course provides a broad overview of issues pertinent to multilingualism, with an emphasis on the linguistic, social and cultural diversity of multilingual societies. Theories and approaches to the study of multilingualism will be illustrated by different multilingual settings around the world, covering Hong Kong and Asia among other contexts. Topics related to the linguistic consequences of multilingualism include code-switching, language change, as well as language contact and creolization. We also look at educational issues involving multilingualism and how they are resolved.

Assessment: 100% coursework

LING6032.   Semantics (6 credits)

This course introduces students to the linguistic study of meaning. It focuses on the meaning of signs and the relation between signifiers and what they stand for. Topics to be examined include both traditional and current approaches to lexical and sentence meaning. The role of semantics in the language system will be addressed. Central problems and theoretical concepts of Semantics will be discussed, with illustration from a variety of languages.

Assessment: 100% coursework

LING7006.   Readings in Linguistics (6 credits)

In this course students read a selection of current works in an area of interest to the student under direction from a supervisor. The course is suitable for those who have a specific research area which they wish to explore. Students are expected to write critical reviews of works they have read, and/or to compile a literature review. The work is intended to prepare the ground for a dissertation in the chosen area.

Assessment: 100% coursework

LING7007.   The Sound Patterns of Language: Phonological Theory and Analysis (6 credits)

Why is English so hard for a Cantonese speaker to pronounce? The sounds of each language are organized by different principles: English allows consonant clusters at word edges (as in strengths) while Cantonese does not. Each human language has its own phonology, a set of principles for organizing its sounds into a unique signature for that language. This course addresses phonological systems from a variety of perspectives. Objectives include teaching the following:

a. an overview of common types of phonological phenomena;
b. analytic tools for determining the phonological patterns found in a given language;
c. theoretical grounding in order to interpret the results of an analysis;
d. argumentation logic to evaluate the validity of analyses;
e. presentation skills for both oral and written professional presentations.

Thus, the primary focus is on analytic, argumentation, and presentation skills, set against the backdrop of phonological systems.

Assessment: 100% coursework

LING7008.   Language and Speech Sounds: Acoustic and Articulatory Phonetics (6 credits)

When speaking, people tend not to actively think about the sounds that make up their language. The task of listening to and producing speech sounds seems so effortless and automatic for native speakers of a language that it can often be one of the most challenging obstacles for the non-native learner to overcome. Contemporary inquiry into the nature of human speech sounds, however, reveals a complex system of phonetic knowledge that language users must use to navigate their linguistic environment. This course introduces students to the nature of speech production and perception and to the properties of the acoustic signal that is transmitted from speaker to listener. Goals of this course are:

a. To understand fundamental principles of phonetic theory and phonetic representation. We will look at current theories of the complicated tasks accomplished by speakers and listeners and arrive at a representation of speech sounds in terms of their articulatory, acoustic and perceptual properties.
b. To introduce students to techniques of phonetic experimentation and modeling. Small-scale experiments will provide training in physiologic measurement, acoustic analysis, and perceptual-data analysis, and reinforce theoretical principles by serving as empirical tests of claims made by such theories.
c. To reflect on the relationship between the physical instantiation of speech and its representation in the mind. Our exploration of this issue will serve as a bridge between phonetics and phonology.
d. To provide practical experience in hearing, producing, and transcribing sounds of the world's languages. Such experience can prepare students for field research on poorly documented or under-described languages or for work involving populations who speak different languages.

Assessment: 100% coursework

LING7009.   Language Structure for Teaching and Learning Languages (6 credits)

Learning a foreign language can be daunting; teaching a foreign language to bewildered students can be frustrating. This course is for the teacher and learner alike; we will look at general properties of how language is structured -- both generically and through specific examples -- starting with the sounds that make up languages and moving to how those sounds form word, how those words form sentences, and how those sentences are interpreted to have both specific and contextual meanings.

Assessment: 100% coursework

LING7010.   Introduction to Speech Prosody (6 credits)

This course is designed to introduce students to the field of speech prosody, i.e. aspects of speech above vowels and consonants. We will explore topics such as: tone, rhythm, question and emotion with a particular focus on English, Mandarin and Cantonese. The course will consist of lectures and hands on lab experience, with an aim to increase students' theoretical and practical knowledge of prosody and its applications for further research, teaching and beyond.

Pre-requisite: LING7004 Phonetics and Phonology

Assessment: 100% coursework

LING7011.   Introduction to Cognitive Linguistics (6 credits)

This course looks at language as a window into the mind. We want to know how language can be understood as a crossroads or interaction between the world and our minds. Our theme is meaning. Instead of focusing on a single theoretical framework aimed at encapsulating every aspect of language, like Optimality Theory or Generative Grammar, this course focuses on Cognitive Linguistics, a less rigid approach, which allows us to explore the myriad strategies to create and convey meaning in language, such as metaphor, imitation, categorization, extrapolation and so on.

Assessment: 100% coursework

LING7012.   Introduction to Data Science for Linguists (6 credits)

This course offers students a detailed introduction to data science and its application to linguistic issues. It covers both theoretical aspects and methods, and assumes no strong background in mathematics or computer science. Following an introduction to data science, a number of statistical concepts and tools will be introduced and applied to linguistic data. Simple natural language processing (NLP) techniques will also be covered. Topics include: sampling, descriptive and inferential statistics, basic parametric and non-parametric statistical tests, regular expressions, morphosyntactic processing, lemmatization etc. Jamovi will be used for statistics and homemade tools for NLP.

Assessment: 100% coursework

LING7013.   Language Emergence and Language Change (6 credits)

This course covers the field of evolutionary linguistics, i.e. how language developed in the past and how languages evolve through time. To this end, it surveys a number of complementary perspectives and disciplines which address the topics of language emergence and language change: cognitive paleoanthropology, comparative psychology, historical linguistics, sociolinguistics, computational linguistics or yet experimental semiotics. Students will overall build a better understanding of language as a cognitive and social device, and investigate evolutionary processes at different time scales, from the remote roots of the faculty of language to the birth of modern languages and contemporary mechanisms of language change.

Assessment: 100% coursework

LING7014.   Language Structure in Context (6 credits)

This course introduces students to a specific language or group of languages on which the teacher concerned has conducted linguistic field work, laboratory or theoretical research. Topics cover the main areas of grammar and phonology of the language chosen for the course. The study of linguistic structure may be complemented with aspects of comparative linguistics, areal typology, language contact, socio-cultural, historical and geographical context. Course work may also cover aspects of the collection, analysis and interpretation of qualitative and quantitative linguistic data on a language. The course therefore provides a unique opportunity for students to apply and expand linguistic knowledge acquired during undergraduate studies and the current Masters programme in a holistic way.

Assessment: 100% coursework

LING7015.   Pragmatics (6 credits)

The course introduces students to linguistic and extralinguistic approaches to language use and the making of meaning, where the roles of language users, their interlocutors, and the contexts in and through which they act and use language are considered paramount. As a contextually-driven perspective on meaning, Pragmatics contrasts with Semantics which tends to focus on instances of language – linguistic expressions – that are abstracted from their real-world contexts of use. Topics to be explored include both canonical and current approaches to meaning with a focus on real-world issues rather than rehearsal of traditional concepts. The role of Pragmatics as a perspective on rather than a component of the language system will be addressed. Central issues and theoretical concepts of Pragmatics will be discussed, with illustration from a variety of languages and cultures.

Assessment: 100% coursework

LING7016.   Linguistic Diversity in China (6 credits)

This course introduces linguistic diversity across modern China, with a focus on structural variation in terms of sound systems, word forms, and grammatical structure. The course takes a descriptive approach to linguistic features with little theoretical or technical linguistic knowledge necessary. Topics covered include the main typological regions in Sinitic and their relationships to each other, the Altaic areal region, the Mainland Southeast Asian region, the Highland region, and approaches to quantifying linguistic diversity.

Assessment: 100% coursework

LING7017.   Sociolinguistics (6 credits)

Linguistic practices are inherently social. To understand what language is, we also need to understand how and why it is used. This course offers an introduction to the field of sociolinguistics, the study of the relationship between language and society. We explore how language use is shaped by different social factors such as identities, media, and language attitudes. The course draws on a range of social contexts, exploring sociolinguistic landscapes

around the world.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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3. Capstone Experience

LING7996.   Capstone Experience: Research Project in Linguistics (18 credits)

The capstone experience is a compulsory and unique component of our Programme. Students will have an opportunity to work with a linguist on a research topic to produce outputs which contribute to the knowledge of the field. To fulfill the requirements of the Programme, students must present their research in both written reports and oral presentations. The written reports should normally be between 3,000 and 5,000 words in length. Each report will be examined by one examiner. The capstone experience must be completed by the deadline prescribed by the Programme.

Assessment: 100% coursework

LING7997.   Capstone Experience: Dissertation (18 credits)

Students will conduct independent research and produce an extended written dissertation under the guidance of their supervisors. They will acquire in-depth knowledge about their research topic, participating in critical discussions and debates in the area, and staying abreast of the latest research developments in the field. They will develop the necessary skills to conduct rigorous and ethical research, including literature review, research design, data collection and analysis, and scholarly writing. Students who present an original research topic, submit a well-developed research proposal, and exhibit strong academic writing skills will be invited to write a dissertation. The dissertation should normally be between 10,000 and 15,000 words in length. Each dissertation will be examined by one examiner. The dissertation must be completed by the deadline prescribed by the Programme.

Assessment: 100% coursework

Assessment

Courses are assessed by 100% coursework. Coursework assessment is based on essays, term papers, projects, oral presentations, quizzes, and other kinds of oral or written work as prescribed by the course instructors.

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