

Welcome to Linguistics!

Hi Freshers,

I am your linguistics rep for this year and am looking forward to meeting you in October! Congratulations on choosing the best college in Cambridge (not that I am at all biased).

Although linguistics is a very small subject with just 3 undergrads and any new freshers, we are also part of the Modern & Medieval languages faculty, which gives us access to their well-stocked library as well as frequent MML socials and the annual MML dinner. You will get a chance to meet the other MML freshers at the subject dinner in freshers' week - I will contact you again with the details.

I am starting my second year of the linguistics course, so I'll be able to answer any questions or worries you may have about studying linguistics - feel free to email me (ct496@cam.ac.uk) or message me on facebook (Charlie Thorpe). In this letter, I'll run through a couple of useful things that will help you in the first few weeks of term.

Linguistics is a very broad course in first year, aiming to cover all major areas. Whilst this can be a little unnerving at first, by the end of the year you'll be surprised by how much you've learnt! You will have 4 lectures a week at the Sidgwick site, which is a ten minute walk or five minute cycle from Pembroke. Lectures are a great way of getting to know your coursemates since there are only around 30 of you in the lecture! In my first year, we tended to get a group of us together for lunch afterwards, which was a nice way of getting to know everyone and also of consolidating the lecture and later revising the content in exam term. You will also have around 4 supervisions a week, which are in smaller groups and are an informal discussion about a piece of work completed prior to the supervision. The Sidgwick site is also home to the MML library, which is much better equipped for linguistics than Pembroke's library - you can also take books out of the rather ugly MML library to use in Pembroke's much prettier library. You will also have two academics who will look after the pastoral or personal aspect of university and the academic side. Your Director of Studies or DoS, who will help you with any academic problems, will be Dr David Willis. David is friendly and approachable and is based in Selwyn college, which again is not far from Pembroke.

Of course, there is a lot of work and studying to be done as a Cambridge student. However, the workload is easily manageable if you establish a good routine and do not forget to set plenty of time aside to relax and catch up with friends! Despite what you may hear, most people manage to get involved with various different societies and spend lots of time with friends as well as studying.

This year we are also in the process of setting up a 'parenting' system within the linguistics department similar to the college parenting system. You should hear some more details on this front from me soon, but essentially every family will consist of 3 or 4 children from different colleges and 4 parents, who will be linguistics second years from different colleges. This way, linguistics freshers will be able to get to know each other a bit quicker since freshers' week activities are usually based around your own college.

I am very much looking forward to meeting you, as are the other undergraduate linguists at Pembroke, and to expanding our linguistics crew at Pembroke over many brunches - Pembroke brunch is after all the best! Once again, if you have any questions or worries about linguistics or Cambridge in general, please drop me an email.

Linguist love,

Charlie