

SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY

Department Description

The Speech Language Pathology Department provides information about speech and language pathology and audiology to students who have an interest in this field. Instruction in this program is balanced between the theoretical and the pragmatic. Students study the causes, characteristics, and therapies for various disorders of communication.

Most students select this major in preparation for further study of communicative disorders in graduate school. Admission to graduate programs in speech-language pathology and audiology are highly competitive. Following graduate school, they may enter the field as speech-language pathologists or audiologists. Others choose the major to gather information that is beneficial to their professional and personal lives.

Study Abroad

Saint Mary's has a long history of providing quality international programs as an essential part of our educational mission—forming women leaders who will make a difference in the world. As this world becomes increasingly interdependent, the College offers an expanding range of semester, year, semester break, and summer study and service programs in a wide variety of countries, and encourages students to take advantage of them. Learn more about the various Study Abroad opportunities (<https://catalog.saintmarys.edu/undergraduate/academic-life/international-programs/>).

Governmental Requirements for some Professions

Some professions (e.g. nursing, teaching, social work, speech therapy, accounting, etc.) require specific requirements for licensure and/or hiring (e.g. acceptable criminal background check, sex offender check, drug and alcohol testing, citizenship or permanent resident status documentation, valid immigration status for non-US citizens, valid social security number, etc.). Such requirements may also apply to required clinical and fieldwork, or other out-of-classroom experience necessary to complete degree requirements in the majors related to these professions. These requirements are determined by laws and regulations at both the state and federal levels and are subject to change. *Saint Mary's College strongly urges all admitted and current students to research and understand the appropriate requirements for their intended course of study and profession. Compliance with these requirements is the responsibility of the student and the graduate.* You should become informed and continue to monitor such requirements as laws and other legal requirements are subject to change.

Programs

There are several paths to completion in Speech Language Pathology.

- Bridging Program in Speech Language Pathology (<https://catalog.saintmarys.edu/undergraduate/programs/speech-language-pathology/bridge-program-speech-language-pathology/>)
- Speech Language Pathology, 4+1 BA-MS - 41SP (<https://catalog.saintmarys.edu/undergraduate/programs/speech-language-pathology/speech-language-pathology-41-ba-ms/>)

- Speech Language Pathology, Bachelor of Arts - SLP (<https://catalog.saintmarys.edu/undergraduate/programs/speech-language-pathology/speech-language-pathology-bachelor-arts/>)

Continue at Saint Mary's

- Speech Language Pathology, Master of Science (<https://catalog.saintmarys.edu/graduate/programs/speech-language-pathology-master-science/>)
- Speech Language Pathology, 4+1 BA-MA (<https://catalog.saintmarys.edu/undergraduate/programs/speech-language-pathology/speech-language-pathology-41-ba-ms/>)

Department Chair

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Faculty

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Student Learning Outcomes

Students will exhibit the knowledge and skills required in the discipline of Speech Language Pathology:

- To provide a program that focuses on the study of both normal and disordered processes of speech, language, and hearing, and the application of such knowledge to the diagnosis and treatment of communication disorders, as well as the basic and applied scientific aspects of human communication sciences and disorders.
- To provide our students with an academic background necessary for graduate education and professional certification in speech language pathology.
- To provide our students with extensive and varied practicum experiences in the diagnosis and treatment of communication disorders.
- To provide our students with opportunities to be involved in research and to learn about various research methodologies and instrumentation.
- To provide our students with opportunities to become proficient in writing and speaking within the discipline.
- To systematically provide our students with structured service learning opportunities and help in integrating learning within the context of communicative disorders.

Speech Language Pathology Courses

SLP 100 FYS: Finding Your Voice: Communication, Identity, and Access (3)

College is often described as a time to “find your voice.” This seminar creates a structured, supportive space for first-year students to build community, strengthen college-level communication, and connect personal experience to broader social issues. Through short readings, media, discussion, and applied activities, students explore how identity and social context shape the way we communicate and how we are perceived. We examine how power, privilege, and oppression influence whose voices are amplified, whose are dismissed, and what it means to feel welcome or unwelcome in groups and institutions. Students will practice practical skills for self-advocacy, allyship, and community engagement—learning how to listen across difference, participate in difficult conversations, and communicate clearly for real audiences and purposes.

SLP 190 Special Topics (1-3)

This is a special topics course about various topics.

SLP 220 Introduction to Communicative Disorders (3)

A study of the causes, characteristics, and treatments of speech, language, and hearing disorders. Course content also includes speech and language development and suggestions for living and working with those who have communicative disorders.

SLP 224 American Sign Language 1 (3)

Introduction to basic sign language. American Sign Language syntax and vocabulary are emphasized as well as sign communication, which focuses on the native language of the Deaf. Appreciation and awareness of Deaf culture is a major consideration within the course.

SLP 225 Introduction to Assistive Technology (3)

This course introduces assistive technology (AT) tools that support communication, mobility, and daily living for individuals with disabilities across the lifespan. Students will explore both low-tech and high-tech solutions, including AAC systems, switch access, adaptive tools, smart home devices, and power mobility equipment. Coursework includes lectures, case studies, hands-on activities in the SPARK Lab, and a campus-wide accessibility mapping project that examines physical barriers to mobility and access. Students will apply ethical reasoning, interdisciplinary collaboration, and practical problem-solving to design inclusive solutions grounded in disability justice. No prior experience with AT or clinical settings is required. Corequisite: SPKL 225

SLP 230 Anatomy and Physiology of the Speech and Hearing Mechanism (3)

A survey of the anatomy and physiology for respiration, phonation, articulation, the nervous system, and hearing. Areas of study will include skeletal structures, muscles, tendons, nerves and circulation necessary for speech and hearing. Prerequisite SLP 220.

SLP 240 Phonetics (3)

A study of the basic principles of speech production: anatomy and physiology of the speech mechanism, phonetic principles of the International Phonetic Alphabet, application of phonetic theory and dialects as represented by phonetics.

SLP 310 Child Language Development (3)

A study of the development of oral language communicative competence in infants, toddlers, and children. Course content focuses on the development of the linguistic domains of form (phonology, morphology, and syntax), content (semantics) and use (pragmatics). In addition, social, cognitive, and neurological aspects are addressed. Prerequisite: SLP 220.

SLP 324 American Sign Language 2 (3)

This course is designed to further develop ASL skills learned in ASL 1. Along with some review, new content and vocabulary will be introduced as well as important issues and information related to the Deaf/Hard of Hearing community. Prerequisite: SLP 224

SLP 330 Speech and Hearing Sciences (3)

An introduction to speech and hearing science, including acoustics, speech production, and instrumentation used in the study of speech and hearing science. Prerequisite: SLP 220.

SLP 334 Evaluation Procedures in Speech and Language Pathology (3)

This course provides the student with information about the process of evaluating and diagnosing speech-language disorders. A broad range of information and laboratory experience relevant to evaluation procedures in speech and language pathology is provided. Areas of emphasis include: the diagnostic process, collection of intake information, common assessment procedures, assessment in specific disorder areas, language sample collection and analysis, report writing, and standardized test administration. Prerequisites: SLP 220, SLP 230, SLP 240, and SLP 310.

SLP 340 Audiology for the Speech-Language Pathologist (3)

This course is designed to familiarize the student with the field of audiology in general and provide the foundations for understanding the auditory system, performing and interpreting basic hearing tests as they relate to auditory disorders, and gaining an appreciation for the profession of audiology. Prerequisite: SLP 220

SLP 350 Speech Sound Disorders (3)

This course is designed to introduce you to the study of normal and disordered articulation. You will gain familiarity with traditional views of articulation disorders and their treatment as well as current treatment methods derived from the study of phonology. Provides the opportunity to develop and analyze therapy programs for speech sound disorders from a variety of etiologically defined groups. Prerequisites: SLP 240, SLP 310, and SLP 334.

SLP 360 Adult Acquired Language Disorders (3)

This course will provide introductory knowledge and skills to understanding adult acquired communication disorders. The course content will focus on disordered communication processes associated with acquired neurogenic disorders (i.e., stroke (left and right hemisphere disorders), traumatic brain injury, dementia, and neurodegenerative disease processes (i.e., Parkinson’s Disease, ALS, etc.). The social, financial, cultural issues that are impacted due to these disorders will be emphasized.

SLP 380 Medical Rehabilitation (3)

This course will provide introductory knowledge and skills to understanding the neuroscience of medical rehabilitation. The course content will focus on medical terminology, examples of typical and atypical communication and swallowing disorders in the health care setting, related anatomy and physiology of such disorders, ethical decision-making theories, counseling, end of life issues, healthcare management of older adults, national trends in neuro rehabilitation, and as applicable evidence from the scientific literature. The social, financial, cultural issues that are impacted will be emphasized.

SLP 412 Clinical Methods and Supervised Observation (3)

This course provides the student with information about clinical methods and intervention procedures for individuals with developmental and acquired communication disorders. In addition, a minimum of 25 supervised observation hours are required. Prerequisites: SLP 220, SLP 230, SLP 240, SLP 310, SLP 330, and SLP 334.

SLP 420 Aural Rehabilitation (3)

This course introduces students to the theories and procedures used to provide aural/audiological rehabilitation to children and adults who have hearing loss and to provide concomitant services to their family members. Prerequisites: SLP 340

SLP 430 Neurology for Speech Language Pathologists (3)

Course offering provides information related to basic structures and functions of the human neurological system with emphasis on human communication processes and related functions

SLP 450 Multi-Cultural Populations: Communication Disorders Across Cultures (3)

This course examines the background, values/beliefs, and language issues of culturally and linguistically diverse populations. Specifically, Black, Latino, Native American, and Asian populations are studied to aid in distinguishing language differences from disorders.

SLP 485 SLP Clinical Practicum (3)

Provides clinical experience for students interested in speech language pathology. Prerequisite: SLP 220, SLP 230, SLP 240, SLP 310, SLP 330, SLP 334 and SLP 412.

SLP 486 Research Practicum (1-3)

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to research in the fields of speech language pathology and audiology. Through participation in original experimental or theoretical investigations and in collaboration with a member of the faculty, students will relate research to clinical practice, both from a historical perspective and a contemporary, evidence-based practice perspective. Students will enhance their research skills, and hone their clinical and research interests and professional development through this course. Repeatable to 6 credit hours.

SLP 490 Special Topics (1-3)

Topics of special interest in communicative disorders not covered in the regular department offerings. May be repeated with different topic.

SLP 497 Independent Study (1-3)

Students may carry independent study with an approved instructor. Content is dependent on student need and interest. Prerequisite: Department Approval.

SLP 499 Internship (1-3)

Four Year Plan for Speech Language Pathology Major

Sample four year plan.

Officially accepted into the major at the end of the sophomore year if all foundation courses have been taken.

Course	Title	Credits
First Year		
First Semester		
SLP 220	Introduction to Communicative Disorders (fall preferred, may take spring)	3
Supporting course (PSYC 156 or PSYC 157 recommended)		3
Credits		6
Second Semester		
SLP 220 Intro to Communicative Disorders (If you didn't take in fall)		

SLP 230	Anatomy and Physiology of the Speech and Hearing Mechanism	3
Credits		3
Second Year		
First Semester		
SLP 240	Phonetics	3
Credits		3
Second Semester		
SLP 310	Child Language Development	3
SLP 330	Speech and Hearing Sciences	3
Credits		6
Third Year		
First Semester		
SLP 340	Audiology for the Speech-Language Pathologist	3
MATH 214	Introduction to Statistics (or SOC 372 or PSYC 324)	3
		3
Credits		9
Second Semester		
SLP 412	Clinical Methods and Supervised Observation	3
SLP Elective		3
Supporting NSN or NSL recommended		3
Credits		9
Fourth Year		
First Semester		
SLP 485	SLP Clinical Practicum (1/2 of the seniors will take in the fall. The other half will take in the spring semester.)	3
SLP 430	Neurology for Speech Language Pathologists	3
SLP Elective		3
Credits		9
Second Semester		
SLP 420	Aural Rehabilitation	3
Credits		3
Total Credits		48