Language and Communication in the Digital Age

Module Coordinator	Neasa Ní Chiaráin, Centre for Language and Communication Studies, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
What will you learn from this Elective?	This Elective is an introduction to the field of language and communication. You will learn about the inherent interdisciplinarity of language study and be invited to explore possible relationships between it and your own experience and field of study. You will consider how language 'works' - how the stream of sounds we produce are highly structured to convey meaning. You will consider how language can be expressed in other modalities, such as in sign language, or indeed, in written language. You will be given the opportunity to reflect on challenges confronting linguistic communities, particularly on the situation of endangered languages, both globally and specifically here in Ireland. Digital technologies impact on all issues concerning language today, including language teaching/learning and the maintenance of endangered languages. During the course of this module you will learn about cutting edge research in speech and language technologies, particularly the research being carried out in the School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences.
Student Workload	This Trinity Elective is a blended module, with both online and face-to-face delivery: - Six 2-hour face-to-face lectures: 12 hours - Fortnightly focused online activies: 20 hours - Preparation/reading/supporting activities/topic research/group project work and assessment activities, including personal reflective journal and linguistic exercises: 60 hours.
Assessment Components	Assessment will be carried out over the course of the module and will take different forms to ensure that specific learning outcomes are achieved. It will include items such as the following: (i) online multiple choice questions, exercises and quizzes that assess knowledge and understanding of the lecture content and associated readings. (formative assessment, 30%) (ii) Group design and development of a webpage. This aims to enable students to communicate understanding of a particular topic to the general public while extending their digital skills. There is considerable scope for topic choice, provided it is relevant to the issues covered in the module and agreed with the coordinator. The webpage could, for example, explain a particular issue concerning language structure or it could be aimed at raising public awareness of a societal challenge addressed in the module, (e.g. the use of technology to promote an endangered language). The use of self-generated multimedia content (e.g., speech or video recordings, such as interviews with people involved with a particular issue) is

	encouraged. No specific coding knowledge is required as website builders will be used. Multidisciplinary groups of up to 5 students will be formed. A presentation of the webpages will be given at the end of the semester. (50%) (iii) learning journal: weekly reflective pieces that demonstrate personal engagement with topics discussed in the lectures (200-400 words per week). (20%)
Indicative Reading List	• Crystal, D. (2007). How language works. Penguin UK. A full reading list or list of resources will be provided to enrolled students.
Learning Outcomes	On successful completion of this module, students should be able to: 1. identify and distinguish between different approaches to the study of language 2. discuss the characteristics of spoken language and how it functions to enable communication 3. describe the ways in which signed language conveys meaning, and how both signed and written forms of language differ from spoken language 4. describe the essential processes of language learning 5. critically engage in discussion of the challenges for linguistic diversity in today's globalised world, and of particular issues pertaining to the survival of Irish in Ireland 6. critically discuss how technology is reshaping how humans communicate, and its potential impact for linguistic communities in the digital age.