• Why are there so many (7000+) languages? Where do new ones come from?

• How and why do dialects form and persist?

• Why do some language changes happen all over the world, while others don't happen at all?

• How can we know what long-dead languages sounded like?

• How can we determine historical relatedness between languages?

• Where do new words come from, and what becomes of old words?

• Are ancient languages qualitatively different from modern ones?

• Is language a technology?

Problem-set-based introduction to historical and comparative linguistics. Topics include sound change, morphosyntactic change, changes in the lexicon, reconstruction using the comparative method, internal reconstruction, variation and change within individuals and groups, diffusion of change, language contact, tonogenesis, philology, and language families. **Prerequisite:** LING 101. **Satisfies** Focus Capacities—Past requirement in the IDEAS In Action curriculum.