

Formal Syntax

Linguistics 5330
Fall 2014

General Information

Instructor: Joey Sabbagh
Email: sabbagh@uta.edu

Class Time & Location: T, Th, 2PM-3:20PM,
TH 119
Office Hours: Wednesday 11AM-12PM or
by appointment, Hammond Hall 126

Course Overview

This course is intended to be an introduction to Syntax, the study of sentence structure. The main goal of this course will be to learn how to carry out syntactic analysis generally, and how to argue for syntactic analysis more specifically. A second and equally important focus of this course will be to highlight some of the discoveries and insights that have emerged from the GENERATIVE theoretical framework associated with the linguist Noam Chomsky and known as *Principles & Parameters* or, in its more recent incarnation, as *Minimalism*. The extent to which we will look at the more recent theoretical developments will depend on your questions and interests. Either way, the key assumptions and formal details of this theoretical framework will be gradually developed throughout the semester through class discussion and through multiple problems sets. By the end of this course, you should be well-equipped to carry out basic syntactic analysis on your own, and you should be familiar with some of the key theoretical and empirical developments of the field.

Topics to be covered

The following is a list of topics to be covered (subject to some changes as we go along), roughly in the order in which they will be covered. There are no set dates for when these topics will be covered. We will move from topic to topic at a pace that works best for the majority of the class.

- A. Categories and Constituent Structure
- B. Constituent Structure and C-Command, Anaphora and the Binding Principles.

- C. Phrase Structure, X-Bar Theory, and beyond
- D. Thematic Roles and Alignment of Thematic Roles and Syntactic Structure
- E. Functional Categories: Tense and the Complementizer System
- F. Head Movement
- G. Head Movement: English, French, and Irish compared
- H. Interrogative questions and Wh-Movement
- I. Passive Clauses and Case
- J. Raising
- K. Unification of Movement rules (Move- α)
- L. Control

Course Requirements

The primary work for this course will consist of roughly 10 problem sets (which includes a midterm and final exam). Problem sets will generally be handout out on a Thursday and due the following Thursday **in class** (you will always be given at least one week to work on these problem sets). Solutions to these problem sets must be typed and should have a meaningful, essay style structure (see below for more details and specific guidelines). All problem sets (including the midterm and final exam) will be weighted equally (9%) in terms of how they will contribute to your final grade.

In addition to problem sets, participation in this class is required. Participation includes, but is not limited to: Attendance at each class meeting; working in a group on homework assignments; and contributing to class discussions.

Grading

Problem sets, the midterm and the final will receive a letter grade. In calculating your final grade, each letter grade you earn will be converted to a numerical value between 0 and 4 as follows: A = 4, A- = 3.5, B = 3, B- = 2.5, C = 2, C- = 1.5, D = 1, D- = 0.5 and F = 0. A grading rubric will be handed out with the first assignment, which will define the basis upon which grades are assigned. At the end of the semester, grades will be averaged and weighed based on the percentages stipulated below to determine your final grades. Final grades will be assigned as follows: 100-90% = A, 89-79% = B, 78-68 % = C, 67-57% = D, 56-0% = F.

- Problem sets, midterm, and final exam = 90% (9% each).
- Participation = 10%

Textbook

There will be no formal textbook for this course. The material that you would pick up from a textbook will instead come from lectures, class discussion, and from your work you do on the problem sets which will often form the basis for class discussion. Selected chapters from textbooks will be made available online via Blackboard as needed. Because there is no textbook, class attendance will be crucial and you will need to be a good note taker or be friendly with someone in the class who is.

If you are interested in a textbook as a supplemental recourse, the following textbooks may be useful. I have the first two and the fourth book, which you can “check out” from me for a limited time. The library should have all three.

- Andrew Carnie. 2012. *Syntax: A Generative Introduction*. Wiley-Blackwell Publishers.
- Dominique Sportiche, et. al. 2013. *An Introduction to Syntactic Analysis and Theory*. Wiley-Blackwell Publishers.
- Liliane Haegeman. 1994. *Introduction to Government & Binding Theory*. Blackwell Publishers.
- David Adger. 2003. *Core Syntax: A Minimalist Approach*. Oxford. (Also downloadable)

Class Policies

The following “class policies” are intended to help foster a friendly and collegial environment in the classroom so that we can focus on learning. Please respect these policies throughout the semester.

Working together: You are encouraged and *expected* to work together on all assignments for this course, including the midterm and final exam. However, unless otherwise specified, what you turn in must be your own work. If you do work with others on assignments, always identify your collaborators on your write-up. Working collaboratively on assignments is practically a guarantee of greater success in this course (i.e. a better grade), and will also help establish a fun and collegial environment in the classroom.

Attendance & Late Assignments: Attendance is required. Since this is a small class, your absence will be noticed (and noted) even if attendance is not formally taken. If you miss more than 3 classes, you will likely not receive credit for participation. More importantly, since each class period will typically build on the previous one, *missing even one class can put you seriously behind*. If you absolutely must miss class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed (what was discussed in class, if there was a hand out or assignment that was passed out, etc.). Because assignments will be discussed in class, typically on the day

they are due, late assignments will generally not be accepted for credit after the due date. You may still turn in an assignment even if it is late if you desire feedback on your work.

Grade Related Matters: You should always feel free to discuss your grades and progress in this course with me. In fact, you should do so, early and often! If you earn a grade on an assignment that is less than you were expecting, you should also always feel free to discuss this issue with me. To do so, just schedule an appointment to visit me in person to review your assignment. Please do not wait until the end of the semester to discuss an assignment from a much earlier point in the semester.

Electronic Devices: To ensure the best possible classroom environment, cell-phones should be turned off and completely out of site. If you appear to be texting, this will distract me and your classmates and will bring the class to a halt. If you have personal matters to tend to which require a use of a cell-phone, or if you just want to tell a friend how bored you are, kindly step outside of the classroom to do so.

University Policies

Drop Policy: Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://www.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

Americans with Disabilities Act: The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

Title IX: The University of Texas at Arlington is committed to upholding U.S. Federal Law "Title IX" such that no member of the UT Arlington community shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination

under any education program or activity. For more information, visit www.uta.edu/titleIX.

Academic Integrity: Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence. I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System Regents' Rule 50101, Section 2.2, suspected violations of university's standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the University.

Electronic Communication: UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

Student Feedback Survey: At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as "lecture," "seminar," or "laboratory" shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student's feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington's effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

Final Review Week: A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week unless specified in the class syllabus. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit

content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

Emergency Exit Procedures: Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.