

Linguistics 5330/4303

Formal Syntax

Spring 2012
UT Arlington

Course Information

Instructor: Joey Sabbagh

Contact Information: Office: Hammond Hall 126, Email: sabbagh@uta.edu

Class meeting time & location: T, Th: 2-3:20PM, Trimble Hall 119

Office Hours: Wed 11-12 and 2-3, or by appointment.

Course Overview and Objectives

Syntax is the study of the principles and processes (or rules) by which sentences are constructed in human languages. Detailed investigation into sentence structure reveals that sentences are not formed simply by stringing words together. Instead, sentences have properties that involve a complex hierarchical organization which is rule governed and systematic within and across languages.

In this course, we will develop an approach to syntactic analysis that is founded in broad ideas that stem from the theoretical framework known as *Principles and Parameters* (aka. “Government and Binding”) and its more recent incarnation known as *Minimalism*.^{1,2}

While emphasis is placed on developing an understanding of the concepts of the above mentioned frameworks, the primary objectives of this course are for you to gain familiarity with the central empirical phenomena, methodology, analytical reasoning and argumentation skills which are important for doing syntactic analysis within the context of any theoretical program. These objectives will be accomplished through regular written work (problem sets) and through classroom discussion.

Requirements

(i) Homework Assignments (60%): There will be 6 assignments total. These assignments will generally be handed out on Thursday and due **at the beginning of class** on Thursday of the following week. Assignments will be returned to you the following week. Late assignments will generally not be graded in a timely fashion, and may not receive full credit. Your lowest assignment will not be counted towards your overall grade. (NOTE: An assignment that is not handed in or is incomplete does not qualify for being dropped.)

¹Chomsky, Noam. 1981. *Lectures on Government and Binding*. Foris, Dordrecht.

²Chomsky, Noam 1995. *The Minimalist Program*. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.

Homework assignments in this class will generally not focus on review and regurgitation of what is covered in class, but rather will focus on applying what you have learned in class to new problems. The homework assignments will also give you opportunities to develop original ideas of your own. Assignments may be quite difficult in some cases. You are therefore strongly encouraged (in fact, expected) to work together on all homework problems (as well as on the take-home exam). I only require that you write up your work independently, so that what you hand in really is your own work. Make sure to attribute any ideas or proposals that originate with someone other than yourself to the relevant individual(s), and **always write the names of the people you worked with at the top of your paper.**

Many class discussions will center around the homework assignments. It is therefore important that you complete them on time and be ready to discuss your solutions in class on the day that they are due.

Assignment Schedule:

	<i>Handed Out</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
Assignment 1	Thursday, Jan. 31	Thursday, Feb. 7
Assignment 2	Thursday, Feb. 14	Thursday, Feb. 21
Assignment 3	Thursday, Feb. 28	Thursday, March 8
Assignment 4	Thursday, March 21	Thursday, March 28
Assignment 5	Thursday, April 4	Thursday, April 11
Assignment 6	Thursday, April 18	Tuesday, April 25
Final Exam	Thursday, May 2	Thursday, May 9

(ii) **Short exercises** (15%): will also be assigned on weeks when there is not a regular assignment out. These short exercises will not require the full essay structure write-up of a normal assignment. They will be graded as Pass or Fail. The exercises will make up 15% of your Homework grade, and must be turned in **on time** for credit.

(iii) **Take Home Final** (15%): The final will be in the same basic format as the homework assignments, but a bit more time-consuming.

(iv) **Participation/Attendance** (10%): Regular attendance is extremely important if you wish to do well in this class. Each class will build on material from the previous class. In some classes, we may take small steps forward, in other classes, we may take giant leaps forward. Therefore, **Missing even one class may put you seriously behind.** If you must be absent from class for whatever reason, it is your responsibility to find out about the material you missed.

Textbook

There is no textbook for this course. Selections from certain textbooks may be made available if needed. If you find yourself completely unable to survive without a textbook, here are two that might be useful. I'll be more than happy to assist you making the connections between the selections of this book and the topics discussed covered in class.

- Carnie, Andrew. 2002. *Syntax: A Generative Introduction*. Blackwell Publishers.
- Radford, Andrew. 2004. *English Syntax: An introduction*. Cambridge University Press.

Because there is no official textbook for this course, it is imperative that you come to each class and take detailed notes (or make friends with a good note-taker). It is also important that you review your notes and make sure that you understand them, and get clarification early and often (from me or from your classmates) if there is something you do not understand. As mentioned above, each class meeting will build on the previous class. Missing even one class may put you seriously behind.

Logistics on Grading and Grade Assignments

Each assignment and the final exam will receive a letter grade. The letter grade that you earn for each assignment will correspond to a numerical score 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. Hence, each individual assignment will be worth up to a total of 4 points. At the end of the semester, grades will be averaged and weighed based on the percentages stipulated above 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. The expectations for every assignment will be basically the same, and letter grade you receive will be based on how well you meet the expectations outlined in the rubric that will be handed out with your first assignment.

You should feel free to discuss your progress in the class with me at any time.

Outline of Topics

This order of topics and the topics themselves are subject to change based on the class dynamics.

WEEK 1 (Jan. 14, 16) / *Generative grammar; Constituent structure and phrase structure rules*

WEEK 2 (Jan. 22, 24) / *Constituent structure and phrase structure*

WEEK 3 (Jan. 29, 31) / *Constituent structure (cont.); Subcategorization*

WEEK 4 (Feb. 5, 7) / *X-Bar theory; Tense/Infl as the head of the clause; The auxiliary system*

WEEK 5 (Feb. 12, 14) / *Embedded clauses*

WEEK 6 (Feb. 19, 21) / *Interrogatives*

WEEK 7 (Feb. 26, 28) / *VP-Internal Subjects; Passive sentences*

WEEK 8 (March 5, 8) / *Sentential subjects, extraposition, and Case-theory; Unaccusative and Unergative predicates*

WEEK 9 / (March 19, 21) *Infinitival Clauses: ECM and Raising*

WEEK 10 (March 26, 28) / *Infinitival Clauses (cont.): Raising (cont.); Control*

WEEK 11 / (April 2, 4) *Infinitival Clauses (cont.): Raising and Control (cont.)*

WEEK 12 / (April 9, 11) *TBA*

WEEK 13 / (April 16, 18) *TBA*

WEEK 14 (April 23, 25) / *TBA*

WEEK 15 / (April 30, May 2) *TBA, Summary, Q & A*

Other 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. Contact the Financial Aid Office for more information.

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.

As a student, your responsibility rests with informing the instructor in writing or email and providing the official documentation from the Office for Students with Disabilities no later than the end of the second week of classes.

Academic Dishonesty: At The University of Texas at Arlington, academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form. Students involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from UTA.

According the UT System Regents' Rules and Regulations, "Scholastic dishonesty" includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts" (Part One, Chapter VI, Section 3, Subsection 3.2, Subdivision 3.22).

While the Department of Linguistics and TESOL hopes to foster a sense of community in which students can enhance their educational experience by conferring with each other about the lectures, readings, and assignments, all work submitted must be the product of each student's own effort. Students are expected to know and honor the standards of academic integrity followed by American universities; ignorance of these standards is not an excuse for committing an act of academic dishonesty (including plagiarism). If you have questions, please speak with your instructor, your academic advisor, or the department chair.

Please be advised that departmental policy requires instructors to formally file charges with the Office of Student Conduct, following procedures laid out for faculty there

(<http://www.uta.edu/studentaffairs/conduct/faculty.html>), as well as notify the department chair of the filing of the charges.

Student Support Services Available: UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to resources@uta.edu, or view the information at www.uta.edu/resources.

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 a 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 course 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.

Auditors: The Department of Linguistics and TESOL has a "no audit" policy, with one exception. With instructor permission, Department of Linguistics and TESOL faculty, staff, and students enrolled in a linguistics/TESOL degree program may be able to audit a course. Audited courses cannot be used to satisfy any degree or program requirements/electives, nor will any credit (including retroactive) be granted for audited courses.