

Formal Syntax

Linguistics 4303

General Information

Instructor: Joey Sabbagh
Email: sabbagh@uta.edu

Class Time and Location: 11AM-12:20PM, PH
200

Office Hours and Location: Tuesday 1PM-2PM
or by appointment, Hammond Hall 126

Course Overview

This course is an introduction to the systematic study of natural language syntax. The course presents the motivation for the modern generative approach to the scientific study of language and develops systematically a generative transformational treatment of the most basic syntactic constructions of natural language. The intellectual emphasis of the course is on understanding the reasoning process that guides syntactic analysis.

Course requirements

- **Problem sets (approximately 8).** Problem sets will generally be handed out on Tuesday and due in class the following Tuesday. Solutions to problems sets must be typed and are expected to have an essay style structure (more specific guidelines will be discussed when the first assignment is handed out).
- **Short exercises (usually 1 per week).** Exercises will be designed to help you get more practice with the basic concepts of this course (drawing trees, thinking up data, etc.). They must be handed in but they need not be typed and they need not have the essay style structure of a problem set.
- **Take home midterm.** The midterm will have the same format as a problem set.
- **Take home final.** The final will also have the same format as a problem set.

Grading

Except for short exercises, which will be graded on pass/fail, 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. 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 = 80%
- Exercises = 10%
- Participation (attendance, etc.) = 10%

Other Information

There is no textbook for this course, though there will be occasional readings. Much like the second half of Linguistics 3340, most of what you learn in this class will emerge from a collaborative discovery process. That is, what assumptions we make, how various syntactic phenomena are analyzed, deciding what counts as evidence, etc. will typically come about through class discussion and by working together on problem sets. Because of the dynamic structure that is intended for this course, there is no set list of topics and we will generally go at a pace that works best for the overall class.

Class Policies

Working together: You are encouraged and expected to work together on all assignments for this course. 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.

Grade Issues

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 receive 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, please schedule an appointment to visit me in person to review your assignment. Do not approach me with grade issues immediately after a class, and do not wait until the end of the semester to discuss an assignment from a much earlier point in the semester.

Electronic Devices: Electronic devices (laptops, cell-phones, etc.) are not to be used during class. If you think that you have a compelling reason why you must use an electronic device such as your laptop during class, then feel free to bring this reason to me. Otherwise no electronic devices are allowed. If you need to use your phone, etc. please leave the classroom to do so. Failure to comply with this class policy will negatively affect your participation grade, and will create an unpleasant distraction in the class.

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Grade Grievances: Any appeal of a grade in this course must follow the procedures and deadlines for grade-related grievances as published in the current undergraduate catalog.

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/ses/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.

Academic Integrity: All students enrolled in this course 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.

Student Support Services: 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.

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.

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.