

Advanced Formal Syntax

Linguistics 5331

Spring 2015

T, Th, 2-3:20PM, Trimble Hall 218

General Information

INSTRUCTOR:

Joey Sabbagh

Email: sabbagh@uta.edu

Office: Hammond Hall 126

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday 11-12

Wednesday 12-1

(also by appointment)

Course Description

This course is a continuation of Linguistics 5330 (Formal Syntax). Building upon the basic theoretical framework introduced in Linguistics 5330, this course will focus on a set of topics that are active areas of current syntactic research. Rather than focussing on developing explicit analyses of syntactic phenomenon, our focus instead will be on the broader theoretical implications surrounding these phenomenon. Topics to be covered include: (i) Wh-movement and Islands phenomenon; (ii) Current conceptions of phrase structure; (iii) Ellipsis phenomenon; and (iv) The syntax-phonology interface.

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the course, students will have an understanding of some of the outstanding theoretical issues alive in current syntactic research, gain comfortability reading the literature, as well as be able to carry out syntactic research on their own.

Outline of Topics to be Covered and Reading Assignments

The following is a list of the topics and readings for this course.

Week 1-3: *Wh*-movement and Island phenomenon

- A. *Wh*-movement in questions and beyond (relative clauses, comparative clauses, etc.).
- B. Island phenomenon.
- C. Successive cyclicity.

Readings:

- McCloskey, James. 2000. Quantifier float and *wh*-movement in an Irish English. *Linguistic Inquiry* 31.
- McCloskey, James. 2002. Resumption, Successive Cyclicity, and the Locality of Operations. in *Derivation and Explanation*, Samuel Epstein and Daniel Seeley, eds., Blackwell Publishers: 184-226.
- *Chung, Sandra. 1998. *The Design of Agreement: Evidence from Chamorro*. (Selected chapter)

Additional suggested readings:

- van Urk Coppe & N. Richards. to appear. Two components of long-distance extraction: Successive cyclicity in Dinka. to appear in *Linguistic Inquiry* 46.
- Gibson, Edward & T. Warren. 2004. Reading-time evidence for intermediate linguistic structure in long-distance dependencies. *Syntax* 7.

Week 4-7: Modern conceptions of phrase structure and phrase structure building.

- A. “Lebeaux” effects and the “Late adjunction” hypothesis.
- B. The operation Merge.
- C. “Wholesale late merger”

Readings:

- *Fox, Danny & Jon Nissenbaum. 1999. Extraposition and Scope: A case for covert QR. In S. Bird et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the 18th West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics*, Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Press, 132-144.

- Hulsey, Sarah & S. Takahashi. 2009. Wholesale later merger: Beyond the A/A-bar distinction. *Linguistic Inquiry* 40.

Week 8-11: Ellipsis

- A. Types of ellipsis (VP-ellipsis, Sluicing, and Gapping)
- B. Approaches to ellipsis.
- C. The identity condition on ellipsis.
- D. Sluicing and “island repair”

Readings:

- Merchant, Jason. Ellipsis: A survey of analytical approaches. Ms. University of Chicago.
- Merchant, Jason. *The syntax of silence*. (Selected chapter)
- *Chung, Sandra. 2013. Syntactic identity in sluicing: How much and why. *Linguistic Inquiry* 44.

Week 12-15: The syntax-phonology interface.

- A. Spell-out and linearization.
- B. Mapping syntactic structure to prosodic structure.
- C. Phonologically motivated movement.

Readings:

- *Fox, Danny and David Pesetsky. 2004. Cyclic linearization of syntactic structure. *Theoretical Linguistics* 31.
- Elfner, Emily. to appear. Prosody and recursion in Conemmara Irish. to appear in *NLLT*.
- *Richards, Norvin. 2010. *Uttering Trees*, Chapter 2.
- Richards, Norvin. 2014. *Contiguity Theory*, Chapter 1.

Suggested reading:

- Selkirk, Elisabeth. 2011. The syntax-phonology interface. In John Glodsmith, Jason Riggle, & Alan Yu (eds.), *The handbook of phonological theory*, 2nd edition, Wiley Blackwell.

Course Requirements

READINGS: We will be reading several articles from the primary literature. These will be made available to you on Blackboard. Students are expected to complete these readings by the times to be announced and should be prepared (at such time) to bring their thoughts and questions to class on these readings. (Time precludes us from discussing all of the readings, but we will every week or two explicitly discuss at least one article.)

PROBLEM SETS: There will be approximately 3 problem sets for this course, which will be structured much like the problem sets from Linguistics 5330.

SQUIBS: Each student will be expected to write 3 “squibs”—a short (3-5 page) paper that presents ‘original’ data that bears on some theoretical topic, and/or which addresses some theoretical problem(s) that arise from the readings for this class. Ideally, one of these squibs will be the basis for your final term paper.

FINAL PAPER: Each student will be expected to write a final term paper (15-20 pages) involving either (i) original research; or (ii) a “overview” paper that critically reviews literature relating to a particular topic.

Expectations for the final paper will be discussed in class.

PRESENTATION OF FINAL PAPER: In the last week or so of the semester, each student will give a 15-20 minute presentation of their final paper project.

Grading

All work for this course will be assigned 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.

Here’s how the different requirements will be weighed with respect to your overall grade:

- Problem sets (20%)
- Squibs (30%)
- Final paper and presentation (50%)

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.