

Linguistics 5330–Formal Syntax

Fall 2009

UT Arlington

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PREAMBLE/COURSE OBJECTIVES: Syntax is the study of how words combine to form phrases, and how phrases combine to form sentences. Detailed investigation into sentence structure reveals that sentences are not formed simply by stringing together words. Instead, sentences have properties that imply a complex hierarchical organization which is rule governed and systematic within and across languages. In this course, we will be investigating these properties and uncovering these rules from the perspective of the “Principles and Parameters” (aka. “Government and Binding”)/Minimalist framework conceived by Noam Chomsky^{1,2} and elaborated by many others. While there are many alternative syntactic frameworks that we could use, this choice of theoretical framework is made for practical reasons: It is the framework I am most familiar with, and—more importantly—because it is also a lingua franca for many syntacticians working within the field today. It is important to keep in mind, though, that this course will also place an equally strong emphasis on gaining familiarity with the central empirical phenomena, methodology, and argumentation which are important to any theoretical framework and for understanding and carrying out syntactic research more generally. These objectives will be accomplished through regular written work and through classroom discussion.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS (70%): There will be roughly 10 assignments total. These assignments will generally be handed out on a Thursday and due **in class** on Thursday of the following week.

While some of the homework problems will be relatively straightforward exercises, some of the assignments will be rather more strenuous. You are therefore strongly encouraged 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 originated 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.**

Homeworks will generally be somewhat open-ended. There will not always be a particular right answer, and the important thing will be how well you present and support the proposal you come up with. So two equally good papers might have different and indeed incompatible solutions.

Homework assignments will also form the major basis for our discussion in class. 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.

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

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

TAKE HOME FINAL: (20%) The final will be in the same basic format as the homework assignments, but a bit more time-consuming.

PARTICIPATION: (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 a textbook for this course:

- Adger, David. 2003. *Core Syntax*, Oxford University Press.

NOTE: It is important to keep in mind that what we do in class may not always sync up with what is in the text. As much as possible, I would like us to be somewhat free to develop and work with formalisms and assumptions that we are comfortable with and collectively agree upon, and then to discuss the points of (dis-)similarity with the Adger text. This will make for a much more interesting and dynamic class. In other words, the book should be thought of mainly as a reference rather than a dictum for how we develop our syntactic analyses of particular phenomena.

OUTLINE OF TOPICS: (Subject to changes as we go along)

WEEK 1 (8/25, 8/27) / *Generative grammar; Acceptability, grammaticality, and stars; Constituent structure and phrase structure rules*

- Adger, Chapter 1 and 2
- Assignment 1 handed out on 8/27 (Due 9/3)

WEEK 2 (9/1, 9/3) / *More on constituent structure and phrase structure; Subcategorization (S-Selection, C-Selection and L-Selection)*

- Adger, Chapter 3
- Assignment 2 handed out 9/3 (Due 9/10)

WEEK 3 (9/8, 9/10) / *Representing phrase structure—X-bar theory vs. Merge*

- Adger, Chapter 4
- Assignment 3 handed out 9/10 (Due 9/17)

WEEK 4 (9/15, 9/17) / *INFL as the head of the clause; Representing agreement; The auxiliary system*

- Adger, Chapter 5 (pp. 155-171)
- Assignment 4 handed out 9/17 (Due 9/24)

WEEK 5 (9/22, 9/24) / *Embedded clauses*

- Adger, Chapter 8 (pp. 289-297)
- Assignment 5 handed out (Due 10/1)

WEEK 6 (9/29, 10/1) / *Interrogatives I*

- Adger, Chapter 9 (pp. 341-358)
- No assignment

WEEK 7 (10/6, 10/8) / *VP-Internal Subjects; Passive clauses*

- Adger, Chapter 6 (pp. 204-222; pp. 229-232)
- Assignment 6 handed out (Due 10/15)

WEEK 8 (10/13, 10/15) / *Sentential subjects, extraposition, and Case Theory; Unaccusative and Unergative predicates*

- Adger, Chapter 6 (pp. 223-228)
- Assignment 7 handed out (Due 10/22)

WEEK 9 (10/20, 10/22) / *Infinitival Clauses: ECM and Raising*

- Adger, Chapter 8 (pp. 305-309)
- Assignment 8 handed out (Due 10/29)

WEEK 10 (10/27, 10/29) / *Infinitival Clauses (cont.): Raising (cont.); Control*

- Adger, Chapter 8 (pp. 315-323)
- Assignment 9 handed out (Due 11/15)

WEEK 11 (11/3, 11/5) / *Infinitival Clauses (cont.): Raising and Control (cont.)*

- Assignment 10 handed out (Due 11/12)

WEEK 12 (11/10, 11/12) / *Binding Theory*

WEEK 13 (11/17, 11/19) / *Interrogatives II: Islands*

WEEK 14 (11/24) / *TBA*

WEEK 15 (12/1, 12/3) / *TBA, Summary, Q & A*

- Final assignment handed out Due (12/9)

Guidlines for written work

- All assignments should be done carefully and should be finished by the beginning of class on the due date. Homework will frequently form the basis for class discussion. Handing it in after class therefore makes it less useful and missing class because it is not done will put you further behind. **All assignments must be typed.** Also, if you care to help me lower my optometry bills, please use 1.5 or double spacing, and—if you use Word or some-such—set the alignment to “Justify”.
- Writing up an assignment DOES NOT reduce to a list of answers (trees, rules, example sentences). It should have a meaningful, essay-style, structure, which organizes the material in a systematic fashion and helps the reader understand your reasoning in developing these answers. Points should be made clear through illustrative examples and derivations. In general solutions should be 3-10 pages in length. Print on one side of the paper only, and leave sufficient room in the margins for comments. Staple loose sheets together.
- Write in complete sentences. Be as clear as possible. When in doubt, err on the side of clarity.
- As much as possible, adhere to the following notational conventions:
 - Number your examples and set them apart from the text
 - If you cite example material in the running text, put it in italics or underline it, do not place them in scare quotes “ ”.
 - Annotate your examples as follows: * placed before an ungrammatical sentence, ? placed before a sentence of doubtful grammaticality, and # for ‘semantically or pragmatically unacceptable’. The absence of annotation indicates ‘grammatical’.
 - If you use any other annotation marks make sure to introduce and define these first. The same goes for any abbreviations or new terminology that you use.
 - If providing data from a language other than English, include a morpheme-by- morpheme gloss and a free translation. (If in doubt, follow the style used in any of the major linguistics journals, which I can provide you with upon request.)
 - When constructing minimal pairs of sentence, parentheses may be used to enclose the difference, as in *He thinks (that) pigs can fly*. If the two versions of the example differ in grammaticality, place the annotation mark accordingly: *I asked whether (*that) pigs can fly* vs. **(That) pigs can fly is news to me*.

IMPORTANT ACADEMIC and ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

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.

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.

According to Department of Linguistics and TESOL policy, “unofficial” or “informal” requests for accommodations (i.e., those not recorded by the Office of Students with Disabilities) cannot be honored.

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 there³, as well as notify the department chair of the filing of the charges.

³<http://www.uta.edu/studentaffairs/conduct/faculty.html>

Student Support Services Available: The University of Texas at Arlington supports a variety of student success programs to help you connect with the University and achieve academic success. These programs include learning assistance, developmental education, advising and mentoring, admission and transition, and federally funded programs. Students requiring assistance academically, personally, or socially should contact the Office of Student Success Programs at 817-272-6107 for information and referrals.

Enrolling in / Withdrawing from this Course: Students are responsible for making all decisions regarding their enrollment status in UTA courses. Should you decide to withdraw from this course, you must either (1) drop via the internet through the MyMav system or (2) complete an official “add/drop” and file it in the Linguistics and TESOL department office. Any student who stops attending class and/or fails to complete assigned work will not be “automatically” dropped; in such cases, unless you officially withdraw, you will receive a grade of F. (Note: Students enrolled in graduate courses may not “replace” a grade; all grades are permanent.)

A student dropping his/her last (only) course cannot withdraw as above. Rather, s/he must go in person to the UTA Registrar’s Office (Davis Hall, First Floor) and complete a request to resign from the university.

Auditors: The Department of Linguistics and TESOL has a “no audit” policy. Students attending LING classes must be officially enrolled in those courses. Exception: Students who have already fulfilled a degree requirements and would like to sit in on a comparable course to prepare for their comprehensive / diagnostic examination may do so (with the permission of the professor).