

Introduction to Syntax
Ling 522
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1 Goals

The primary goal of the course is to acquaint students with the basic goals and methodology of syntactic theory, in the process giving them an introduction to one very influential approach.

2 Practice

The course will use the textbook *Syntax: A Generative Introduction* <http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/carnie>, by Andrew Carnie, available in the campus bookstore. There will be exercises for most of the chapters covered. Please be sure to get the *Third Edition*.

The course begins with an introduction to constituents and trees, introduces some structural concepts such as dominance and C-Command, and then develops some applications such as the Binding Theory, and some theoretical hypotheses, such as X-Bar Theory.

The meat of the course is then a treatment of movement of various kinds, including head movement and NP movement.

A virtue of the text is that examples and exercises from numerous languages are used, affording the student the opportunity to evaluate some of the claims made about the universality of the theory.

3 Pre-requisites

Ling 420 Or 501. **Strictly enforced. Please see instructor if you have not taken one of these classes, even if you have taken an equivalent at another institution.**

4 Grading

Grading will be based on exercises and take-home midterms and finals.

- Midterm 30%
- Final 30%
- Exercises: 30%
- Class participation: 10%

Many homeworks are graded loosely, especially at the beginning of the course, since they are regarded as learning experiences. However, the one aspect that homeworks will not be graded loosely on is examples. When you are asked to produce an example of a phenomenon you must **attempt** to create a sentence or word or phrase (whatever is asked for) that meets the requirements. Failure to attempt always gets a grade of 0.

5 Late Assignments

The general structure of the course is not well-suited to late assignments. Assignment solutions will be discussed in detail on the day they are turned in, and thus students who turn assignments in late will be at an advantage. However, to allow for some flexibility, late assignments will receive partial credit. Here is the lateness policy:

1. Up to one week late: 50
2. More than one week late: not accepted

6 Group Work

Group work is encouraged on the assignments. The midterm and final should be completed without any help. To be clear on this, collaboration or group work on the midterms and finals will be considered cheating.

When turning in collaborative assignments, your collaborators should be identified on your paper.

One option to explore with respect to group work:

You may wish to change groups in mid-semester. This is a good idea. I encourage existing groups to admit new members. Moving around will help you get to know more people and you will probably learn more. On the other hand, if you find a group that is a good fit, there is no requirement that you leave it.

7 Attendance

Attendance is not a formal part of your grade.

However, be aware that participation is, so do the math. Also, hints on how to solve problems on the assignments, the midterms, and the final are handed out liberally in class. These hints will not be posted on the web page. Since the problems can be challenging and the hints can be of great help, problems stemming from non-attendance can cascade.

8 Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to define the correct syntactic structures of most English examples.
2. Students will learn how to interpret properly annotated syntactic data from any language, including languages they have never seen.
3. Students will understand the relationship between meaning and structure and will be able to identify multiple structures for ambiguous examples.
4. Students will learn what the goals of a modern syntactic theory is and a how a theory is tested against those goals.

5. Students will be able to understand the theoretical claims made about a number of syntactic phenomena, and how to classify data as evidence for or against those goals, or not relevant.
6. Students will learn how to identify parts of speech and theoretically significant syntactic patterns in languages they have never seen. Patterns they will learn to identify include binding phenomena, NP-movement, Head movement, and WH-movement.

9 Office Hours

Tu 3:30-4:30
Tu,Th 11:00-12:00
Th 09:30-10:30
by appointment

10 Mailing address

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