

Introduction to Syntax

Ling 522

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1 Goals

The primary goal of the course is to acquaint students with the aims 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 33%
- Final 33%
- Exercises: 34%

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 Course outline

Week One	Generative Grammar: An overview
Week Two	Parts of Speech, cross-linguistic perspective
Week Three, Four	Introduction to Constituent Structure, Meaning and Structure
Week Five	Tree relations: Dominance, C-Command, Is a Constituent of
Week Six	Applying C-Command: The Binding Theory
Week Seven	X-Bar Theory
Week Eight	Functional Projections in Xbar Theory (DPs, CPs, and TPs)
Week Nine	Theta Roles, Lexical Entries, and the Theta Criterion
Week Ten	Introducing Movement: Head Movement
Week Eleven	Movement continued (DP Movement)
Week Twelve	Principles governing movement (Case, EPP, Theta Criterion)
Week Thirteen	Wh Movement
Week Fourteen	Interactions of movement and principles, mult clause movements of multiple types
Week Fifteen	Review

7 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.

8 Attendance

Attendance is not a formal part of your grade. In the time of this global pandemic, flexibility about how you attend class is going to be essential.

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

9 Zoom Etiquette

Since we are not having face-to-face class sessions this semester, classes will be conducted in Zoom. Students should treat these sessions as much as possible like real classes. In particular, they should prepare for class by doing reading and assignments, and they should attend with the intention of participating. That means participating in discussion, asking and answering questions, being respectful, and actively contributing to the ongoing process of collaborative problem-solving that will take up much of our time.

Students will not be required to turn on video, but they are encouraged to do so for class. Students should dress appropriately as they would for a live class. Many class sessions will be recorded and students will be informed when a class is being recorded. Students who wish to remain off camera will be allowed to do so, but again, the default should be that you are on video, able to interact with your peers, allowing them to see your face and your reactions as you allow them to see yours.

A lot of research has shown that social presence is a factor in learning, and you can contribute to the sense of community and the learning experience of your peers, by being onscreen and actively participating.

10 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 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.

11 Cheating: Academic Dishonesty

Academic misconduct includes the following examples as well as any other similar conduct which is aimed at falsely representing a student's academic performance: cheating, plagiarizing, unauthorized collaborating on course work, stealing course examinations or materials, falsifying records or data, or intentionally assisting another individual in any of the above.

Academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Students who cheat will receive an "F" for the course grade and the Linguistics Department's Undergraduate Advisor and SDSU's Judicial Coordinator will be notified. The Judicial Coordinator will conduct an investigation, and depending on the outcome, the student may be expelled, suspended, or placed on probation. As explained in the Group Work Section, group work and collaboration on assignments is allowed, but **any** collaboration on the Midterm or Final is cheating. These are tests intended to evaluate your individual level of achievement.

For more information on SDSU's policies and procedures regarding academic misconduct visit the following site: [Academic Dishonesty](#).

12 Student Privacy and Intellectual Property

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) mandates the protection of student information, including contact information, grades, and graded assignments. I will use [Canvas / Blackboard] to communicate with you, and I will not post grades or leave graded assignments in public places.

Students will be notified at the time of an assignment if copies of student work will be retained beyond the end of the semester or used as examples for future students or the wider public. Students maintain intellectual property rights to work products they create as part of this course unless they are formally notified otherwise.

13 Religious observances

According to the University Policy File, students should notify the instructors of affected courses of planned absences for religious observances by the end of the second week of classes.

14 Office Hours

Office SHW 238
Tu 3:30-4:30
Tu,Th 12:30-1:30
Th 09:30-10:30
by appointment

15 Contact Information

Dept: Department of Linguistics and Oriental Languages
Uni: San Diego State University
Address: 5500 Campanile Drive
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16 Office Hours

W 11:00-12:00
W 2:00-3:00
Th 16:00-17:00
by appointment

17 Mailing address

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