

LING 324 : ADVANCED TOPICS IN SYNTAX

TTh 1:10–2:30pm, Eliot 121

Course Syllabus Spring 2012

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Office hrs: Tue 11:00–12:00, Wed 11:00–1:00, or by appointment

PREREQUISITES

LING 323 *Introductory Syntax* or equivalent, or permission from the instructor, is required. Additional courses dealing with syntactic topics, such as LING 328 *Morphosyntactic Typology*, are recommended but not required.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course gives students the opportunity to build on concepts and methodologies learned in Introductory Syntax by exploring current and seminal research problems. The broad goals of the course are:

1. To extend the formal model of syntax sketched in LING 323, showing how it has been developed to handle additional data from English, as well as phenomena from other languages.
2. To give students practice in evaluating, constructing, and presenting syntactic arguments, as well as the opportunity to conduct their own syntactic research.
3. To expose students to influential papers in formal syntactic literature from the past three decades, in particular papers which made important contributions to the Principles and Parameters (P&P) approach, from the *Government and Binding* (GB) framework through early developments in the *Minimalist Program* (MP), a period lasting from the mid-1980s through the early 2000s.

Regarding point (3): This class has no textbooks and no problem sets; instead, we focus almost exclusively on reading and discussing original articles and selections from monographs. A list of these is given at the end of the syllabus. I have probably included more readings than we can hope to cover in a single semester; we will decide as we go along which readings to focus on in our discussions.

I have tried to pick readings which are accessible (at least with some effort) to students who have only had a basic introduction to GB syntax. However, many of the papers are quite technical. In a couple cases I have prefaced the papers with readings from textbooks and other secondary sources. Nevertheless, it may be useful to have a couple reference works handy as you read, in

case you need to refresh your memory on the meanings of certain terms which the authors don't define. I recommend Haegeman's *Introduction to Government and Binding Theory* (2nd ed.), and Ouhalla's *Introducing Transformational Grammar: From Principles and Parameters to Minimalism* (2nd ed.) (these books are on two-hour reserve for this course). However, any introductory textbook on generative syntax would be useful.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS, POLICIES, DEADLINES

Students will be expected to complete all assigned readings, attend every class meeting, and participate actively in discussion. At various points you may be asked to lead the discussion or present material in class. In addition, you will be required to complete short response papers and a final research paper on a topic of your choice. There will be no problem sets or exams. Participation and attendance will count for approximately **30%** of the course grade, the response papers for **25%**, and the term paper (including the proposal and rough draft) for **45%**.

Written work (including paper proposals, complete rough drafts, and response papers) must be turned in on time if you wish to receive full credit and comments. Late work will be penalized 10% of total possible points for each day it is late, unless you arrange an extension with me in advance. In addition, late assignments will usually receive minimal comments (or, in the case of response papers, no comments), and may not be returned to you in a timely fashion. Written work may be submitted in either hardcopy or electronic versions. Electronic versions may be in PDF (preferred) or Word (if no specialized fonts or symbols are used).

Participation — Given the size and nature of this course, it is crucial to the success of our class meetings that you complete all readings on time and come to class prepared to discuss them. In order to help us prepare for class discussions, it will be useful for me to know in advance which aspects of the reading you found most interesting, most confusing, or most (un)convincing. Hence, as part of your participation grade, you will be asked to submit at least two questions or comments to the course Moodle page for each class meeting (except for those meetings in which a response paper is due). These can be requests to clarify aspects of the reading, suggested topics for class discussion, or what have you.

Response papers — At various points throughout the course, you will be asked to submit one- to three-page written responses to the readings. These responses will take a variety of forms. For some readings I may ask you to summarize the paper informally and submit a list of questions for discussion, or to compare and contrast the approaches of different authors. For other readings I may ask for a more formal summary, in the form of a one-page abstract. The details and deadlines for these short assignments will be announced in class.

Term paper — You are expected to complete a research paper on a topic of your choice involving formal syntactic theory and analysis. Your research must involve outside reading, and may (but need not) incorporate original fieldwork as well.

Your topic need not relate directly to the subject matter of the course. You may choose to work on some particular phenomenon of interest in a given language (including English), to compare phenomena across languages, or to tackle a purely theoretical issue. Your paper should include an empirical component—that is, your goal should be to come up with a testable analysis of some small body of natural language data, and support that analysis with appropriate argumentation. However, your analysis need not be complete: a thorough and careful presentation of the facts,

with thoughtful remarks on possible formal approaches and their theoretical implications, could also be sufficient. Please discuss your ideas with me, or solicit my help in selecting a topic, as soon as possible.¹ For advice on developing a topic, presenting your analysis, and formatting your paper, I strongly recommend the following readings:

- Green, Georgia, and Jerry Morgan. 2001. *Practical Guide to Syntactic Analysis*, chapters 2–4, pp. 15–63. / Print reserve: P291.G694 2001.
- Macaulay, Monica. 2011. *Surviving Linguistics: A Guide for Graduate Students* (2nd ed.), chapters 3–5, pp. 33–84. / Print reserve: P57.U5M33 2011.

A one-page paper proposal, together with a one- to two-page preliminary bibliography, is due the Thursday before spring break (your topic must be approved by me prior to this date). Shortly before the end of classes you will be asked to turn in a complete rough draft of your paper for me to comment on. The revised draft is due at the end of exam week. Exact due dates and times are:

Paper proposal and bibliography	Thursday, March 8	5:00pm
Complete rough draft	Thursday, April 19	5:00pm
Final draft with revisions	Thursday, May 10	5:00pm

Papers will be evaluated on completeness, conciseness, organization, correct application of terminology, and clarity and precision of language. In terms of length, you should aim for approximately 15–25 pages (if your paper is less than 12 pages, then either your topic is too narrow or you’re not going into enough detail; if it’s more than 30 pages, then either your topic is too broad or you’re rambling).

READING LIST

The readings for the course are given below, in the approximate order in which we will cover them. Readings are available through the course Moodle page and/or on print reserve. Most of the journal articles are also available online through JSTOR, or in print form in the bound periodicals section of the Library. If you have difficulty obtaining any of the readings, please let me know as soon as possible.

This list is subject to modification, depending on how quickly we get through the material. You will notice that I have not assigned specific dates for the readings: it makes more sense to me to set the pace of the course as we go along, rather than trying to stick to a predetermined schedule. As a rough guide, we will try to get through one to two articles per week. I will let you know in class which reading(s) you should be working on for the following week. *Please remember to bring a copy of the day’s reading with you to class, since we will be referring to it constantly in our discussions.*

(1) Unpacking the VP: Theta roles, objects, and argument linking

This unit deals with the syntax of verbs and their internal arguments (objects), and considers the nature of theta roles and the structure of VP. Topics we will cover include unaccusativity, the double object construction, applicatives in Bantu, and the syntax of psych verbs such as *frighten*. The theoretical focus of the unit is on UTAH, the hypothesis that theta roles are uniformly associated to particular D-structure positions or relations.

¹Note that although the readings for this course are all within the domain of Government & Binding and Minimalism, you need not adopt GB/Minimalist assumptions in your research paper. If you want to write a paper in a different theoretical framework, that’s fine. All that’s required is that you apply *some* current formal syntactic model to a particular theoretical or empirical question.

1. **Burzio**, Luigi. 1986. *Italian Syntax: A Government-Binding Approach*, chapter 1 ‘Intransitive Verbs and Auxiliaries’, pp. 20–84. / Moodle, print reserve: PC1369.B87 1986.
2. **Larson**, Richard. 1988. ‘On the Double Object Construction’. *Linguistic Inquiry* 19, pp. 335–391. / Moodle, JSTOR, bound periodicals.
3. **Jackendoff**, Ray. 1990. ‘On Larson’s Treatment of the Double Object Construction’. *Linguistic Inquiry* 21, pp. 427–456. / Moodle, JSTOR, bound periodicals.
4. **Larson**, Richard. 1990. ‘Double Objects Revisited: Reply to Jackendoff’. *Linguistic Inquiry* 21, pp. 589–632. / Moodle, JSTOR, bound periodicals.
5. **Marantz**, Alec. 1993. ‘Implications of Asymmetries in Double Object Constructions’. *Theoretical Aspects of Bantu Grammar*, ed. Sam Mchombo, pp. 113–150. / Moodle, print reserve: PL8025.1.T54 1993 v.1.
6. **Belletti**, Adriana and Luigi **Rizzi**. 1988. ‘Psych-Verbs and θ -Theory’. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 6, pp. 291–352. / Moodle, JSTOR.
7. **Pesetsky**, David. 1995. *Zero Syntax*, chapter 2 ‘Linking Problems with Experiencer Predicates’, pp. 11–53; chapter 3 ‘U(T)AH and the Zero Morpheme CAUS (sections 3.0–3.4.5, 3.4.7), pp. 55–76, 78–81; chapter 4 ‘A Meteorology of Emotions’, pp. 95–122. / Moodle.
8. **Baker**, Mark. 1997. ‘Thematic Roles and Syntactic Structure’. *Elements of Grammar: Handbook of Generative Syntax*, ed. Liliane Haegeman, pp. 73–137. / Moodle, print reserve: P291.E45 1997.

(2) Unpacking the clause: Subjects, topics, and movement

This unit deals with the structure of the clause external to VP. We begin by considering the treatment of passives, predication, and small clauses. We then discuss verb movement and evidence for the so-called ‘exploded INFL’ hypothesis—that is, the hypothesis that clause-level inflectional features are contained not within a single functional projection (IP), but rather a hierarchy of functional projections (TP, AgrP, NegP, etc.). Many of these papers deal in one way or another with the syntax of *subjects*: Where are subjects generated? Which categories have subjects? Do languages differ in the surface position of subjects, and is ‘subject’ even a unified notion cross-linguistically? The last two papers in the unit consider A’-movement and the left periphery of the clause. The Huang paper gives an overview of *Logical Form* (LF), an important component of GB and Minimalist theory; while the Rizzi paper extends the ‘exploded INFL’ idea beyond IP, arguing that CP should also be sub-divided into multiple projections.

9. **Baker**, Mark, Kyle **Johnson**, and Ian **Roberts**. 1989. ‘Passive Arguments Raised’. *Linguistic Inquiry* 20, pp. 219–251. / Moodle, JSTOR, bound periodicals.
10. **Koopman**, Hilda and Dominique **Sportiche**. 1991. ‘The Position of Subjects’. *Lingua* 85, pp. 211–258. / Moodle.
11. **Guilfoyle**, Eithne, Henrietta **Hung**, and Lisa **Travis**. 1992. ‘Spec of IP and Spec of VP: Two Subjects in Austronesian Languages’. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 10, pp. 375–424. / Moodle, JSTOR, bound periodicals.
12. **Bowers**, John. 1993. ‘The Syntax of Predication’. *Linguistic Inquiry* 24, pp. 591–656. / Moodle, JSTOR, bound periodicals.

13. **Pollock**, Jean-Yves. 1989. ‘Verb Movement, Universal Grammar, and the Structure of IP’. *Linguistic Inquiry* 20, pp. 365–424. / Moodle, JSTOR, bound periodicals.
14. **Huang**, C.-T. James. 1995. ‘Logical Form’. *Government and Binding Theory and the Minimalist Program*, ed. Gert Webelhuth, pp. 125–175 (section 5 is optional). / Moodle, print reserve: P291.G68 1995.
15. **Rizzi**, Luigi. 1997. ‘The Fine Structure of the Left Periphery’. *Elements of Grammar: Handbook of Generative Syntax*, ed. Liliane Haegeman, pp. 281–337. / Moodle, print reserve: P291.E45 1997.

(3) Some recent developments: Phrase structure and movement

In this unit we turn to some recent developments in the theory of phrase structure and the organization of grammar. We begin with Kayne’s Antisymmetry theory, which argues for a close relationship between hierarchical relations (c-command) and surface relations (linear order). Kayne’s theory allows him to derive the basic properties of X-bar structure rather than having to stipulate them, allowing us to eliminate the X-bar module from our model of grammar. However, his proposal yields a highly restrictive word order, with interesting cross-linguistic consequences. We then briefly consider the evolution of the Minimalist Program from Government & Binding Theory, and conclude by looking at some recent work on linearization and movement chains (Nunes, Fox and Pesetsky).

16. **Kayne**, Richard. 1994. *The Antisymmetry of Syntax*, parts I and II, pp. 1–54. / Moodle, print reserve: P291.K34 1994.
17. **Cook**, V. J. and Mark **Newsom**. 2007. *Chomsky’s Universal Grammar: An Introduction* (3rd ed.), chapters 7 and 8, pp. 242–309. / Print reserve: P151.C64 2007.
18. **Chomsky**, Noam. 1995. ‘Bare Phrase Structure’. *Evolution and Revolution in Linguistic Theory*, ed. Hector Campos and Paula Kempchinsky, pp. 51–109. / Moodle.
19. **Nunes**, Jairo. 2004. *Linearization of Chains and Sideward Movement*, introduction and chapter 1, pp. 1–63. / Moodle, print reserve: P151.N86 2004.
20. **Fox**, Danny and David **Pesetsky**. 2005. ‘Cyclic Linearization of Syntactic Structure’. *Theoretical Linguistics* 31, pp. 1–46. / Moodle (2004 manuscript version).