

LING 20201: Introduction to Syntax

University of Chicago

Winter 2018

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You can also meet us by setting an appointment by email.

Lecture: TR 2-3:20, Ryerson 276

Sections: Jackie: F 1:30–2:20, Rosenwald 208
Daniel: F 2:30-3:20, Foster 408

Attendance of section is obligatory.

Description of the Course

This is an introduction to syntax and syntactic theory within the general framework of Principles and Parameters, with occasional reference to the Minimalist Program. The framework of Principles and Parameters is based on the premise that all languages share at their core a single – universal – grammar; the objective of syntactic analysis within this framework is to use language-specific data to build an adequate model of this universal grammar, accompanied by a set of parameters that allow for cross-linguistic variation. Most of the data we will discuss is from English, although we will occasionally look at other languages.

Prerequisites

LING 20001 Intro to Linguistics is a required prerequisite for this class. If you have not taken it, you should let the instructor know as soon as possible.

Textbook

Readings will be routinely assigned from the following textbook:

Adger, David. (2003). *Core Syntax: A Minimalist Approach*. Oxford University Press.

You can purchase the book at the Seminary Co-op. A copy is also on course reserve at the library for 4-hour loans.

Evaluation

Evaluation will be based on two components:

1. **Homework assignments (90%):**

There will be weekly written homework assignments. Timely completion of the assignments is crucial to your progress in the class, so **no late submissions will be accepted**. You must write up the assignments individually; you can work together on the assignments, but you should acknowledge any collaboration. Answers to homework assignments should be typed, and as clear and brief as possible, making sure that you include all arguments and examples illustrating your analysis, but nothing more. Any data you refer to must be reproduced in the write-up. All examples, trees, rules, etc. must be numbered and referred to in the text by number. There will be no separate midterm or final exam for this class.

2. **Class participation (10%):**

Class participation includes attendance at the lectures and section, preparedness and active participation in class discussion.

Research awareness requirement

Linguists conduct research using a variety of methods and in a variety of cultural and political settings. Some research involves interviews in “field” situations, and other research involves experimental techniques in a laboratory setting. One requirement for this course is to complete a *research awareness* component. During the course of this term, you must obtain at least two credits by taking part in ongoing research studies as part of the Linguistics Department human subject pool. You can sign up for the subject pool by registering on <http://uchicagoling.sona-systems.com>, where current and ongoing participation opportunities will be announced. Participation in experiments allows students to directly contribute to research programs in a way that is otherwise seldom possible at the undergraduate level.

If you are unable to participate in any linguistic study, you may satisfy this requirement by attending one of the many linguistics talks held during the quarter, such as a Linguistics Department colloquium or a talk sponsored by one of the language-oriented workshops (Syntax and Morphology; Language Variation and Change; Semantics and the Philosophy of Language). To receive credit for this, you must write up a 1–2 page critical summary of the topic discussed.

Tentative schedule

Week 1-2	Constituent structure
Week 3	Parts of speech
Week 4	Phrase Structure Rules; Trees
Week 5	Subcategorization; Argument structure
Week 6	Sentence structure; Functional categories
Week 7	Case
Week 8-9	Passives and unaccusatives Raising and control
Week 9-10	Wh-movement

Academic honesty

The work you submit for this course must be your own work and must meet basic standards of honesty. You may discuss the assignments with others, but you must be sure to write up your work independently and alone, consistent with the university's policies on academic honesty. In addition, if you work on a problem with others, please indicate who you worked with and be sure to give credit if you use ideas or observations that they come up with. This is a simple matter of fairness and courtesy.

If you choose to use written sources other than the assigned textbook or readings, you must reference those sources explicitly in the assignment. Failing to do this is immoral and is a violation of the University's policies on Academic Integrity.

You can get more information about what constitutes plagiarism and about the relevant university policies and regulations here:

<http://college.uchicago.edu/policies-regulations/academic-integrity-student-conduct>

Accommodations

If you require any accommodations for this course, please provide the instructor with a copy of your Accommodation Determination Letter (provided to you by the Student Disability Services office) as soon as possible so that we may discuss how your accommodations can be implemented in this course.

The University of Chicago is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. If you have a documented disability (or think you may have a disability) and, as a result, need a reasonable accommodation to participate in class, complete course requirements, or benefit from the University's programs or services, you are encouraged to contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. To receive reasonable accommodation, you must be appropriately registered with Student Disability Services.

Please contact the office at 773-702-6000 or disabilities@uchicago.edu, or visit the website at: <http://disabilities.uchicago.edu>.

Additional resources

Website for the Morphology & Syntax Workshop:

<http://voices.uchicago.edu/morphologyandsyntax/>

Calendar of talks and other events in the Linguistics Department:

<https://linguistics.uchicago.edu/calendar>

L^AT_EX is the most convenient text editor for drawing syntactic trees. For those who wish to use L^AT_EX to write up their assignments, I will include .tex versions of the questions which you can use as a starter template. Some links with info on how to use L^AT_EX:

<http://cl.indiana.edu/~md7/08/latex/slides.pdf>

<http://www.ling.ohio-state.edu/~dowty.1/latex-tutorials/>

<https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/LaTeX>