This course will acquaint you with some of the important results and ideas of the last half-century of research in syntax. We will explore a large number of issues and a large amount of data so that you can learn something of what this field is all about. The class will emphasize ideas and arguments for these ideas in addition to the details of particular analyses. At the same time, you will learn the mechanics of one particular approach (sometimes called Minimalist syntax).

The class assumes some familiarity with basic concepts of theoretical linguistics, of the kind you could acquire in 24.900.

**REQUIREMENTS**

**Readings and attendance:** There is no textbook for this class. Readings will appear on the webpage, linked to the relevant days on the course schedule. Some of the readings will be optional, and these will be clearly marked.

It is strongly recommended that you do the reading, which is provided to help you understand the material. Your primary source of information, however, should be the class itself. If you find discrepancies between what is said in class and what you find in the readings, please do tell us about them; when in doubt, however, you should believe us, and not the readings.

Therefore: Attendance and participation in all classes is obligatory. You must come to class and you must participate.

**Section:** Ted Levin will run a section (at a time to be determined); attendance is not obligatory, but is strongly encouraged.

**Problem sets:** There will be problem sets every week or two. The problem sets will typically have some questions in them with answers that we think we understand, along with some more open-ended questions which you will need to answer with short essays. The latter are part of what makes this class a CI-M class.

Problem sets are due one week after they are handed out.

**Late policy:** In general, late problem sets will not be accepted except by e-mailed permission of the instructor requested before the due date.

Permission, if granted, will be granted in two categories. For illness and similar emergencies, you will not be penalized for handing in the problem set late. If we decide
that your excuse does not involve an emergency, then you will be given permission to
hand in the problem set late, but your grade on the problem set will go down by one letter
grade for every day it is late.

You are encouraged to discuss the class with your classmates, and general discussion of
the problem sets is fine — even encouraged. But make sure you arrive at the solution
yourself, and write your own answers.

**Laptop policy:** You should feel free to use laptops in class (though not, of course, during
the midterm). We reserve the right to change this policy if we discover that you are mostly
watching cartoons during class.

**Paper:** You will also write a short paper (around 4000 words) on a syntax topic
(remember, the class is CI-M). The paper can be of several possible types. One option is
to write a review paper of one of the optional readings (or of some other relevant paper;
feel free to talk with us about other papers you might write about), clearly describing its
claims and argumentation and offering your opinion (with arguments!) of how well
justified these claims are. Another would be what linguists call a squib. A squib is a
pattern of facts that you find interesting along with an exploration of their possible
significance. You might discover these facts yourself, as you sit in class, talk with friends,
or read the newspaper -- or you might read them in a reference grammar or linguistics
book. The paper should contain an organized description of the phenomenon, explain its
interest and significance, and suggest how you might analyze it. For an entire professional
journal devoted to squibs, see [http://www.ledonline.it/snippets/](http://www.ledonline.it/snippets/). Another place to look for
syntax papers is the online archive [LingBuzz](http://www.ledonline.it/snippets/).

The paper will be **due on Wednesday, December 5**, but you should settle on a topic (and
notify us of it) no later than **November 7**, and give us a draft (to be revised) by **November
21**. Please discuss your topic with us in advance of the due date. If you think you have
difficulty in finding a topic, please come see me and we will find something appropriate
together.

**Mid-term:** In the middle of the term (hence the name) there will be a test covering the
material we have studied up to that point. For purposes of computing your grade, it will
count as much as one problem set.

**Final exam:** There will be no final exam.

**Grade computation:**
- problem sets/ midterm: 70%
- paper: 20%
- attendance/participation: 10%
Sept 5 (Wed)  Introduction
Sept 10 (Mon)  Phrase structure
Sept 12 (Wed)  More phrase structure
Sept 17 (Mon)  Selection
Sept 19 (Wed)  EPP, case, and movement
Sept 24 (Mon)  A-movement and Case Theory
Sept 26 (Wed)  VP-internal subjects; raising
Oct 1 (Mon)    More on A-movement
Oct 3 (Wed)    Morphological case and agreement
Oct 8 (Mon)    Holiday (Columbus Day)
Oct 10 (Wed)   Binding theory
Oct 15 (Mon)   midterm
Oct 17 (Wed)   Binding theory, continued
Oct 22 (Mon)   Control
Oct 24 (Wed)   More control
Oct 29 (Mon)   Double Object constructions; applicatives
Oct 31 (Wed)   Head-movement
Nov 5 (Mon)    Head-movement and do-support
Nov 7 (Wed)    wh-movement
Nov 12 (Mon)  Holiday (Veterans Day)
Nov 14 (Wed)   islands
Nov 19 (Mon)   more on islands
Nov 21 (Wed)   [drop date]  squib draft due
Nov 26 (Mon)   Covert movement
Nov 28 (Wed)   Why is some movement overt?
Dec 3 (Mon)    Reconstruction
Dec 5 (Wed)    QR, ACD  squib due
Dec 10 (Mon)   Phase theory
Dec 12 (Wed)   Ellipsis, Sluicing