



01:615:305 H1

Syntax

(Fall 2017) M & W, 2:50-4:10, FH-A2

Troy Messick

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Room 302 18 Seminary Place

Office Hours: TBD

Course Description: The basic objectives of this course are (A) to familiarize students with the basic goals and assumptions of generative grammar, (B) to train students in the rudiments of syntactic analysis and syntactic theorizing and argumentation and (C) to familiarize students with the major syntactic structures of English and their relevance to linguistic theory.

The central goal of Generative Grammar is to understand what a person knows when he or she knows a language, and to understand how it is that people acquire this knowledge. Syntax is that portion of what we know about our language that deals with the structure and word order of sentences. Most of this "knowledge" is actually unconscious, that is to say, native speakers of English "know" what sounds to them like a perfectly normal English sentence, but when native speakers hear a sentence that sounds "ungrammatical" to them, they rarely can say exactly why. In fact the greatest portion of our linguistic knowledge has never been explicitly taught to us, rather we have acquired it because we have human brains, and human brains are specially equipped to learn certain kinds of languages. Linguistics, from this perspective, is a "cognitive" science, like much of psychology, dedicated to understanding how our brains work in a particularly human way.

Part of the charm of investigating the syntax of one's native language is that it is often not necessary to go to the library to amass the facts. Each native speaker of English knows what sounds like a good sentence of English, and native speakers agree about this much more than they disagree. For example, a sentence like (A) "Who did Mary say that she saw?" is a typical question which one might answer by saying, "Mary said that she saw Joe," but a question like (B) "Who did Mary see the film which pleased?" sounds terrible, although one could imagine a logical response like "Mary saw the film which pleased Joe." The curious fact about sentences like the ungrammatical question just mentioned is that no one is ever taught not to say it. In fact, a native speaker of French or Swahili will not have to be instructed not to say such a sentence either, as sentences with a "structure" like that in (B) are ungrammatical in every language in the world. English, or, for that matter, Swahili, are learnable precisely because children do not have to even consider the possible existence of sentences like (B). What humans "know" without being taught is what is of particular interest to linguists who want to understand what "knowledge" we are born with, and how it affects what we know after we have "learned" the language we know as adults.

The study of syntax is a very young science that has nonetheless made a remarkable degree of progress in understanding just how rich, complex and systematic the mind is. Advances in syntactic theory have led to much more subtle descriptions and understanding of the grammar of particular languages, such as English, Chinese, Swahili, and Warlpiri, as well as to the discovery of linguistic universals, i.e., properties true of every human language. But as a young science, this sort of linguistics as cognitive science has barely come of age, and some of the most exciting questions about human potential are just beginning to be asked.

English has been the most intensely studied of all the natural languages, so most of the interesting issues in theoretical syntax can be presented using structures familiar to every speaker of English. As time allows, less familiar languages will also be discussed for comparison. Though most of the major syntactic structures of English will be analyzed, the presentation of the course is designed to illustrate theoretical concepts and to provide practice in syntactic analysis rather than to present a complete a description of English syntax.

This course is likely to be of interest to students in computer science, anthropology, language studies, philosophy and psychology as well as students in linguistics.

Prerequisite(s): 01:615:201

Credit Hours: 3

Text: *Syntax: A Generative Introduction*, 3rd edition

Andrew Carnie

ISBN-13: 978-0-470-65531-3

Grade Distribution:

Assignments	60%
Midterm	20%
Final Exam	20%

Letter Grade Distribution:

≥ 90	A	70 - 76	C
87 - 89	B+	67.00 - 69.99	D+
80 - 86	B	63.00 - 66.99	D
77.00 - 79.99	C+	≤ 59.99	F

Course Policies:

• **Assignments**

- You will be given ten (10) assignments during the course each worth 6% of your final grade.
- Each assignment builds off of the material covered in lecture and the readings, as well as the previous assignments. so it is important to keep up.
- You may discuss the assignments with other students, but each student must independently turn in their own assignment.

- Late assignments are accepted up to one week after the due date, but with a 2 point penalty. After a week past the due date, assignments will no longer be accepted. (Exceptions can be made for extraordinary circumstances.)
- The purpose of the assignments is to get you to engage critically and independently with the material covered in the course.

- **Exams**

- There are two (2) exams given throughout the course of the semester each worth 20 points.
- The midterm will be in class and closed book/note.
- The final will be during the scheduled final exam date. You will be allowed to use 3 x 5 inch note card.
- The purpose of the exams is to reinforce the main points discussed in the course and also to assess your learning.

- **Extra Credit**

- Some faculty and graduate students in the Department of Linguistics do experimental research on language. This research depends on the participation of undergraduate participants.
- You have the option of participating in Linguistics experiments during the semester. Each experiment usually takes between 20 and 45 minutes.
- Experiments are offered through the Linguistics department experiment management system (sona): <http://rutgerslinguistics.sona-systems.com/> . Towards the beginning of the semester, your name and email will be added to the experiment system. You will be issued an anonymous id to participate in experiments through this system. Once Linguistics experiments are posted, you can sign up online. Note that this system is different from the psychology pool, and you should not use a psychology ID to log in to the system.
- Any student enrolled in a Linguistics undergraduate course is eligible to participate in Linguistics experiments, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, language status, or impairments, disorders, or disabilities (as long as his/her instructor provides the opportunity). You cannot be denied participation for any of these reasons.
- You have the right to not participate in experiments to earn extra credit. You may speak with me about possible research alternatives, such as reading a pre-approved scholarly article in linguistics and writing a 2-page paper summarizing it.

Academic Integrity Policy Summary:

Please take a moment to review the university's academic integrity policy:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>

Violations include: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, denying others access to information or material, and facilitating violations of academic integrity.

Self-Reporting Absence Application

Students are expected to attend all classes; if you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.

Disability Services

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order, to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation:

<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>.

If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

Counseling, ADAP, & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)

CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professional within Rutgers Health services to support students' efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include: individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community and consultation and collaboration with campus partners. (848) 932-7884 / 17 Senior Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901/ www.rhscaps.rutgers.edu/

Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA)

The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848-932-1181. (848) 932-1181 / 3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 / www.vpva.rutgers.edu/

Scarlet Listeners

Free and confidential peer counseling and referral hotline, providing a comforting and supportive safe space. (732) 247-5555 / <http://www.scarletlisteners.com/>

Just in Case Web App

<http://codu.co/cee05e> Access helpful mental health information and resources for yourself or a friend in a mental health crisis on your smartphone or tablet and easily contact CAPS or RUPD.

Tentative Course Outline:

The weekly coverage might change as it depends on the progress of the class. However, you must keep up with the reading assignments.

Week	Content
Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• W Sept 6: <i>Introduction</i>• Reading assignment: AC 1-31
Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• M Sept 11 & W Sept 13: <i>Categories and Constituents</i>• Reading assignment: AC 43-61; 71-106
Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• M Sept 18 & W Sept 20: <i>Trees and structural relations</i>• Reading assignment: AC 117-135
Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• M Sept 25 & W Sept 27: <i>Binding Theory</i>• Reading assignment: AC 147-158
Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• M Oct 2 & W Oct 4: <i>X-bar and functional categories</i>• Reading assignment: AC 163-199; 207-219
Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• M Oct 9 & W Oct 11: <i>Theta theory and auxiliaries</i>• Reading assignment: AC 227-240; 249-279
Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• M Oct 16 & W Oct 18: <i>Review and Midterm</i>• Reading assignment: None
Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• M Oct 23 & W Oct 25: <i>Head movement</i>• Reading assignment: AC 287-312
Week 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• M Oct 30 & W Nov 1: <i>DP movement</i>• Reading assignment: AC 323-346
Week 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mon Nov 6 Exam 2 W Nov 8: <i>Wh-movement</i>• Reading assignment: AC 357-384; 391-405
Week 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• M Nov 13 & W Nov 15: <i>Verb Phrase</i>• Reading assignment: AC 409-421
Week 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• M Nov 20 & W Nov 22 <i>Raising and Control</i>• Reading assignment: AC 429-371
Week 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• M Nov 27 & W Nov 29: <i>Ellipsis</i>• Reading assignment: AC 457-471
Week 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• M Dec 4 & W Dec 6: <i>Advanced Topics</i>• Reading assignment: TBD
Week 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• M Dec 9: <i>Wrapping Up</i>• Final Exam TBD