

LING 324 : ADVANCED TOPICS IN SYNTAX

MW 3:10–4:30, Physics 121

Course Syllabus

Spring 2005

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PREREQUISITES

LING 323 “Introductory Syntax” or equivalent, or permission from the instructor, is required. Additional courses in linguistics, especially LING 328 “Morphosyntactic Typology”, are highly recommended, but not required.

CONTENT AND FOCUS OF THE COURSE

This course gives students the opportunity to build on concepts and methodologies learned in introductory syntax classes by exploring current and seminal research problems, especially those related to cross-linguistic variation and the notion of *parameter*. As such, this course is a follow-up both to Introductory Syntax, which introduces the formal modeling of syntactic competence using data from English, and to Morphosyntactic Typology, which deals with cross-linguistic variation from a largely descriptive viewpoint. The major goals of this course are:

- (1) To extend the formal model of syntax developed in LING 323, showing how it has been developed to handle additional data from English, as well as phenomena from languages other than English.
- (2) To give students practice in understanding, constructing, and presenting syntactic arguments.
- (3) To give students the opportunity to conduct their own syntactic research.
- (4) To expose students to some of the more influential papers in the formal syntactic literature from the last two decades of the twentieth century—in particular, papers which developed various aspects of the Government and Binding (GB) and Minimalist frameworks.

Regarding point (4): This class has no textbooks and no problem sets. Instead, we focus almost exclusively on reading and discussing original articles and monographs. A list of these is given in the “Course Outline” section below. (I have deliberately included more readings than we can possibly 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’ve had only a basic introduction to GB. However, many of the papers are quite technical, and it would 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 edition), and Ouhalla’s *Introducing Transformational Grammar*. These books are on 2-hour reserve for this course.

COURSEWORK AND REQUIREMENTS

Expectations and grading policies

Students will be expected to complete all assigned readings, attend every class meeting, and participate in discussion on a regular basis. At various points students may be asked to lead the discussion or present supplementary material in class. In addition, students will be required to complete various written exercises culminating in a research paper.

Grading basis:	daily participation and presentations	30%
(<i>approximate</i>)	writing assignments	25%
	term paper	45%

There will be no problem sets or exams in this class.

Written work—including paper proposals, paper drafts, and article responses—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 receive an extension from me in advance. In addition, late assignments will probably receive minimal 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).

Term paper

You are expected to complete a research paper on a topic of your choice involving formal syntactic theory and analysis.¹ You may choose to work on a particular phenomenon in a given language (including English), to compare phenomena across languages, or to tackle a purely theoretical issue related to the organization of mental grammar. Your project must involve outside reading, and may also incorporate original fieldwork, if you so desire. (For those of you taking this course concurrently with Field Methods, I would welcome papers on the field methods language, as long as it does not duplicate your work for that class.)

In terms of length, you should aim for *roughly* 20-25 pages (if your paper is less than 15 pages, then either your topic is too narrow or you're not going into enough detail; if it's more than 40 pages, then your topic is too broad, or you're rambling). Papers will be evaluated on *completeness*, *conciseness*, *organization*, *correct application of terminology*, and *clarity and precision of language*. Ideally you should attempt to come up with a testable analysis of some small body of natural language data. However, your analysis need not be complete. A thorough and careful presentation of the data, with thoughtful remarks on possible analyses and their implications, could also be sufficient. Please discuss your ideas with me, or solicit my help on selecting a topic, as soon as possible.

For useful advice on picking a topic, presenting your analysis, and formatting your paper, I *strongly* recommend that you consult chapters 2-4 (pp. 15-63) of Green & Morgan's *Practical Guide to Syntactic Analysis* (on 2-hour reserve for this course).

¹ Although the readings for this course are all within the domain of Government and Binding, you needn't adopt GB assumptions in your research paper. If you wanted to write your paper in a Minimalist, or HPSG, or Optimality Theoretic framework, for example, that would be fine too. All that I care about is that you apply *some* current formal syntactic model to a particular theoretical or empirical question.

A one- or two-page proposal for your paper, together with a one-page preliminary bibliography, is due the Wednesday before spring break (your topic must be approved by me prior to this date). Two weeks 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 final draft of the paper is due at the end of exam week. The exact due dates and times are:

<i>paper proposal</i>	Wednesday, March 7	6:00 PM
<i>complete rough draft</i>	Friday, April 13	6:00 PM
<i>final draft</i>	Thursday, May 10	6:00 PM

Additional written work

At various points throughout the course, you will be asked to submit short (1-3 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. For other readings I may ask for a more formal summary, in the form of a one-page abstract. For yet other readings I may ask you to apply the author's analysis to additional data. The details and deadlines for these short assignments will be announced in class. There will be approximately one written response assigned for every third class period.

E-mailing questions to the class

In order to help us prepare for class discussions, it will be useful 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 to the class email list for each class meeting. These can be requests to clarify aspects of the reading, suggested topics for class discussion, or what have you. Please send your questions to the list (*LING324-S@lists.reed.edu*) by no later than **1:30 PM** on the day of class.

COURSE OUTLINE

The readings for the course are given below, in the approximate order in which we will cover them. 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. Given the nature of the class, it makes more sense to set the pace as we go along, rather than trying to stick to a predetermined schedule. As a rough guide, we will try to get through approximately two articles per week (or one article if it's very long). Each week I will let you know in class which readings you should be working on for the following week.

Please remember to bring a copy of that day's reading(s) with you to class, since we will be referring to them constantly during our discussions.

Papers are available on print reserve (book chapters) or on e-reserve (journal articles). Some articles may also be made available as reserve folders, or can be found in the bound periodicals section of the library. For items in bound periodicals, please photocopy the article and return the volume to the stacks as quickly as possible so that other students can have access to it. If the relevant volume is missing from the shelf, please let me know at once so I can make the paper available some other way.

(1) Introduction: Parameters, levels of representation, and word order variation

Although the papers in this first unit are somewhat heterogeneous, the broad focus is on the notion of *parameter*, and early attempts to account for cross-linguistic variation within the GB framework. We begin by very briefly tracing the development of the *Principles and Parameters* approach to syntax out of

earlier transformational frameworks (Van Riemsdijk and Williams, Wasow). The Hale and Jelinek papers (and the later follow-up by Baker) address the formal treatment of non-configurational languages. Finally, the Huang paper gives an overview of Logical Form, an important feature of GB theory. Recurring themes in this unit include the importance of binding and island effects as diagnostics for structure, and evidence for ‘the unseen’ (empty categories, null arguments, covert movement, etc.).

READINGS:

- **Wasow**, Thomas (2001) “Generative Grammar” in *The Handbook of Linguistics*, ed. Mark Aronoff and Janie Rees-Miller, pp. 295-318 <[available from me, or P121 .H324 2001](#) (reference section)>
- **Van Riemsdijk**, Henk and Edwin **Williams** (1986) *Introduction to the Theory of Grammar*, chapters 1-3, pp. 1-57 <[P291 .R48 1986](#)>
- **Hale**, Kenneth (1983) “Warlpiri and the Grammar of Non-Configurational Languages” *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 1, pp. 5-47 <[e-reserve](#)>
- **Jelinek**, Eloise (1984) “Empty Categories, Case, and Configurationality” *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 2, pp. 39-75 <[e-reserve](#)>
- **Baker**, Mark (2001) “The Natures of Nonconfigurationality” in *The Handbook of Contemporary Syntactic Theory*, ed. Mark Baltin and Chris Collins, pp. 407-438 <[P291.H246 2001; e-reserve](#)>
- **Huang**, C.-T. James (1995) “Logical Form” in *Government and Binding Theory and the Minimalist Program*, ed. Gert Webelhuth, pp. 125-175 [section 5 is optional] <[P291 .G68 1995](#)>

(2) Unpacking VP: Theta roles, objects, and argument structure

This unit deals with the syntax of verbs and their internal arguments (objects), and considers the nature of theta roles and theta role assignment. Topics covered include the double object construction, applicatives in Bantu, and the syntax of psych verbs such as *frighten* and denominal verbs such as *shelve*. The theoretical focus of the unit is on UTAH, the hypothesis that theta roles are uniformly associated with particular deep structure positions. The Hale & Keyser paper takes UTAH to its logical extreme, calling into question whether theta roles exist as syntactic primitives.

READINGS:

- **Belletti**, Adriana and Luigi **Rizzi** (1988) “Psych-Verbs and θ -Theory” *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 6, pp. 291-352 <[e-reserve](#)>
- **Larson**, Richard (1988) “On the Double Object Construction” *Linguistic Inquiry* 19, pp. 335-391 <[e-reserve; bound periodicals](#)>
- **Jackendoff**, Ray (1990) “On Larson’s Treatment of the Double Object Construction” *Linguistic Inquiry* 21, pp. 427-456 <[e-reserve; bound periodicals](#)>
- **Larson**, Richard (1990) “Double Objects Revisited: Reply to Jackendoff” *Linguistic Inquiry* 21, pp. 589-632 <[e-reserve; bound periodicals](#)>
- **Marantz**, Alec (1993) “Implications of Asymmetries in Double Object Constructions” in *Theoretical Aspects of Bantu Grammar*, ed. Sam Mchombo, pp. 113-150 <[PL 8025.1 .T54 1993 v.1](#)>

- **Baker**, Mark (1997) “Thematic Roles and Syntactic Structure” in *Elements of Grammar: Handbook of Generative Syntax*, ed. Liliane Haegeman, pp. 73-137 <P291 .E45 1997>
- **Hale** Kenneth, and Samuel Jay **Keyser** (1993) “On Argument Structure and the Lexical Expression of Semantic Relations” in *The View from Building 20*, ed. Kenneth Hale and Samuel Jay Keyser, pp. 53-109 <P26 .B768 V54 1993>

(3) Functional categories: Subjects, topics, and head movement

This unit deals with functional projections like IP, CP, and DP. We begin by considering the treatment of passives and small clauses, and the role of various specifier positions. We then discuss evidence for the so-called ‘exploded INFL’ hypothesis—that is, the hypothesis that inflectional features are contained not within a single projection (IP), but rather a hierarchy of projections (TP, AgrP, NegP, etc.)—and cross-linguistic differences in Case-licensing. The final paper of the unit (Rizzi) extends the exploded INFL idea beyond IP, arguing that CP should also be sub-divided into multiple projections. Most of the papers in this unit deal in one way or another with the syntax of *subjects*: Where are subjects generated? What types of phrases have subjects? Do languages differ in the surface position of subjects? Do ‘pivot’ languages like Malagasy and syntactically ergative languages like Dyirbal have a subject category?

READINGS:

- **Stowell**, Tim (1989) “Subjects, Specifiers, and X-Bar Theory” in *Alternative Conceptions of Phrase Structure*, ed. Mark Baltin and Tony Kroch, pp. 232-262 <P158.3 .A48 1989>
- **Baker**, Mark, Kyle **Johnson**, and Ian **Roberts** (1989) “Passive Arguments Raised” *Linguistic Inquiry* 20, pp. 219-251 <e-reserve; bound periodicals>
- **Koopman**, Hilda and Dominique **Sportiche** (1991) “The Position of Subjects” *Lingua* 85, pp. 211-258 <e-reserve>
- **Bowers**, John (1993) “The Syntax of Predication” *Linguistic Inquiry* 24, pp. 591-656 <e-reserve; bound periodicals>
- **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 <e-reserve; bound periodicals>
- **Pollock**, Jean-Yves (1989) “Verb Movement, Universal Grammar, and the Structure of IP” *Linguistic Inquiry* 20, pp. 365-424 <e-reserve; bound periodicals>
- **Bobaljik**, Jonathan and Dianne **Jonas** (1996) “Subject Positions and the Roles of TP” *Linguistic Inquiry* 27, pp. 195-236 <e-reserve; bound periodicals>
- **Bittner**, Maria, and Kenneth **Hale** (1996) “The Structural Determination of Case and Agreement” *Linguistic Inquiry* 27, pp. 1-68 <e-reserve; bound periodicals>
- **Rizzi**, Luigi (1997) “The Fine Structure of the Left Periphery” in *Elements of Grammar: Handbook of Generative Syntax*, ed. Liliane Haegeman, pp. 281-337 <P291 .E45 1997>

(4) Stripping things away: Recent conceptual developments

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 monograph, 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, but yields

a highly restrictive approach to word order. We then briefly consider the evolution of the Minimalist Program from Government and Binding theory by reading two early papers on Minimalism by Chomsky.

READINGS:

- **Kayne**, Richard (1994) *The Antisymmetry of Syntax* (parts I and II only), pp. 1-54 <P291 .K34 1994>
- **Chomsky**, Noam (1995) “A Minimalist Program for Linguistic Theory” in *The Minimalist Program*, pp. 167-217 <P158.28 .C48 1995>
- **Marantz**, Alec (1995) “The Minimalist Program” in *Government and Binding Theory and the Minimalist Program*, ed. Gert Webelhuth, pp. 351-382 <P291 .G68 1995>
- **Chomsky**, Noam (1995) “Bare Phrase Structure” in *Government and Binding Theory and the Minimalist Program*, ed. Gert Webelhuth, pp. 385-439 <P291 .G68 1995>