

# Attention!

This is a representative syllabus.

The syllabus for the course you are enrolled in will likely be different.

Please refer to your instructor's syllabus for more information on specific requirements for a given semester.

## SYLLABUS (v.1)

<b>Course</b>	Linguistics 4200 (Syntax)
<b>Time</b>	Tu Th 12.45-2.05
<b>Place</b>	Campbell Hall 215
<b>Instructor</b>	XXX
<b>Email</b>	XXX
<b>Office hours</b>	XXX
<b>Office</b>	Ohio Stadium East (between Gates 22 and 24)

(version of **January 12, 2016**)

**Text**        *Natural Language Syntax*, by Peter W. Culicover  
Oxford University Press, 2009.  
(Available in pdf form from course website on Carmen)

### **Scope**

In this course we will become familiar with the major concepts and types of facts associated with the branch of linguistics known as **syntax**. Syntax concerns the knowledge that a speaker of a language has about how to construct a proper sentence that conveys a particular meaning. It is informally called **grammar**. We will survey a range of phenomena that illustrate how language works, particularly with regards to the relationship between the structure of sentences and their meanings.

### **Structure**

The structure of the course is intended to facilitate learning of essential concepts and methods through problem-solving.

- Before each meeting of the class students will be expected to read material in the text and go over the accompanying overhead presentations.
- The first portion of most class meetings will be devoted to solving problems based on the material in the reading. Students will form groups of two or three to work on these problems.
  - When there is an in-class quiz, it will be scheduled for the beginning of a class.
- The second portion of the class meeting will typically focus on discussing the solutions to the problems, and reviewing the relevant theoretical and descriptive points from the reading.

### **Homework**

There will be homework exercises designed to follow up on what we do in class, and to prepare for the quizzes. The homework is not graded for correctness -- there will be feedback -- but credit

will be given for doing it.

### ***Quizzes***

There are two types of quizzes.

1. Brief quizzes on the reading in class. The quizzes will focus on key concepts and terms in the reading. Each quiz will be worth 3 points.
2. Long quizzes. There will be 6 **take home** quizzes, each worth 10 points. **The lowest grade will be dropped in the calculation of the final grade.**
  - The problems on the quizzes are similar to the problems worked on in class – some require you to demonstrate understanding of the basic concepts, and a few require you to explore somewhat new territory and apply what you have learned to try to figure out what is going on.
  - There will be extra credit available on most of the quizzes.
  - Each quiz will be focused on the current topic but assumes understanding of material covered earlier.

### ***Final***

There will be a final exam given during the finals week that covers all of the material dealt with in class.

### ***Participation***

Participation means coming to class, participating actively in problem-solving (including presenting solutions), asking questions when something is not clear, and answering questions when called on (I ask questions to try to see if what I'm saying is making sense).

### ***Project***

There is a [project assignment](#) that you will do in order to get some additional experience in what constitutes research in syntax and syntactic theory. The description of what is a suitable project is given beginning on page 7 of this syllabus. **Please read it carefully.**

There is a sample project on Carmen in Contents | Materials and Data Sets.

### ***Grading***

Grades are determined on the basis of the homework, participation, the quizzes, and the project. Here is the weighting:

Homework	14 points
Brief Quizzes	36 points (12 @ 3 each)
Long Quizzes	50 points (5 @ 10 each)
Final exam	60 points
Project	40 points

### **Grading scheme**

Here is how I calculate the grades.

A	186-200	B	166-173	C	146-153	D	120-133
A-	180-185	B-	160-165	C-	140-145	E	<120
B+	174-179	C+	154-159	D+	134-139		

While you are encouraged to work together and talk to one another about assignments, your written work **must** be your own, not that of someone else (see Academic Misconduct below). (You may submit joint projects, however.) One of the most important purposes of homework is for you to get feedback and learn from it, so you are urged to do all of the assignments yourself. There will be lots of discussion in class, so you should come prepared to participate (for example, by saying how you solved a problem and why).

### **Academic Misconduct**

Academic misconduct will not be tolerated. If I suspect academic misconduct I am obliged to report it to the University Committee on Academic Misconduct (UCAM). That is, I am not permitted to judge whether it really is academic misconduct – that is the job for the UCAM.

The most common form of misconduct is plagiarism. Materials regarding plagiarism and how to avoid it can be found at

[http://cstw.osu.edu/writingCenter/handouts/research\\_plagiarism.cfm](http://cstw.osu.edu/writingCenter/handouts/research_plagiarism.cfm)

You should also take a look at ‘how not to plagiarize’, at the following website:

<http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/plagsep.html>

University procedures regarding academic misconduct can be found at

<http://oaa.osu.edu/coam/home.html> [Website of Committee on Academic Misconduct]

[http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource\\_csc.asp](http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp) [Student Code of Conduct]

You should familiarize yourself with these materials. I will be more than happy to help answer any questions that you might have about plagiarism and related issues.

The problem of plagiarism is particularly severe nowadays because it is so easy to plagiarize, using computers, cut and paste tools, and the Web. No one should even think about doing it and getting away with it; there is a very high probability that you will get caught because the materials that you can find dealing with a particular subject can be found by anyone who knows the subject matter.

***Students with Disabilities***

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 614-292-3307 in Room 150 Pomerene Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

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### Schedule, version of 1/12/2016

This schedule is a best estimate at this point about what we will be able to cover. We will go slower or faster as needed, and the schedule will be revised accordingly.

Week	Date	Topics	Readings and homework for next time	Brief in class quizzes on readings	Other
Week 1	1/12 (T)	What is syntax	NLS Chapter 1&2		
	1/14 (R)	Grammaticality & ungrammaticality	NLS Chapter 2		
Week 2	1/19 (T)	Categories		Brief Quiz #1	
	1/21 (R)	Categories	NLS Chapter 3, §1-3		
Week 3	1/26 (T)	Basic sentence structure I; trees and labeled bracketings, rules. <b>Project language due today</b> (written note, dropbox note, or email).		Brief Quiz #2	<b>Long Quiz #1: Categories.</b> Due 1/28
	1/28 (R)	Basic sentence structure II: representing structure; complements and adjuncts	NLS Chapter 3, §4-5		
Week 4	2/2 (T)	Basic sentence structure III: grammatical functions; tests for subjects		Brief Quiz #3	
	2/4 (R)	Basic sentence structure IV: marking grammatical relations	NLS Chapter 3, §6		<b>Long Quiz #2: Basic sentence structure, II.</b> Due 2/9
Week 5	2/9 (T)	Basic sentence structure V: tests for constituency; disambiguating ambiguous sentences		Brief Quiz #4	
	2/11 (R)	Basic sentence structure V, cont'd: tests for constituency; disambiguating ambiguous sentences	NLS Chapter 4, §1-2		
Week 6	2/16 (T)	Phrasal categories I: X' theory; structure of VP		Brief Quiz #5	
	2/18 (R)	Phrasal categories, II: X' theory; structure of other categories	NLS Chapter 4, §3-6		<b>Long Quiz #3: Structure of phrases.</b> Due 2/23
Week 7	2/23 (T)	English verbal sequence I: Structure of S; AUX, affix hopping		Brief Quiz #6	
	2/25 (R)	English verbal sequence II. <b>Part 1 of project due today.</b>	NLS Chapter 5 (for 3/8)		
Week 8	3/1 (T)	<i>Activity:</i> meet individually with EV to review Part I of project, suitability of materials, glossing and formatting, projected work on Parts II and III			
	3/3 (R)	<i>Activity:</i> meet individually with EV to review Part I of project, suitability of materials, glossing			

		and formatting, projected work on Parts II and III			
Week 9	3/8 (T)	Conceptual structure, I. Basic concepts		Brief Quiz #7 (on Ch 5)	
	3/10 (R)	Conceptual structure and the lexicon II: $\theta$ -roles (“theta” roles); linking hierarchies; computing correspondences.	NLS Chapter 6, §1-3,		<b>Long Quiz #4: Conceptual structure.</b> Due 3/22
<b>SPRING BREAK: MON. 3/14–FRI. 3/18</b>					
Week 10	3/22 (T)	Selection		Brief Quiz #8	
	3/24 (R)	Passive and dative	NLS Chapter 6, §6-8		
Week 11	3/29 (T)	Deriving the passive. <b>Part 2 of project due today</b>		Brief Quiz #9	
	3/31 (R)	Dummy subjects; transformational passive	NLS Chapter 9, §1-2		
Week 12	4/5 (T)	Wh-questions (lecture)		Brief Quiz #10	<b>Long Quiz #5: Argument Structure.</b> Due 4/7
	4/7 (R)	Wh-questions and relative clause	NLS Chapter 9, §3-5		
Week 13	4/12 (T)	Relative clauses		Brief Quiz #11	
	4/14 (R)	A-bar constructions and constraints: Islands: configurations that do not allow extraction	NLS Chapter 10, §1-2		
Week 14	4/19 (T)	Binding theory I: The Binding Conditions. Sensitivity of pronoun interpretation to syntactic structure.	NLS Chapter 10, §5	Brief Quiz #12	<b>Long Quiz #6. A-bar constructions.</b> Due 4/21
	4/21 (R)	Binding theory II: The Binding Conditions; Crossover <b>[Final version of project due today, including Parts 1, 2 and 3; Final exam posted/given out]</b>			



## Projects

The purpose of a syntax project is for you to become more intimately familiar with what we are studying by applying it to a language other than English and the other languages that we use to exemplify various phenomena. Two or three people may work together on a project and submit it jointly, but then the same grade will be given to everyone working on that project.

### *The language.*

Pick a language to describe. The language **cannot** be one that is taught at OSU, and should be a real language, not one made up (like Esperanto or Klingon). You will have to find information about this language in the library. You should pick a language for which there are a couple (or more) decent grammatical descriptions. This means actually going to the library and looking at the books in the stacks before deciding on a language.

You should decide on your language by the end of the second week and let me know in writing in the first class of the third week (**January 26**). At that time you should also let me know the titles of the books that you will be consulting. And you should get started on your project.

### *Project description.*

#### Part I. **Noun phrases (February 25)**

To the extent possible, figure out the answers to the following questions and **provide a few examples from the language to illustrate your answers.**

- (1) Does the language mark number morphologically (e.g. singular and plural)? How many numbers are distinguished? How is number marked (i.e. on what constituent(s), etc.)
- (2) Does the language have a morphological system for classifying nouns (like masculine, feminine, neuter gender)? If so, describe it. How many classes are there, are there criteria for determining which noun is in which class (if so, what are they), how are the classes distinguished from one another, and so on?
- (3) Does the language have definite determiners? Indefinite determiners? If so, where do determiners go with respect to the noun? If not, how does the language express definiteness and indefiniteness?
- (4) Where do adjectives go with respect to the noun?
- (5) Where do other modifiers like quantifiers go with respect to the noun?
- (6) Is there number and gender agreement in the noun phrase, between determiner and noun? Between adjective and noun? How does agreement work?
- (7) Is there anything noteworthy about the structure of the noun phrase in your language, in comparison to English?
- (8) **What is the simplest and most general statement of the structure of the noun phrase in this language that you can come up with? Use the notation of phrase structure**



**rules to capture the general properties of the NP in this language. You may have to state several rules, but remember, THE FEWER RULES THE BETTER. Abbreviate as much as you cannot while still capturing the correct structure of the language.**

### Part II. Verbs (Due March 29)

To the extent possible, figure out the answers to the following questions and provide enough data from the language to illustrate your answers.

- (1) What morphological tenses does the language have and how are they expressed?
- (2) How does the language express aspect (e.g. complete vs. incomplete action)? What aspects are expressed? How are they marked?
- (3) What else, if anything, is marked on the verb?
- (4) Is there anything noteworthy about the form of the verb in your language, in comparison to English?
- (5) In sentences with more than one verb in a sequence, what is the ordering of the verbs? (Examples in English: *has left, is eating, tries to swim.*)
- (6) Is there evidence for VP in this language? If so, what is the structure of VP? If not, why not? (By VP we mean a constituent that includes the verb and its complements. It may well be that there is not enough evidence in your materials to justify assuming that the language has a VP.)
- (7) Assuming that there is a VP in this language, is there anything noteworthy about the structure of the verb phrase, in comparison to English?
- (8) **What is the simplest and most general statement of the structure of the verb phrase in this language that you can come up with? Use the notation of phrase structure rules to capture the general properties of the VP in this language. You may have to state several rules, but remember, THE FEWER RULES THE BETTER. Abbreviate as much as you cannot while still capturing the correct structure of the language.**

### Part III. Sentences (Due April 21)

To the extent possible, figure out the answers to the following questions and provide enough data from the language to illustrate your answers.

- (1) Does the language have a case system? If so, for which nouns are there case inflections? What is each case used for?
- (2) What is the canonical word order (of subject, verb and object) in the language? State the simplest rules that describe the order of constituents. (Remember whether or not you are assuming that the language has a VP constituent.)
- (3) How does the language express negation in sentences?
- (4) How does the language express yes-no questions? State a rule or rules that will capture this ordering.
- (5) How does the language express wh-questions?
- (6) How does the language express imperatives? How does it express negative imperatives?
- (7) Is there anything noteworthy about the structure of the sentence in your language, in

- comparison to English?
- (8) **What is the simplest statement that you can come up with for the structure of the sentence in this language? You may have to create a number of rules that together express the structure of the language but the fewer rules the better. Some of the rules may have to be transformational, if that is the simplest and most general. Abbreviate as much as you cannot while still capturing the correct structure of the language.**

*Criteria*

- A project must make use of materials available from the library, and the write up must use proper citation. You may (and should) use Wikipedia as a guide to materials that might be relevant, but you cannot cite Wikipedia as a source for the statements that you make in your write up.
- It is reasonable to expect you to have control over the terminology and tools from the course, so your write up should give evidence that you see where and how these apply.

*Format*

The project **MUST** look like the following:

- **EVERY** example has to be **GLOSSED**, following the Leipzig Glossing Rules. Here is a link: <http://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/resources/glossing-rules.php>. Glossing involves a literal description of every part of the sentence, and a translation into English. For example:
- (9) Non    sopporto                    la    sintassi.                    [Italian]  
NEG    stand.1.SG.PRES            the    syntax  
'I can't stand syntax.'
- Examples should be numbered consecutively, and should be aligned with the **left** margin, as follows:
- (10) This is an example.  
(11) This is a second example.  
(12) a. This is a third example.  
      b. Non    sopporto                    la    sintassi. [Italian]  
          NEG    stand.1.SG.PRES            the    syntax  
          'I can't stand syntax.'
- Citations of published work mentioned in the text should be of the form Author (date: page(s)), for example, Chomsky (2000: 191).
  - Citations that are parenthesized should be of the form (Author date: page(s)), for example (Chomsky 2000: 191).
  - References should be listed at the end of the write up under the heading **References**. Here

are typical formats for an article, a chapter, and a book, respectively.

Aissen, J. 2003. Differential Object Marking: Iconicity Vs. Economy. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 21:435-483.

Chomsky, Noam (2000), 'Minimalist inquiries: the framework', in Roger Martin, David Michaels, and Juan Uriagereka (eds.), *Step by step: essays on minimalist syntax in honor of Howard Lasnik*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. 89-155.

Culicover, Peter W. and Ray Jackendoff. 2005. *Simpler Syntax*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

#### Advice

- You may work on the projects alone, or in groups of two or three.
- If you have any questions, if you are not quite sure about something, ask me.
- The grade for a project will be determined by the clarity of the organization and the writing, by the extent to which the data exemplify the phenomenon in question, by the carefulness of the glossing, by the comprehensiveness of the data, by the extent to which reasonable sources were consulted, by the extent to which the proper citation form is followed, and by the extent to which relevant concepts and terminology from the course are applied in the description and discussion.
- Do not plagiarize, either intentionally(!) or even accidentally. For example, don't go to Wikipedia, cut out a grammatical description, and paste it into your write up **without citing it** – I will check Wikipedia for any material that looks like it has been pasted without proper citation. Make sure that any descriptive phrase or chart borrowed from some text is properly attributed and quoted, and that the source of the data is accurately identified. So you can do something like the following if you want to:

Person	Singular	Plural	Sng.	Pl.	Sng.	Pl.	Sng.	Pl.
1st	amo	amamus	teneo	tenemus	dico	dicimus	audio	audimus
2nd	amas	amatis	tenes	tenetis	dicis	dicitis	audis	auditis
3rd	amat	amant	tenet	tenent	dicit	dicunt	audit	audiunt

Table 1. Present tense forms of the Latin verbs *amāre* 'love', *tenēre* 'have', *dicere* 'say', *audīre* 'hear' (from Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin\\_grammar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_grammar))

- That said, **Wikipedia is not always right**, so you should do your best to check your cited material with published sources (starting with the references cited in the Wikipedia article).