

Foundations of Syntax and Semantics

LING321 / ENGL 396

Spring, 2018

MWF, 11:30a - 12:20p

BRNG B260

Instructor: Charles 'Chuck' Bradley

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Office Hour: by appointment only

Office: LYLE 3049

*Syllabus subject to change. Current as of **July 20, 2020**

Course Description: This course is an introduction to the scientific study of the structure and meaning of Language. The course will cover basic principles of good science as applied to syntactic behavior, including discussion of hypothesis generation, methodology, and conclusion drawing. The necessary theoretical groundwork for syntactic and semantic analysis will be covered and then applied to real-world language data. Basic principles of linguistics, syntax and semantics are assumed (prereq: LING201/ SLHS227).

A considerable amount of time will be spent assessing different methods of procuring syntactic data, their strengths and weaknesses, and the conclusions that can be justifiably drawn from each. That is, the emphasis of this course is on developing the methodology and argumentation skills used by professional syntacticians and semanticists. This, of course, assumes familiarity with core syntactic and semantic concepts.

To that end, you will be conducting a number of linguistic experiments yourselves.

N.B.: This class does not reward or punish the ability to remember facts.

Course Objectives:

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate understanding of core concepts of syntax and semantics, and apply that knowledge to novel problems
2. Demonstrate scientific reasoning and critical thinking, including how to:
 - (a) detect patterns,
 - (b) weigh (sources of) evidence, including:
 - i. data from syntactic experiments (e.g., acceptability judgment tasks)
 - ii. data from corpora
 - iii. primary source data from linguistic fieldwork
 - (c) form logical generalizations from that evidence, and
 - (d) compare and contrast competing analyses of the evidence
3. Defend their ideas orally (in class) and in writing (on assignments)
4. Appreciate linguistic diversity, including minority, threatened, and stigmatized languages/dialects.

Required Readings:

The textbook is required reading. While lectures and slides will provide *some* of the course content, the textbook will provide invaluable added examples, insights, and explanations. You are expected to read each chapter in its entirety, even if explicit reference to the text is not made in class.

Textbook:

Tallerman, Maggie. Understanding syntax. 3rd ed. Routledge, 2015.

Articles:

Myers, J. (2009). Syntactic judgment experiments. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 3(1), 406-423.

Beavers, J., & Sells, P. (2014). Constructing and supporting a linguistic analysis. *Research Methods in Linguistics*, 397. Chicago

Periodically, I will upload other texts to Blackboard, likely in conjunction with something we're doing in class. These texts, unless marked 'supplementary,' are required reading.

Wasow, T., Arnold, J. (2005). Intuitions in linguistic argumentation. *Lingua*, 115(11), 1481-1496.

Sketch of Semester Schedule:

M	08 Jan	First day of class
M	15 Jan	MLK Day (No classes)
		Final exam out
M	5 Mar	Final exam progress report due
M	12	– Sn 18 Mar Spring Break (no classes)
M	23 Apr	Final exam due by 5p
F	27 April	Last day of class
T	08 May	Grades due by 5p

Tentative Reading Schedule:

Weeks 1 & 2:	Tallerman chpts. 1 & 9
Week 3:	Myers, J. (2009). Syntactic judgment experiments. <i>Language and Linguistics Compass</i> , 3(1), 406-423.
Week 4:	Beavers, J., & Sells, P. (2014). Constructing and supporting a linguistic analysis. <i>Research Methods in Linguistics</i> , 397. Chicago
Weeks 5 - 15	Remaining Tallerman chapters

Evaluation:

1. *Participation & Attendance*: Participation is crucial for effective learning. Posing and answering questions lets me know what areas students are comfortable with, and what areas need to be revisited. This is especially important given that the final exam is the only means of adjudication.

However: you're adults. Come to class when you want to.

However, however: I will *not* reteach the class during my office hours should you be absent.

2. *In-class assignments*: Most days, there will be a warm-up quiz that reviews course material, applies critical thinking, whatever. Some days, you will be asked to form groups to tackle a larger question. These questions will be presented in the latter half of class and reviewed

the following class. Groups are required to submit one written response/ answer to these questions. These are ungraded, but factor into extra credit. See below. These also help me know what concepts are well/ poorly understood and inform how lenient/ harshly I grade the final exam.

3. *Homework Assignments*: None ;)

4. *Final Exam*: The final exam is meant to be a comprehensive exercise that tests:

- (a) Knowledge of core syntactic / semantic concepts
- (b) Beginner's competency in linguistic argumentation
- (c) Beginner's competency in study design, data collection, analysis, and conclusion drawing.

The final exam will be distributed during the second or third week of class. You have all semester to complete it.

You may discuss the final with your peers, but you must submit your own work. This means that you must explain your answers in your own words.

The final exam, as currently envisioned (July 20, 2020), will include:

- (a) A grammaticality judgment experiment
- (b) A corpus analysis
- (c) Syntactic description of a 'new' language

Some *nota benes*:

- ★ It's recommended that you submit whatever you've started on the final exam for review on/by 5 Mar to avoid major issues. If you are on scholarship/ a sports team and need a mid-term grade to submit, this is mandatory.
- ★ If you submit a part of your final exam for review, the response to the question, *Is this right?* will uniformly be, *I dunno. u tell me.*

5. *Extra Credit*: Students in groups that have submitted correct or thoughtful responses to in-class assignments will receive one point per assignment. Students in groups that have most successfully answered an in-class assignment will receive two points. Failure to submit an assignment or an assignment that is dramatically off course will receive 0 points. At the end of the semester, the number of points earned will be divided by the number of points possible to get a percentage successful assignments. Students scoring above 60% will get 2 extra credit points. Students scoring above 50% will get 1 extra credit point.

Grade Distribution:

Participation	0%
Homework	N/A
In-class quizzes and assignments	0%
Final Exam	100%
Extra Credit	2%
TOTAL	102%

Letter Grade Distribution (in %):

≥ 92.50	A	72.50 - 76.49	C
89.50 - 92.49	A-	69.50 - 72.49	C-
86.50 - 89.49	B+	66.50 - 69.49	D+
82.50 - 86.49	B	62.50 - 66.49	D
79.50 - 82.49	B-	59.50 - 62.49	D-
76.50 - 79.49	C+	≤ 59.49	F

Some other *nota benes*:

- ★ This grade distribution *includes* rounding. No further rounding will occur (e.g., an 89.49 is *truly* a B+).
- ★ Grades cannot be discussed over email (per FERPA). You must make an appointment to see me in person. General grade-related questions can, however, be answered over email.

Online Resources:

Purdue Libraries lib.purdue.edu
Google Scholar scholar.google.com
Stackexchange <https://linguistics.stackexchange.com/>

*A note on Stackexchange: The website is a linguistics-oriented forum. You may ask questions of actual linguists/ students of linguistics. If you use the forum to answer questions from the final, please include (a) a copy of your exact question(s) posed and (b) all responses given. Or, give me a perma-link to the thread using the *share* function. Ask me for clarifications.

Course Policies:

1. *Cheating & Plagiarism*: Don't do it. You are expected to know what constitutes plagiarism. (See [OSSR guidelines](#); NB: Plagiarism includes taking text from slides/ lecture notes without attributing them to 'ctor, i.e., me). Since the only graded work is due at the end of the semester, cheaters will receive an 'Incomplete' for the course until a make-up assignment or a fair grade is negotiated. When in doubt, please just ask.

For your reference:

"As a boilermaker pursuing academic excellence, I pledge to be honest and true in all that I do. Accountable together - we are Purdue."

For a fun propaganda video concerning the above see: <https://www.purdue.edu/provost/teachinglearning/honor-pledge.html>

2. *Nondiscrimination/ classroom behavior*: Be respectful to other students. The classroom is a safe space for the free interchange of ideas. Any attempt to silence, intimidate, etc. other students is in direct violation of the goals of education, generally, and this class, specifically. Offending students may be asked to leave class. This policy extends to collaborative work done outside of the classroom. Students are encouraged to contact me should problems arise.
3. *Attendance/ Absence*: Same as above. But, if you'd just generally like more information on University attendance policies, you can find that here:
<http://catalog.purdue.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=2035>

4. *Tardiness*: I'm always late. You can be, too. No need to sneak in, just don't be intentionally disruptive.
5. *Food and Drink*: It's lunchtime. You can eat. Please avoid potato chips or any other loud foods. Please also be considerate w.r.t. food odors and allergies.
6. *Cell Usage*: Please, no cell phones in class. Along with all aging faculty, this is a personal pet peeve.
7. *Laptop usage*: If you prefer to take notes on your laptop, you're welcome to do it. Fact-checking and other linguistics-related tasks are also permitted. Don't distract others with your occasional/ frequent/ obsessive FB check-ins. Don't skype during class.

Getting Help:

1. Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): if you're feeling overwhelmed, depressed, anxious, etc. for *whatever* reason, CAPS is a really good service. They can be reached at (765)494-6995 or online at <http://www.purdue.edu/caps/> during and after hours, on weekends and holidays. They are located at PUSH (2nd floor) during regular office hours. If you are having a crisis: <http://www.purdue.edu/caps/contact/crisis/index.html>.
2. *The Office of the Dean of Students* (Schleman 207, 494-1747): provides confidential counseling and advice for personal or academic problems.
<http://www.purdue.edu/odos/counseling/index.php>
3. *The Academic Success Center* (BRNG 3268, 494-5569): provides help with academic success, including tips on how to study, how to structure your time, and how to take effective notes, inter alia.
<http://www.purdue.edu/studentsuccess/academic/index.html>
<http://www.purdue.edu/studentsuccess/academic/resources/handouts/allHandouts.html>
4. *Purdue Writing Lab* (HEAV 226, 494-3723): provides writing tutorial services.
<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/writinglab/cscworkshops>
5. *The Disability Resource Center*: provides support to students with disabilities, academic or physical. If you have an academic disability, please contact me immediately so that we can discuss any adjustments. NB: Given that you have the entire semester to complete the final exam, I do not anticipate needing to grant extra time.
<http://www.purdue.edu/studentsuccess/specialized/drc/>

Emergency Procedures:

NB: In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to change.

1. In case of *fire*, please exit Beering using the South exit. We will meet across the street by the Triangle Fraternity. Do not reenter the building until the all-clear signal sounds. Do not start a game of flip cup you cannot finish.
2. In case of a *tornado*, we will shelter in place.
3. In case of an *active shooter*, we will turn out all of the lights, lock/ barricade and move away from the door, and shelter in place.

4. In case of an *issue with the class or instructor*, please contact me directly. If you feel you cannot approach me, please seek advice from the Office of the Dean of Students.
5. **Consult the below missive for more information**