

# Ling 120: Syntax

Spring 2024

(Revised 2/19)

	Email	Office	Office hours
Instructor:	Peter Jenks jenks@berkeley.edu	1217 Dwinelle	Tu 9-10am, W 12-1pm
GSIs:	Shweta Akolkar akolkar@berkeley.edu	55 Dwinelle	M 2-3, F 1-2
	Franco Liu kfliu@berkeley.edu	55 Dwinelle	Tu 10-12
Meetings:	MWF 11:10–11:59a 277 Cory		

**Land acknowledgement** This class takes place on unceded Chochenyo Ohlone land. The Chochenyo Ohlone are the successors of the federally recognized Verona Band of Alameda County. The Chochenyo Ohlone people have an unbroken connection to their homeland and a continuous existence in the East Bay since time immemorial. Their history is one of survival and persistence. Continued and active cultural restoration is manifest in Chochenyo language classes, restoration of traditional Chochenyo Ohlone foods (makamham.com), culture, and land stewardship. Chochenyo Ohlone people are also working actively with the University to heal old wounds. Our awareness of Chochenyo Ohlone people, history, language, and culture aids that process. (Written by Prof. Line Mikkelsen, in collaboration with Vincent Medina, Chochenyo Ohlone, co-founder of Mak-'amham)

**Description:** Syntax is the study of the sentence structure of natural languages. In this class we will develop a formal theory with the goal of being able to provide an analysis of all grammatical sentences in all natural languages. Along the way, we will discuss the importance of having an explicit, predictive theory, and develop the basics of syntactic argumentation. While the focus will mostly be on syntax, we will discuss some aspects of linguistic meaning.

**Learning goals:**

- to develop an appreciation for the syntactic diversity of languages
- to gain an understanding of formal syntactic theory
- to apply your analytic skills to new data
- to create your own analysis of a language you don't speak

**Textbook** *Syntax: A Generative Introduction*, 2013, by Andrew Carnie, Wiley-Blackwell.

- Our class will follow this textbook, approximately a chapter a week.

**Attendance**

- If you repeatedly miss class or section, you will fall behind and do poorly.
- I will be using course capture for the course, but trees drawn on the board form a major component of the in class material, the slides will be relatively minimal.
- Because there will be a fair number of hand-drawn trees, taking notes with pen-and-paper is recommended.
- If you have to miss class for any reason, you are responsible for obtaining notes for the missed class from a classmate

**Section:** Section attendance will be an integral part of the class. In section, you will practice the basic skill of analyzing sentence structure and drawing trees. Attending all but 2 sections will earn you 2 percentage points of extra credit on your final grade.

**Weekly Quizzes** Every Monday there will be an in person quiz on the previous week's material. The quiz will take approximately 20 minutes at the start of class. Missed quizzes can only be made up with a valid excuse or on the final exam.

Quiz-specific policies:

- Quizzes can only be retaken if students send a bCourses message to their GSI before the start of class on Monday with a valid excuse, such as illness or necessary travel.
- Make-up quizzes (with a valid excuse) can be taken during any instructors' office hours. We will confirm that you have messaged us before class on Monday before posting your grade.
- A maximum of two excused make-up quizzes are allowed during the semester.
- All unexcused quiz absences, including those exceeding the two excused quiz threshold, can be made up on the final exam.

**Problem sets** • Every other week, a problem set will be posted on bCourses, in which you will need to draw trees and analyze syntactic data.

- Problem sets will be submitted and graded via Gradescope by the start of class on Wednesday; each day the assignment is late, a 25% deduction will be applied to the score.
- You can work with your classmates, but the work that you submit must be your own.

**Final Project** • Throughout the semester you will be working towards a final paper in which you analyze the syntax of an unfamiliar language, which you will have to select from a list;

- Your first weekly quiz will be your choice of language and a basic description of it in response to prompts.
- Every few weeks you will submit an 'installment' of your final paper as an assignment as a pdf file upload on bCourses;
- Final project assignments are due by the start of class on Wednesday; each day the assignment is late, a 25% deduction will be applied to the score.
- Your final paper will consist of the revised partial analyses of the language along with an additional research question about the language

**Final Exam:** The final exam will be in class, on Tuesday May 7, from 7-10pm. The final exam is optional. The final exam will be structured like a sequence of 11 quizzes that you took over the course of the semester. If your final exam grade exceeds your quiz grades, it will replace the quiz grades for the semester. If the final exam grade is worse than the quiz grades, there will be no effect on the final grade.

**Grading:** Your grades are out of a total of 500 points. The final paper grade will include 120 points for your 6 FP assignments during the semester, which can be improved with revisions in your final submission.

Grade Values	Scale				
Problem sets (x6)	120	A	467.5–500	A-	447.5–467.4
Final paper	200	B+	432.5–447.4	B	417.5–432.4
Quizzes/Final Exam	180	C+	382.5–397.4	C	362.5–382.4
Total	500 points	D+	332.5–347.4	D	312.5–332.4
		F	0–297.4		

**Academic Integrity** One of the most important values of an academic community is the balance between the free flow of ideas and the respect for the intellectual property of others. Researchers don't use one another's research without permission; scholars and students always use proper citations in papers; professors may not circulate or publish student papers without the writer's permission; and students may not circulate or post materials (handouts, exams, syllabi—any class materials) from their classes without the written permission of the instructor.

Any test, paper or report submitted by you and that bears your name is presumed to be your own original work that has not previously been submitted for credit in another course unless you obtain prior written approval to do so from your instructor. In all of your assignments, including your homework or drafts of papers, you may use words or ideas written by other individuals in publications, web sites, or other sources, but only with proper attribution. If you are not clear about the expectations for completing an assignment or taking a test or examination, be sure to seek clarification from your instructor or GSI beforehand.

Finally, you should keep in mind that as a member of the campus community, you are expected to demonstrate integrity in all of your academic endeavors and will be evaluated on your own merits. The consequences of cheating and academic dishonesty—including a formal discipline file, possible loss of future internship, scholarship, or employment opportunities, and denial of admission to graduate school—are simply not worth it.

**Classroom climate** We are all responsible for creating a learning environment that is welcoming, inclusive, equitable, and respectful. If you feel that these expectations are not being met, you can consult your instructor(s) or seek assistance from this link to campus resources.

**Accommodations** The purpose of academic accommodations is to ensure that all students have a fair chance at academic success. Disability, or hardships such as basic needs insecurity, uncertain documentation and immigration status, medical and mental health concerns, pregnancy and parenting, significant familial distress, and experiencing sexual violence or harassment, can affect a student's ability to satisfy particular course requirements. Students have the right to reasonable academic accommodations, without having to disclose personal information to instructors. For more information about accommodations, scheduling conflicts related to religious creed or extracurricular activities, please see the Academic Accommodations hub website:  
<https://evcp.berkeley.edu/programs-resources/academic-accommodations-hub>

**Schedule** The schedule below lists the dates of class meetings, readings, homework assignments, and tests. The suggested workflow for the class is to content during the week and spend the later part of the week (or weekend) working on your assignment.

WEEK	DAY	DATE	TOPIC	READING	HW
1	Wed	Jan 17	Preliminaries	Carnie ch. 1	
	Fri	Jan 19			
2	Mon	Jan 22	Categories	Carnie, ch. 2	Quiz 1 (online)
	Wed	Jan 24			
	Fri	Jan 26			
3	Mon	Jan 29	Phrase structure	Carnie ch. 3	Quiz 2 (in class)
	Wed	Jan 31			PS1 due
	Fri	Feb 2			

4	Mon	Feb 5	Structural relations	Carnie ch. 4	Quiz 3 (in class) FP1: Categories
	Wed	Feb 7			
	Fri	Feb 9			
5	Mon	Feb 12	Binding theory	Carnie ch. 5	Quiz 4 (in class) PS2 due
	Wed	Feb 14			
	Fri	Feb 16			
6	Mon	Feb 19	NO CLASS	(President's Day)	(no Quiz!)
	Wed	Feb 21	X-bar theory	Carnie ch. 6	
	Fri	Feb 23			
7	Mon	Feb 26	DP/CP/TP	Carnie ch. 7	Quiz 5 (in class) FP2: Constituency
	Wed	Feb 28			
	Fri	Mar 1			
8	Mon	Mar 4	Constituent order	Carnie ch. 8	Quiz 6 (in class) PS3 due
	Wed	Mar 6			
	Fri	Mar 8			
9	Mon	Mar 11	Head movement	Carnie ch. 9	Quiz 7 (in class)
	Wed	Mar 13			
	Fri	Mar 15			
10	Mon	Mar 18	Theta-theory	Carnie ch. 10	Quiz 8 (in class) PS4 due
	Wed	Mar 20			
	Fri	Mar 22			

Mar 25-29 SPRING BREAK

11	Mon	Apr 1	Case and agreement	—	Quiz 9 (in class) FP3: DP, TP
	Wed	Apr 3			
	Fri	Apr 5			
12	Mon	Apr 8	DP movement	Carnie, ch. 11	Quiz 10 (in class) PS5 due
	Wed	Apr 10			
	Fri	Apr 12			
13	Mon	Apr 15	Wh-movement	Carnie, ch. 12	Quiz 11 (in class)
	Wed	Apr 17			
	Fri	Apr 19			FP4: Wh-questions, focus
14	Mon	Apr 22	Towards Minimalism	Carnie, ch. 13	Quiz 12 (in class) PS6 due
	Wed	Apr 24			
	Fri	Apr 26			

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