

Pedagogy in linguistics: Syntax and beyond

Steven Foley (University of Southern California) • March 1, 2024 • tinyurl.com/foleySFU

My experience

TA'd across the curriculum	Intro to Linguistics • Syntax (writing intensive) • Psycholinguistics • Semantics • Pragmatics • Phonology • Typology
Taught advanced electives and lower-division classes	Poetry and Language • Native Languages of North America • Mythbusting Language • Constructed Languages
Designed syntax courses	Advanced undergraduate • Advanced graduate (\bar{A} -movement) • Graduate seminar on argument structure
Other teaching	Experimental syntax lecture at SCCC-3 (Tbilisi '23) • Contributed to language lessons w/ Nido de Lenguas • Video content & public science

My approach

All students	Have a hypothesis • Be creative • Hone generalizable skills
Non-majors	Dispel misconceptions • Empower • Share cool, counterintuitive facts
Linguistics majors	Apply the scientific method toward one's own intuitions • Evaluate abstract theories • Develop logical and rhetorical skills in writing
Undergrads in research	How to do research and present it • Setting & meeting deadlines • Contributing through RAships (e.g. Princeton Ahnaphor Lab) • Singular <i>they</i> • Bringing RAs to Georgia • Working on Punjabi?
Nonspecialist grads	Core baseline: phrase structure, locality, movement • Identify potential confounds, and points of collaboration • Professional development
Specialist grads	Foundational concepts and contemporary theory • Grammaticality vs. acceptability • Evaluating and synthesizing data across sources
Advisees or lab members	Weekly meetings • Data science skills • Experimental design and fieldwork • Generating vs. developing ideas • Giving posters and talks

At SFU

Excited to hit the ground running	Undergrad syntax (LING 322) • Graduate syntax (LING 801) • Psychology of Language (LING 315) • Morphology (LING 323) • Language Structures (LING 431; Georgian or Mesoamerican languages)
Interested and able	Lower-div (LING 111, 200, 220) • Sociolinguistics (LING 160, 309W, 806) • Semantics (LING 324, 802) • Field linguistics (LING 408) • Techniques & Design (LING 851) • Sentence processing, Typology
Topics courses	Case and ergativity • Agreement • Grammatical roles and prominence scales • Psychology of reading, of color vision • Signal detection theory • Crosslinguistic sentence processing, including Indigenous lgs of NA
Some questions about the program	What are the goals for current students, and for future students? • Upper-level courses for grads and undergrads? • TAsip opportunities and TA training? • Equitability and inclusion in the curriculum?