

# Introduction to Syntax

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Office:

Semester, Year

***NB: this syllabus is subject to small changes. Any modifications will be notified. Please check the course website for up-to-date information.***

- **Class time:**
- **Location:**
- **Office hours:** see course website for up-to-date information

## Description of the course

This course is an introduction to the syntax of natural languages, under a generative framework. Throughout the semester, we will explore key components of grammar, including:

- Rules and operations responsible for putting together the basic pieces of phrases and sentences;
- Rules that govern the interpretation of nominal expressions like *themselves*;
- Rules that govern the positions where nominal expressions can or must be placed and the crosslinguistic variation in the realization of these rules;
- Rules and operations responsible for displacing phrases and words across the syntactic structure;
- The classification of predicates, according to the number and nature of the arguments they combine with.

Most of these concepts will be introduced and illustrated with Standard English, but we will also have the chance to examine data from a diverse set of languages.

## Textbook

There is no dedicated textbook for this course. This course is designed for all participants to formulate and evaluate laws and generalizations together. Furthermore, students are encouraged to reevaluate previous content, as new data is introduced along the semester.

Nonetheless, course slides are made to be understandable outside of class. Likewise, key definitions will be highlighted and summary sheets will also be provided.

When appropriate,<sup>1</sup> classes will start with a short (around fifteen minutes) quiz that does **not** count for the grade, but which is intended to encourage students to actively retrieve the data examined in previous lectures.

There will be no advance notice of these quizzes, as they are explicitly intended to be an informal chance to revise and retrieve content.

If you would like to read a textbook, I recommend the following:

Carnie, Andrew, 2021. *Syntax: A generative introduction*. John Wiley & Sons.

## Assessment

In this course, there will be three homework assignments and one final exam. The schedule below outlines when each assignment can be expected to be posted. There will be around two to three weeks to complete each assignment. **Please check the due date on the information sheet of each assignment**, which will be posted on the course website.

The weight of each piece of assessment is below:

- Homework #1: 20%
- Homework #2: 25%
- Homework #3: 30%
- Final exam: 25%

The homework is a combination of two types of exercises. First, there will be exercises that help students revise data and concepts examined in class. On this camp, students can expect variations of sentences reviewed during lectures and the combination of them into a single sentence (e.g. if we studied passivization and *Wh*-movement separately during the lecture, you may be asked to diagram a single sentence that includes both).

Second, there will also be exercises that encourage students to creatively apply and extend the concepts built in class in order to describe and analyze novel data, specially from languages other than standard English.

## Submitting your homework

Submit your homework electronically at the course website. We will be drawing a lot of syntactic diagrams. You can do this by hand and then scan or take a picture of it. Alternatively, you can use free online generators or, if you use  $\text{\LaTeX}$ , packages used for exactly this purpose. On the latter two, see the *Tree drawing tutorial* uploaded on the course website.

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<sup>1</sup>There is no definition for this, but, basically, there will be a quiz whenever we have covered enough content.

## Schedule

NB: there are no dates in the schedule because there can be some variability in how long covering a topic can take. Nevertheless, the order of topics can be relied on. The students are advised to **follow the order of the materials posted on the course's website.**

	Topic	Assessment
1	Universal Grammar & constituency tests	
2	X-bar Theory & Theta-role assignment, UTAH & clausal embedding	
3	Phrasal movement, head movement & the English auxiliary system	
4	VP-internal Subject Hypothesis & Phrasal movement (incl. WH-movement)	<b>Homework #1 posted</b>
5	Phrasal movement (cont'd): passives & Case Theory	
6	Case Theory (cont'd) & ergative languages	
7	Binding Theory	<b>Homework #2 posted</b>
8	Binding Theory (cont'd) & ditransitives vs. double object construction	
9	Ditransitives vs. double object construction (cont'd)	
10	False twins: unaccusative vs. unergatives (intransitive verbs)	<b>Homework #3 posted</b>
11	More false twins: Exceptional Case Marking vs. control (embedded infinitival clauses)	
12	False twins (cont'd)	
13	Final review (in-class exercises)	
14		<b>Final exam on DATE</b>