

Syllabus

Course Name: **Introduction to Syntax**

Course Number: 01:615:305:01

This syllabus is subject to change

Spring 2015

Lectures will be videotaped and sound recorded. Your presence in class qualifies as consent.

Tue – Thus 04:30-05:50

Scott Hall 216

Lecturer

Dr. Adam Szczegielniak

Contact: as1787@scarletmail.rutgers.edu
http://scholar.harvard.edu/adam
Department of Linguistics
18 Seminary Place.

Office Hours and Location

Tue 2:40– 3:40, please email first.

Place: 18 Seminary Place

Linguistics Department Information

Map: <http://maps.rutgers.edu/building.aspx?id=189>

URL: <http://ling.rutgers.edu>

18 Seminary Place, New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Department Administrator: Danielle Berlingieri, Room 102 (ph. 848-932-0477).

Course Learning Goals

By the end of this course, students will:

- i. Gain technical mastery over the tools of linguistic analysis in syntax
- ii. Gain understanding of syntactic theory as it applies in these areas
- iii. Learn how to investigate syntactic data and analyze it
- iv. Develop strong problem-solving skills in syntax.

Department Learning Goals

Students will reason about language; identify how incorrect or irrational assumptions and prejudices distort understanding of language; demonstrate knowledge about language in the world including a sophisticated understanding of linguistic and cultural variation, and evaluate popular views on the nature of human languages and their speakers.

Majors and minors will also demonstrate technical mastery over the tools of linguistic analysis in syntax, phonology and semantics and apply linguistic theory in these areas. They will investigate linguistic data and analyze it; demonstrate strong problem-solving skills; extend their understanding of theoretical linguistics into other domains of linguistic research; apply the techniques of linguistics that they have

learned in the core courses to new topics; and access current research in the field. Some students will investigate language in a broader context, where it can be systematically and rationally explored using their sophisticated understanding how language works.

Description:

The basic objectives of this course are:

(A) to familiarize students with the basic goals and assumptions of Generative Grammar,
(B) to train students in the rudiments of syntactic analysis and syntactic theorizing and argumentation, and
(C) to familiarize students with the major syntactic structures of English and their relevance to linguistic theory.

The central goal of Generative Grammar is to understand what a person knows when he or she knows a language, and to understand how it is that people acquire this knowledge. Syntax is that portion of what we know about our language that deals with the structure and word order of sentences. Most of this "knowledge" is actually unconscious, that is to say, native speakers of English "know" what sounds to them like a perfectly normal English sentence, but when native speakers hear a sentence that sounds "ungrammatical" to them, they rarely can say exactly why. In fact the greatest portion of our linguistic knowledge has never been explicitly taught to us, rather we have acquired it because we have human brains, and human brains are specially equipped to learn certain kinds of languages. Linguistics, from this perspective, is a "cognitive" science, like much of psychology, dedicated to understanding how our brains work in a particularly human way.

Part of the charm of investigating the syntax of one's native language is that it is often not necessary to go to the library to amass the facts. Each native speaker of English knows what sounds like a good sentence of English, and native speakers agree about this much more than they disagree. For example, a sentence like (A) "Who did Mary say that she saw?" is a typical question which one might answer by saying, "Mary said that she saw Joe," but a question like (B) "Who did Mary see the film which pleased?" sounds terrible, although one could imagine a logical response like "Mary saw the film which pleased Joe." The curious fact about sentences like the ungrammatical question just mentioned is that no one is ever taught not to say it. In fact, a native speaker of French or Swahili will not have to be instructed not to say such a sentence either, as sentences with a "structure" like that in (B) are ungrammatical in every language in the world. English, or, for that matter, Swahili, are learnable precisely because children do not have to even consider the possible existence of sentences like (A). What humans "know" without being taught is what is of particular interest to linguists who want to understand what "knowledge" we are born with, and how it affects what we know after we have "learned" the language we know as adults.

The study of syntax is a very young science that has nonetheless made a remarkable degree of progress in understanding just how rich, complex and systematic the mind is. Advances in syntactic theory have led to much more subtle descriptions and understanding of the grammar of particular languages, such as English, Chinese, Swahili, and Warlpiri, as well as to the discovery of linguistic universals, i.e., properties true of every human language. But as a young science, this sort of linguistics as cognitive science has barely come of age, and some of the most exciting questions about human potential are just beginning to be asked. English has been the most intensely studied of all the natural languages, so most of the interesting issues in theoretical syntax can be presented using structures familiar to every speaker of English. As time allows, less familiar languages will also be discussed for comparison. Though most of the major syntactic structures of English will be analyzed, the presentation of the course is designed to illustrate theoretical concepts and to provide practice in syntactic analysis rather than to present a complete a description of English syntax.

This course is likely to be of interest to students in computer science, anthropology, language studies, philosophy and psychology, as well as students in linguistics.

Required Reading

Algebra of Language.

Script by Adam Szczegielniak

Provided on Sakai.

Additional reading (Optional)

Syntax: A Generative Introduction, 3rd Edition, by Andrew Carnie ISBN: 978-0-470-65531-3, August 2012 Wiley. \$49.95

Kindle edition \$39.96

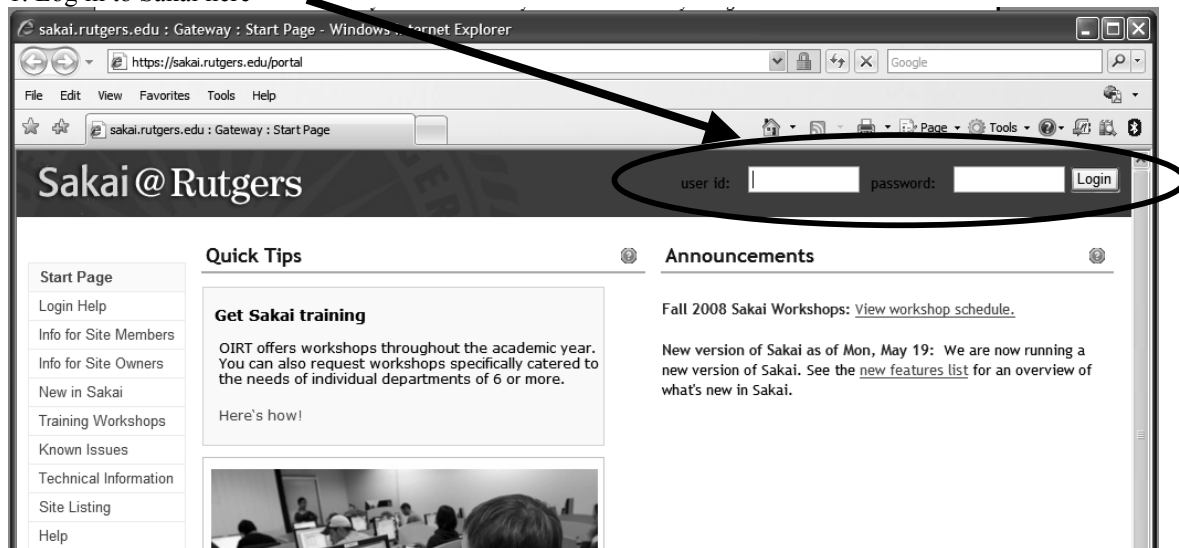
http://www.amazon.com/Syntax-Introduction-Introducing-Linguistics-ebook/dp/B0093A421Q/ref=tmm_kin_title_0?ie=UTF8&qid=1358749226&sr=8-1

Course Webpage

– You should have access to the website "Introduction To Syntax" on Sakai.

– If you are not familiar with Sakai, go to <http://sakai.rutgers.edu> and read the help documentation. Here are basic instructions:

1. Log in to Sakai here



– your username is your NetID.

2. Click on “{Sakai course name}”



– If you cannot see “{SAKAI COURSE DESIGNATION}”, click on the menu box on the right side of the page:



– If you still can't see “{SAKAI COURSE DESIGNATION}”, then contact your Instructor. You must be enrolled in the course to have access.

- For lecture materials, click on *Modules*.
- For resources specific to your section, click on *Resources* and then choose your section number.
- For homework assignments, click on *Assignments*. Assignments will be made visible as the course progresses.
- The lecturer and instructors are *not* the IT helpdesk. If you have trouble understanding how to use Sakai, contact the IT people.

Course Prerequisites: Linguistics 201 or permission of instructor.

Course Requirements

Students will receive frequent problem sets and reading assignments. The problem sets will be discussed in class the day they are due. For this reason it is VERY IMPORTANT to keep up, especially as each assignment builds on the last, and most of class discussion is based on the problem sets.

Problem sets have to be printed and submitted at the beginning of class. Diagrams can be drawn by hand.

Grades: Grades will be decided on the basis of the following procedure. First consideration will be the quality and punctual submission of problem sets (50%), the midterm exam (20%), the final exam (25%), and class participation (5%). Students will receive a grade based on the material they have handed in as of the final class (i.e., no incompletes). I reserve the right to juggle with the percentages within five or ten percent if I think a fairer grade will result.

Problem Sets 5 x 10% = 50%

Midterm exam 20%

Final Exam 25%

Class Participation 5%

Late submission of PS – there is no possibility to obtain credit for late submission unless medical or religious observance circumstances are involved.

Participation in the midterm and final exam is obligatory.

Attendance at each class is obligatory; every absence must be reported via self-reporting absence system.

Final Exam

This course does have a final exam. It constitutes 25% of the grade. Both midterm and Final exams are take-home open book exams.

Assignments

There are 5 assignments (see plan for due dates). Each assignment is 10% of the grade. Assignments cannot be handwritten, with the exception of tree diagrams.

Midterm Exams

There will be one midterm exam posted on the 12th class. It is an open book take home exam. It constitutes 20% of the grade.

Participation

All students are expected to attend. Absences must be reported via the Self-reporting absence notification (more info at: <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/help.jsp>)

Grade Calculation: Summary

Problem Sets 5x10%= 50%

Midterm exam 20%

Final Exam 25%

Class Participation 5%

Class Schedule

Class	Topic	Reading	Assign	Due
1	Constituency	AL1,		
2	Properties of constituents, Graphs	AL 2;		
3	Parts of speech	AL 3;	PS1	
4	X-bar	AL 4;		
5	X-bar	AL 4;		
6	Theta theory, c-selection	AL 4;		PS1
02/17	Functional Categories little v DP, CP, TP	Al 5		
02/19	Functional Categories little v DP, CP, TP		PS2	
02/24	Structural Relations, c-command Binding	AL6		
02/26	Recap			
03/03	Drawing trees Practice			
03/05	Review		midterm	PS2
03/10	Review			
03/12	Movement vs. empty categories	AL7		midterm
03/24	Head movement	AL7	PS3	
03/26	Head Movement			
03/31	Recap			
04/02	DP Movement	AL8	PS4	PS3
04/07	DP movement			
04/09	Recap			
04/14	Wh-movement	AL9	PS5	PS4
04/16	Wh-movement			
04/21	Recap			
04/23	Unifying movement- Broad Picture	AL10	Exam	PS5
04/28	Review			
04/30	Review			
05/07				Exam

Policies

Policy on Religiously Observant Students

It is University policy (University Regulation on Attendance, Book 2, 2.4.7B, formerly 60.14f) to excuse without penalty students who are absent from class because of religious observances, and to allow the make-up of work missed because of such absence. Examinations and special required out-of-class activities shall ordinarily not be scheduled on those days when religiously observant students refrain from participating in secular activities. Absences for reasons of religious obligation shall not be counted for purposes of reporting.

In the printed schedule of classes, students are advised that they should provide timely notification to instructors about necessary absences, and that they are responsible for making up the work or exams according to an agreed-upon schedule.

The published schedule of classes contains a reminder for students who are unable to participate in secular activities because of a religious observance to notify their instructor as early in the semester as possible. Reasonable common sense, judgment, and the pursuit of mutual goodwill should result in the positive resolution of scheduling conflicts.

Students with Disabilities

Full disability policies and procedures are at <http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/>

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations must follow the procedures outlined at <http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/request.html>

Attendance Policy

In accordance with Rutgers University regulations, attendance is expected at all regularly scheduled meetings of this course.

Students who miss an occasional class for unverifiable illness or personal circumstances do not require written documentation or verification from the dean. In these circumstances, use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email will be automatically sent to the course instructor. It is the responsibility of the student to notify instructors in a timely manner of any absences. It is up to the instructor to determine if accommodations are warranted to allow students to make up work that counts toward their semester grade.

Students missing more than an occasional class due to serious illness or serious personal circumstances should contact the Dean of Students to authenticate their absences. Faculty notified of authenticated absences should make reasonable accommodations to allow students to make up work that counts toward their semester grade.

Absences due to religious observance, participation in university-sponsored events or activities such as intercollegiate athletics, are treated as authenticated absences and do not require written verification from the dean. Absences due to chronic illness or documented disability are treated as authenticated absences when students present a note of authentication from the Dean of Students office or the Office of Disability Services. Authenticated absences do not waive the overall policy for attendance. Students who must, for any reason, miss more than an occasional class should consult with their instructors directly and with the Dean of Students office.

It is the policy of the Rutgers University not to cancel classes on religious holidays. In the case of inclement weather, the President of the University may cancel classes.

– **Any student who misses two or more classes is considered to have “missed more than an occasional class”, and the policy outlined above applies.**

Late Assignment Policy

Assignments must be handed in class in on the due date before class begins.

Late assignments will **not** be accepted, except:

- If you are ill and missed the deadline, and contacted me beforehand. You will be asked to provide proof of illness (usually a doctor’s note).
- If you know you will miss a deadline due to religious observance, it is your responsibility to contact me early in the semester. You should arrange to take an alternative assessment, or to submit the assignment on another date.

In-Class Exam Policy

If you miss an in-class exam you will be assigned a score of zero, unless:

- If you are ill and miss the exam, contact me beforehand. You will be asked to provide proof of illness (usually a doctor’s note).
- If you know you will miss an exam due to religious observance, it is your responsibility to contact me early in the semester. You should arrange to take an alternative assessment, or to do the exam on another date.

Academic Integrity

You are expected to know and follow Rutgers’ policies on Academic Integrity:
<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml>

Students may not collaborate on answering questions in homework assignments or exams; homework assignments and exams must be done independently. Collaboration is a violation of the Academic Integrity policy. All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs.

Complaints

The Bylaws of the Linguistics Department direct that any complaint must:

- If the complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, it will be referred to the Lecturer: Dr. Adam Szczegielniak
- If the complaint is still not resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, it will be referred to the Linguistics Undergraduate Director: Prof. Veneeta Dayal
- If the complaint is still not resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, it will be referred to the Chair of the department: Prof. Bruce Tesar
- If the complaint is still not resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, it will be referred to the Dean of the school.

Department Resources

The Linguistics Department’s Website:

<http://ling.rutgers.edu>

Sakai (Course Management System):

<http://sakai.rutgers.edu>

Student Absence Reporting System:

<https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/>

The Undergraduate Linguistics Club:

<http://ling.rutgers.edu>: click *Undergraduate Club* in the rightmost box.

The Department of Linguistics Newsletter (SNARL):

<http://ling.rutgers.edu>: click *News and Events > Our Newsletter*