Syntax seminar: Comparatives

Technical specs:

Time: Fridays 1:30-4:20pm
Place: Cobb 204

Office hours: Fridays 12-1pm or by appointment
Office: Classics 305
Tel: (70)2-8523
email: merchant@uchicago.edu

Goals and course description:

This course is an advanced look at the syntax of comparatives, exploring the interaction between the lexicon, phrase-structural properties, and A'-dependencies in explaining the range of attested manifestations. Comparatives are well known for their complexity, and as such have proven a fruitful ground for research over the past three decades, including forming the central arena for the debate on the nature of 'unbounded' dependencies in syntax. We will review this literature and examine in depth recent analyses that address both the empirical richness within English (comparatives involving differing or multiple standards, subdeletions, VP-ellipsis, gapping, pseudogapping, stripping, and other missing material) and cross-linguistically. We will focus on a close reading of recent work by Kennedy and Lechner.

Coursework:

The required work for this courses consists mainly of reading and discussion of the assigned chapters, papers, and books. Each participant in the seminar will be expected to present one or two of the readings to the class in a presentation with a handout. You will also be required to write a final paper of 10-15 pages. Papers are due Wednesday, March 19, as files (preferably pdf, though Microsoft Word is acceptable) emailed to merchant@uchicago.edu.

Evaluation:

Your evaluation for this course will be based on the above coursework as well as on class participation.
Schedule: (Parenthesized readings are background, to be read as supplementation)

2 [Jan 17] No class
4 [Jan 31] Kennedy 1997 [modulo 3:30pm Heim colloq at Northwestern]
5 [Feb 7] Kennedy 1997 continued
8 [Feb 28] Lechner 1998 continued
9 [Mar 7] Lechner 2001

Readings: