Syntax 1
Linguistics 20400/30400, Fall 2005
TuTh 10:30-11:50 am, Social Sciences 3xx

Instructor
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Section place: TBA
Office hours: TBA

Course description
This course introduces the fundamental goals and techniques of current syntactic theory and
the empirical facts it is based on. It also has the goal of putting you in a position to pursue
more advanced study of the structure of human languages and to provide a foundation for
your own research. After reviewing the basic concepts of modern grammatical theory, the
course moves on to the principles of current theoretical syntax: phrase structure and
constituency, the interaction of syntax and the lexicon, and the nature and type of structure-
building and movement operations. Emphasis is placed on coherent argumentation and
empirical justification for theoretical claims, as well as overall understanding of theoretical
concepts and tools.

Undergraduate course requirements
• Attendance and participation in the class; diligent reading
• Homework assignments
• Midterm exam (in class)
• Final exam

The final grade will be an average of all grades received on assignments plus
participation (worth one assignment), the midterm (worth two assignments), and the
final exam (worth four assignments)

Graduate student course requirements
Students enrolled in this course under its graduate number (30400) must complete all the above
coursework; they must also complete one additional assignment (the ‘formal’ homework of week
4), complete all the readings, including the ones marked as optional for the undergraduates in
square brackets, and write a final squib. The squib is a short paper (5-10 pages double-
spaced) on
a topic of your choosing; you may consult with me about the topic of course--typically applying
some of the tools we’ve learned to a new set of data, either from English or another language you
know, or exploring some theoretical tension in the set of analyses and definitions presented in
class. Unlike assignments, the squib must be entirely individual work.

Overview of the contents of the course:
The following topics will be covered (roughly in the order below):
• The basics of phrase structure
• The lexicon; types of lexical information; the interaction between the lexicon and the
phrasestructuresystem(thetheoryofselection)
• The basics of clausal architecture; functional and lexical categories
• Theta theory, argument structure, grammatical relations
• The internal subject hypothesis and the organization of the VP
• Voice: active/passive constructions, unaccusatives and unergatives
• Case theory
• Expletives and impersonal constructions; the ‘extended projection principle’
• Raising and control (‘equi’)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading (to be completed before class on date) [undergrad optional reading in brackets]</th>
<th>Homework (to be turned in on the Tuesday of the week indicated)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9/27, 9/29</td>
<td>Introduction, background features</td>
<td>chs. 1 and 2</td>
<td>ch. 2, ex 1 ‘Reflexives and phi-features’ (p. 53)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>10/4, 10/6</td>
<td>constituency</td>
<td>ch. 3</td>
<td>ch. 3, ex 1 ‘Pseudoclefts’ (p. 97)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>10/11, 10/13</td>
<td>phrase structure</td>
<td>ch. 4 (up to 4.4.4)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ditransitives</td>
<td>Barss and Lasnik 1986</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>10/18, 10/20</td>
<td>unaccusativity</td>
<td>ch. 4 (4.4.4 to end); [Perlmutter 1978,] Alexiadou et al 2004</td>
<td>Formal homework (for grad students only)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>10/25: Midterm</td>
<td>auxiliaries, head movement do-support</td>
<td>ch. 5</td>
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<td>10/27</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>11/1</td>
<td>expletives</td>
<td>ch. 6</td>
<td>ch. 5, ex 2 ‘copulars’ (p. 196)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11/3</td>
<td>the internal subject hypothesis</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>11/8</td>
<td>case, voice</td>
<td>Mithun 1999</td>
<td>ch. 6, ex 4 ‘expletives’ (p. 240)</td>
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<td>11/10</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>11/15</td>
<td>raising</td>
<td>ch. 8</td>
<td>Case systems homework</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>11/22</td>
<td>control continued</td>
<td>[Landau 2001]</td>
<td>ch. 8, ex 7 ‘classifying verbs’ (p. 336); In class derivations</td>
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<td>11/24</td>
<td>[Thanksgiving]</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>11/29</td>
<td>Remaining issues, or nonconfigurationality (time permitting)</td>
<td>Baker 2001 [Pensalfini 2004]</td>
<td>In class derivations continued</td>
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<td>12/1: No class</td>
<td>Reading period</td>
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Final: Thursday, December 8, 10:30am-12:30pm
Graduate student final squibs are due in my office or mailbox (hard copies only, please!) by noon on Friday, December 9.

Text


Other readings: (these will all be available as pdf files on e-reserve through the Regenstein)

Guidelines for writing up assignments:

The assignments should take the form of short papers aimed at explaining sets of problematic data using, and (where necessary) extending, the set of analytical tools adopted in class. Emphasis will be placed on providing empirical justification for claims, strength of argumentation, and form and clarity. You are free to work together in developing solutions to the problems in the assignments, with the following two requirements:

(i) you must acknowledge your collaborators (i.e., include a footnote saying who you worked with), and
(ii) you must write up the assignments individually

Write-ups should be in complete prose, with all examples, trees, rules, etc., numbered and referred to in the text by number. Do not refer to numbered examples on handouts or in the textbook without reproducng the examples in your write-up. The general structure will be to introduce a set of data (pointing out generalizations as necessary), explain their significance, propose or reiterate one or several hypotheses about the data, and argue for the superiority of a particular hypothesis on the basis of the data, introducing new data as relevant. The final product should be a self-contained piece of analysis, readable and understandable by your colleagues and classmates without their needing the textbook or other class materials at hand.

In general, assignments are due at the beginning of class on Tuesday. We will generally spend part of Tuesday’s class discussing the data in the assignment and its analysis. For this reason, late assignments cannot be accepted without a Dean’s note.

In class participation
You are expected to do the readings and to contribute in class. The format of the class is by necessity largely lecture, but with questions and comments driving class as well. At some point late in the quarter, you will be broken up into groups of three and required to provide a derivation on the board for a sentence I assign you: one member of the group will write the final tree on the board, another member will explain the derivation, and the third member will answer questions about it. You will have about 15 minutes in class to prepare.