

ENGL 5338: SYNTAX

I. Basic Information

- Class time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00 – 12:20 AM
- Location: English/Philosophy **Rm 310**
- Instructor: Dr. Min-Joo Kim
- E-mail: ***min-joo.kim@ttu.edu*** (best way to get hold of me)
- Office: English/Philosophy Rm 480 (**East Wing** of the English/Philosophy Bldg.)
- Office hours: **Tuesdays & Thursdays, 12:20-1:30 PM & 4:00-4:20 PM** (or by appointment)

II. Information on the Course

A. Course Description

Syntax is a sub-discipline of linguistics that deals with sentence structure—that is, how grammatical sentences are formed and structured. This course aims to introduce fundamental principles of theoretical syntax, and prepare students to conduct more advanced research in theoretical syntax and/or to apply the knowledge to other more applied disciplines such as language acquisition, language disorders, mass communication, machine translation, and artificial intelligence.

Students will learn analytical methods used in syntactic research such as how to analyze syntactic data drawn from various languages, how to formulate plausible hypotheses based on them, and how to compare and evaluate different theories and/or hypotheses. Topics will include but will not be limited to phrase structure rules, X-bar syntax, binding, and constraints on movement.

There will be a required textbook and the course will be organized around lectures on select topics. But we will proceed largely on weekly homework assignments, which will play a key role in assessing where we are in this course.

In addition to doing weekly homework assignments, students will write a final term-paper on a topic related to the course and make an in-class presentation on it at the end of the term. In meeting these course requirements, students will be expected to apply the acquired knowledge of theoretical syntax to the research topic at hand. That is, their papers must contain a highly engaged discussion on a theoretical or applied syntactic issue (more on this later).

B. Textbooks:

Required:

Carnie, Andrew. 2013. *Syntax: A Generative Introduction*. 3rd edition. Wiley-Blackwell.

Recommended:

Carnie, Andrew. 2013. *The Syntax Workbook: A Companion to Carnie's Syntax*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Haegeman, Liliane. 1994. *Introduction to Government and Binding Theory*. Blackwell.

Radford, Andrew. 1997. *Syntax: A Minimalist Introduction*. Cambridge University Press.

C. Learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to do the following:

- how to analyze syntactic data drawn from various languages;
- how to formulate plausible hypotheses to explain the data;
- how to compare and evaluate various hypotheses within a recent Chomskyan framework;
- how to build argumentation in order to make a new theoretical claim.

In addition, they will also become familiarized with the following topics:

- word classes (traditionally known as ‘parts of speech’) and lexical vs. grammatical category distinction
- structural relations (c-command, precedence, dominance)
- different types of pronominals and their binding conditions
- phrase structure rules and X-bar theory
- structures of finite/nonfinite, embedded/non-embedded clauses, complement, and adjunct clauses
- NP movement (passives, NP-raising)
- raising vs. control
- null or empty categories (e.g., traces, null pronouns)
- head to head movement
- wh-movement (in question formation, relative clauses, clefts)

D. Criteria for assessments:

Assessment category	Percentage of final grade
1. Attendance & participation	5%
2. Weekly homework assignments	50% ($10 \times 5\% = 50\%$ in total)
3. Proposal for the final term paper	5%
4. Final term-paper	25%
5. Presentation on the term paper	15%
Total	100%

Relation between numeric scores and letter grades

95 – 100	A+
90 – 94.99	A
85 – 89.99	B+
80 – 84.99	B
75 – 79.99	C+
70 – 74.99	C
65 – 69.99	D+
60 – 64.99	D
Below 60	F

Attendance and participation (5%): Being a graduate student, you are expected to come to each and every class prepared and actively participate in class discussion. This means that you will come to each class, having completed the reading assignments in advance and bringing some specific questions on them. In addition, you should be ready to present your own homework answers and talk about how you have arrived at the answers. **More on Attendance Policies below.**

Weekly homework assignments (5% x 10 = 50%):

- One can learn syntax only by actually doing it. To this end, homework assignments are given out almost every week. Unless otherwise notified, homeworks will be **given out on a Thursday** and **due on the following Tuesday**.
- Homeworks are meant to help you grasp what you’re learning in class and also sharpen your analytical reasoning and critical thinking abilities. Therefore, in doing your homework, it will be crucial for you to show that your answers are based on a **careful thinking and logical reasoning**. There may not be one absolutely right answer to a homework problem, and there may be cases

where we cannot come up with an answer at all (given the inadequacies of the present syntactic theories or due to our own limited knowledge of syntax at this point). In such cases, what I'll expect from you is to demonstrate that you can clearly articulate your thinking process and argue for an answer in writing, rather than just offering a quick and a simple solution to a problem.

Proposal on the final term-paper (5%):

- As a way to help you produce a good-quality final term-paper, I require that you submit a paper proposal by **Thursday, November 7th**, which is **two-paged long, double-spaced and in 12 font size New Times Roman**.
- Your proposal must clearly **outline the topic** for your final term-paper including remarks on what the topic is, why it is worth investigating it, and what kind of specific questions you'll be addressing. It also needs to contain a **preliminary literature review**, i.e., the list of references you will build on, although it doesn't have to be exhaustive at this point. And one of the references should serve as **a point of departure** in your research, something you will be **directly engaging in** by strongly arguing for or against it. In addition, if relevant, you need to state the **research methodology** with which to investigate your topic.
- You are strongly encouraged to talk to me about your paper topic **before** deciding on it although I also strongly encourage you to show maximal intellectual independence as graduate students.

Final term-paper (25%):

- Your term-paper should be **15-16 pages long, double-spaced, excluding references, and in 12 font New Times Roman**.
- Your paper may be concerned with any topic in theoretical syntax or related areas. But I strongly recommend that you first select an existing work (e.g., an article, a book chapter, a dissertation, or a book) that addresses a problem that greatly interests you and then go from there. See my remarks on the paper proposal above.
- At this point in your development as a linguist, you may feel that you can only produce a review article, but even if you choose to write a review paper, your paper should contain something **novel**, in addition to a thorough and accurate literature review and constructive criticism of the existing works.
- **Evaluation criteria for final papers:** (i) organization, style and clarity of exposition (20%); (ii) thoroughness and accuracy of the literature review (40%); and (iii) originality of research (25%), and (iv) strength of argumentation (15%).

Presentation on the final term-paper (15%):

- As part of professional development, you will make a presentation on your final term-paper at the end of the semester (see Schedule below).
- Your presentation should be done **professionally**, accompanied by a **hard copy handout**. Additionally, you may choose to use powerpoint slides but you'll need to factor in the time you'll need to set things up before your presentation.
- During your presentation, you must ensure that the audience (fully) understands the core idea or gist of the analysis of the paper you are presenting on.
- All presentations must occur on the **day they are scheduled**; failure to do so will **lower your grade by two levels** (e.g., an A becomes a C) since it shows that you are not able to behave like a semi-professional. More specific instructions on how to make the presentation will be given later.
- **Evaluation criteria for presentations:** (i) organization (30%); (ii) solidity of content (50%); and (iii) **effectiveness of delivery** (e.g., clarity, ability to maintain the audience's interest/attention, professional demeanor) (20%).

II. Course Schedule (Subject to change but with a prior announcement; all readings below are from Carnie 2013)

Week/Date	Topic	Reading	Notes
Week 1, 8/27 & 8/29	Introduction Parts of Speech	Ch. 1 & 2	Homework (HW) 1 given out.
Week 2, 9/3 & 9/5	HW 1 review Constituency, Trees and Rules	Ch. 3	HW 2 given out.
Week 3, 9/10 & 9/12	HW 2 review Structural Relations	Ch. 4	HW 3 given out.
Week 4, 9/17 & 9/19	HW 3 review Binding Theory	Ch. 5	HW 4 given out.
Week 5, 9/24 & 9/26	HW 4 review X-Bar Theory	Ch. 6	HW 5 given out.
Week 6, 10/1 & 10/3	HW 5 review Extending X-Bar Theory	Ch. 7	HW 6 given out.
Week 7, 10/8 & 10/10	HW 6 review Theta-Roles and the Lexicon	Ch. 8	HW 7 given out.
Week 8, 10/15 & 10/17	HW 7 review Auxiliaries & functional categories	Ch. 9	HW 8 given out.
Week 9, 10/22 & 10/24	HW 8 review Loose ends & catching-up		
Week 10, 10/29 & 10/31	Head to Head movement DP Movement	Ch. 10 Ch. 11	HW 9 given out.
Week 11, 11/5 & 11/7	HW 9 review Wh-Movement	Ch. 12	Paper proposal due on Thursday at class. HW 10 given out.
Week 12, 11/12 & 11/14	HW 10 review Unified theory of movement	Ch. 13	
Week 13, 11/19 & 11/21	Expanded VPs Raising, control, & empty categories	Ch. 14 Ch. 15	
Week 14, 11/26 & 11/28	Loose ends Thanksgiving Holiday: No class		
Week 15, 12/3 & 12/5	Student presentations Student presentations		Final paper due at 11 PM on Thursday via e-mail.

III. Course Policies

A. Basic course-related requirements:

- In order to earn a passing grade, a student must successfully complete **all course requirements**. In addition, students must demonstrate that they are fully in charge of their own learning.

- All writing submissions including homeworks should be in **12 font size Times New Roman, typed to the extent possible, and paginated and stapled, with clear section headings** as appropriate.
- Students are expected to be **present and audible** in every class. In the event of missing a class, students must inform the instructor as soon as possible. Otherwise, there will be serious consequences for their grades: **Every absence** that cannot be justified by proper documentation (e.g., doctor's note) will count as **-1 point** of the course grade. **More than five absences** will result in **an automatic F** for the course.
- Students must be **punctual** for each and every class to respect other students' time, let alone their own time. **Being late for class more than three times without justification** will lead to **lowering the course grade by one level** (e.g., an A becomes a B).
- Announcements will be made both in class and via e-mail by sending an e-mail to students' TTU e-mail accounts. Moreover, any supplementary course materials including lecture notes will be sent to students' TTU e-mail. Therefore students must **check their TTU e-mail accounts at least once a day during weekdays**.
- Students are encouraged to set up appointments with the instructor to discuss issues related to the course or to clear up confusion about topics discussed at any time.
- Constructive feedback about the course is also encouraged and welcome at any time.

B. E-mail rules

- I check e-mail regularly from Monday through Friday, but please allow 24 hours for a response from me during business days. Between Friday evenings and Sunday nights, I may rarely check e-mail for family reasons. So if you send me an e-mail over the weekend, you will most likely receive a response from me the following Monday morning.

C. Civility in the Classroom

- Students are expected to help maintain a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. Appropriate student behavior (whether online, in person, or over the telephone) creates a better environment for learning (as well as for teaching).
- Students are not allowed to chat with someone in class about personal matters, to text-message, to talk on the phone, or to respond rudely to someone's remarks including the instructor's during class.
- Such inappropriate behavior will **minimally result in a request to leave class**. In extreme cases, it may even lead to **lowering the course grade** by at least one level (i.e., a B becomes a C).
- Students are encouraged to participate actively in class but **no one should dominate the entire class discussion** in every class. Such behavior will be considered inappropriate and hence will be subject to the same set of rules as those stated above.

D. Academic Integrity

- This course follows the University's statement on academic integrity, namely, "It is the aim of the faculty of Texas Tech University to foster a spirit of complete honesty and a high standard of integrity" (*Bulletin of Texas Tech*, p. 82).
- It also abides by the Code of Student Conduct as laid out in the Student Affairs Handbook (<http://www.studentaffairs.ttu.edu/campuslife/handbook.pdf>). Failure to uphold such guidelines may result in one or more of the following penalties, depending on the instructor's assessment of the seriousness of the violation: e.g., failing grade on an assignment or for the entire course, reporting to the Dean of Students, referral for disciplinary action to the Student Mediation Center or other relevant disciplinary action.
- This class has **zero tolerance for cheating or plagiarism**: plagiarism or cheating will result in an **automatic F for the course regardless of the reason**.
- **What counts as cheating:**
 - dishonesty on exams, quizzes, and written assignments;
 - illegal possession of exams;
 - use of unauthorized notes during an exam or quiz;
 - obtaining information during an exam from an unauthorized source or from another student;
 - help others to cheat;
 - alteration of grade records;
 - illegal entry to or unauthorized presence in the instructor's office or his/her department office.
- **What counts as plagiarism:**
 - Plagiarism means using other people's work as if it were his/her own **without proper acknowledgments**.
 - Therefore, any student will be guilty of plagiarism if he or she **fails to give credit** for quotations or use essentially identical expressions of material taken from other sources including books, encyclopedias, magazines, the Internet, and other people's writings.

E. Students with Disabilities

- Any student with disabilities who needs special arrangements to minimize the effects of their disabilities should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make any necessary accommodations. But students must present appropriate verification from TechAccess first.