

ENGL 3373
Modern English Syntax

Class time:	Tuesdays & Thursdays: 2:00 – 3:20 PM
Location:	English/Philosophy Rm 450
Instructor:	Dr. Min-Joo Kim
Office:	English/Philosophy Rm 480 (East Wing of the English/Philosophy Bldg.)
Office hours:	Tue & Thurs 3:40-5:00 PM and by appointment
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I. Information on the Course

A. Course Description

This course provides an overview of the structure and usage of Modern American English. The material covered in the course will provide basic knowledge of the form and function of Modern American English and will be relevant to future teachers at the secondary school level. Topics include but are not limited to basic word structure, classification of words into what is traditionally known as ‘parts of speech’, description and analysis of various types of phrase structure and sentence structure, prescriptive versus descriptive approaches to grammar, stylistic and dialectal variation in English syntax, and grammaticalization and language change.

B. Textbooks

This course has three recommended (but not required) textbooks. Each textbook is meant to serve different purposes (see below). Instead of adopting a required textbook, the instructor will create lecture notes and send them to you via your TTU e-mail account before new topics are introduced.

- **Gelderen, Elly van. 2010. *An Introduction to the Grammar of English*. John Benjamins.**
Note: This book provides a more in-depth analysis of English syntax within a recent Chomskyan generative grammatical framework. More theory-oriented; will be the **closest** to the framework I will be adopting in this course.
- **Huddleston, Rodney and Geoffrey Pullum. 2005. *A Student’s Introduction to English Grammar*. Cambridge University Press.**
Note: This book offers a comprehensive overview on the English Language Syntax without any specific commitments to theoretic frameworks.
- **Battistella, Edwin L. 2005. *Bad Language: Are Some Words Better than Others?* Oxford University Press.**
Note: This book touches on prescriptive vs. descriptive approaches to grammar, various others sociolinguistic issues, dialectal variations, language/grammar teaching at the K-12 level.

C. Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to do the following:

- define different types of lexical categories or ‘parts of speech’.
- analyze English words in terms of morphological structure and categorical information.
- identify phrases and constituents in English.
- draw syntactic tree diagrams for different types of English sentences.
- recognize syntactic ambiguity and account for it using draw tree diagrams.

- differentiate between embedded/non-embedded clauses and finite/non-finite clauses.
- gain an initial understanding of how to form questions and relative clauses.
- differentiate between descriptive grammar and prescriptive grammar.
- identify and appreciate similarities and differences between different varieties of English.
- recognize that every language and dialect of a language is equally complex and creative.

Students will be able to acquire the aforementioned skills and knowledge by **taking the ownership of their own learning**. More specifically, they need to do the following:

- Come to every class prepared: e.g., do all the assignments in a timely fashion and bring questions to ask in class.
- Follow lectures attentively and participate actively in class discussion
- Clear up any confusion as soon as possible.

D. Criteria for Assessment

Requirement/Activity	Proportion in the final grade (100% in total)
(i) Attendance and participation	5%
(ii) Three exams	60% (3 x 20% = 60%)
(iii) Weekly homework assignments	Not graded but required
(iv) Research project proposal	5%
(v) Final research paper	20%
(vi) Presentation on the final project	10%

Relation between average 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

(i) Attendance (5%): attendance will be checked every day. The first absence will not be counted but starting from the second one, every absence will count as **-1 point off of the final grade**. No absence during the entire semester will give you **two extra credit points** for the final grade but **5 and more absences will result in an automatic F** unless justified with appropriate documentation (e.g., proof of illness or a dire emergency). In the event of an absence, the student must notify the instructor as soon as possible, preferably before the class. Such notifications will be taken into account when the final grades are being calculated. This means that if the documentation is justifiable, the absence may not result in reducing the final grade by -1 point. That being said, simply providing relevant documentation will not give the student two extra credit points; only those who never missed any class will be given those extra credit points.

(ii) Exams (60%): There will be three exams, each of which takes up 20% of the final grade. The last exam will be cumulative in the sense that the topics covered towards the end of the semester will build on what had been learned in the earlier part of the semester. (I strongly believe that learning should be done in an incremental way and the acquired knowledge should be retained for a long period of time, rather than just being used for exam-taking purposes.)

The exams will cover information given out during lectures and discussions, as well as what is found in the lecture notes even if they were not mentioned in class. Conversely, what was discussed in class may be on the exam even if it was not mentioned in the lecture notes. Therefore, you must attend each and every class in order to not miss out on any important information.

(iii) Homework assignments: homework assignments will be given out almost every week. They are meant to help you to exercise and/or practice what you are learning in class, so they will not be graded. But completing them in a timely way will be crucial to your success in this course, since exams will be based largely on the homework problems.

On the day when a homework assignment is due, you must bring your answer keys to the homework problems to the class, and receive the instructor's signature on it. In addition, you must compile your homeworks in a well-organized way by putting them in a binder or folder, as homeworks may be collected on any day. In addition, when reviewing homework problems in class, you are expected to work in groups and share your answer keys with the group members and other class members. So failure to complete the homework in a timely way will negatively affect the class's progression.

(iv) Final paper proposal: Students must submit a **one paged, single-spaced proposal** for their final papers by **Tuesday, November 8**. The proposal must outline the topic, initial research results including existing literature, and methods with which to conduct your research (more instructions will be given later).

Possible topics for your final paper:

- a) Grammatical similarities and differences between Standard Modern American English (SAE) and other varieties English: e.g., Standard British English, African American English (a.k.a. African American Vernacular English or Ebonics), Texas English, Chicano English/Tex-Mex.
- b) Comparison between SAE and another language such as Spanish, German, French, Latin, and Japanese.
- c) Comparison between the structure of Modern English and that of Middle or Old English
- d) Grammatical analysis of English as a second language (ESL), in particular typical grammatical "errors" made by second language learners and their structural characteristics.
- e) Grammaticalization of certain lexical items: e.g., the word 'like' in *I was like, XX*.
- f) Prescriptive vs. descriptive grammatical rules of SAE and the way in which language users comply with them: e.g., when do they use which rules, how, and why?

(v) Oral presentation (10%): at the end of semester, before submitting their final papers, students will make a presentation on their research findings (more on this later). This presentation has to be done **professionally**, accompanied by a **hard copy** handout. Additionally, you may choose to use powerpoint slides, but that is optional.

Evaluation criteria for your presentation: (i) structure/organization (30%); (ii) content (40%); and (iii) effectiveness of delivery (30%).

(vii) Final research paper (35%): The final paper should be **6-7 pages** long, **double-spaced, excluding** references. There must be **section headings** and **page numbers**. You can adopt the MLA or Linguistic Inquiry style for citations. The paper must cite **at least 5 published works** that discuss the topic at hand (e.g., peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and book chapters); they can be published either on-line or in print.

Evaluation criteria for your paper: (i) organization and style (20%); (ii) clarity of exposition (10%); (iii) thoroughness and accuracy of the literature review (40%); and (iv) originality of research (30%).

E. Schedule (Subject to Change with a prior notice)

Date	Topic	Notes
R, 8/25	Introduction and overview of the course	Homework (HW) 1 given out.
T, 8/30	HW 1 review: Prescriptive vs. descriptive grammar	
R, 9/1	Grammatical functions	HW 2 given out.
T, 9/6	HW 2 review	
R, 9/8	Lexical categories	HW 3 given out.
T, 9/13	HW 3 review & Cont.	
R, 9/15	Lexical categories Cont.	HW 4 given out.
T, 9/20	HW 4 review	
R, 9/22	Exam 1	
T, 9/27	Grammatical categories	
R, 9/29	Cont.	HW 5 given out.
T, 10/4	HW 5 review	
R, 10/6	Phrase structure	HW 6 given out.
T, 10/11	No class: Student Holiday	
R, 10/13	HW 6 review & Phrase structure cont.	
T, 10/18	Review for the exam/catching-up	
R, 10/20	Exam 2	
T, 10/25	Simple finite sentence structure	
R, 10/27	cont.	HW 7 given out.
T, 11/1	HW 7 review	
R, 11/3	Complex finite sentence structure	HW 8 given out.
T, 11/8	HW 8 review	Paper proposal due
R, 11/10	Complex finite sentence structure cont.	HW 9 given out.
T, 11/15	HW 9 review	
R, 11/17	No class: Research Day	Instructor conference travel.
T, 11/22	Exam 3	

R, 11/24	No class: Thanksgiving Holiday	
T, 11/29	Wrap-up & Student presentations	
R, 12/1	Student presentations	
T, 12/6	Student presentations	Final-paper due at class (no final exam)

II. Course Policies

A. Basic Course-Related Policies

- To earn a passing grade, students must successfully complete all course requirements stated in the syllabus and in e-mail correspondences. In addition, students must demonstrate that they are fully in charge of their own learning.
- All writing submissions should be in 12 font size Times New Roman, paginated, printed, and stapled or clipped.
- In the event of missing the class, students must inform the instructor as soon as possible. See what is stated above under *Attendance* above.
- Students must be punctual to respect other students' and the instructor's time. Being late for class more than three times without proper justification will lead to lowering the course grade by one level (e.g., an A becomes a B).
- No individual make-up exam will be administered (the only exception being hospitalization and religious activities, but both will need to be justified and/or proved by appropriate documentation).
- Announcements will be made both in class and via e-mail. E-mail announcements will be sent to students' TTU e-mail account. Therefore students must check their TTU e-mails every day.
- Students are encouraged to set up appointments with the instructor when issues regarding this course come up or just to clear up any confusion about the course content. Constructive feedback about the course is encouraged at any time.

B. E-mail Rules

- I check e-mail throughout the day from Monday through Friday, but please allow 24 hours for a response from me during business days. Between Friday evenings and Sunday nights, I rarely check e-mail. So if you send me an e-mail over the weekend, you will most likely receive a response from me the following Monday morning.
- To ensure that your e-mail reaches me safely, please put ENGL 3373 or Modern English Syntax in the "subject" header at all times. In addition, please provide your full names (both first and last names) in the e-mail text, so that I will know who the sender is; non-Tech email accounts usually do not provide such important information.
- Remember to be polite and respectful, and be careful and attentive to how the email is written; students are expected to use professional language and tone in all communications with the instructor, including e-mail correspondences. E-mails should be limited to quick inquiries or requests; that is, students must use office hours and appointments to discuss more complex questions, issues, or concerns about the course.
- If you do not receive an e-mail response from me within the specified response times above, take another look at the construction of your e-mail. The tardiness or lack of a response on our part may be the result of an inattention to the prescribed method of professional e-mail correspondence. In that case, please revise with proper attention to e-mail etiquette and resend the e-mail.

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 both teaching and learning.
- Students are not allowed to chat with someone in class creating disruption, to text-message, to talk on the phone, nor to respond rudely to someone's remarks including the instructor. Such inappropriate behavior will minimally result in a request to leave class. In extreme cases, it may even lead to lowering of the grade by more than one level.
- Students are encouraged to participate actively in class but no one should dominate the entire class discussion. Such behavior will be considered inappropriate and hence will be subject to the same set of rules applied to inappropriate behavior outlined 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 no tolerance for cheating or plagiarism: plagiarism or cheating will result in an **automatic F** regardless of the reason.
- **What counts as cheating:**
 - dishonesty on examinations, quizzes, and written assignments,
 - illegal possession of examinations,
 - use of unauthorized notes during an examination or quiz,
 - obtaining information during an examination from the examination paper or otherwise from another student,
 - help others to cheat,
 - alteration of grade records,
 - illegal entry to or unauthorized presence in an 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 the writings of other people.

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.