

## ENGL 5338: SYNTAX

### I. Basic Information

- Class time: Monday, 2:00 – 4:50 PM
- Location: English/Philosophy Rm 360
- Instructor: Dr. Min-Joo Kim
- Office: English/Philosophy Rm 480 (**E**ast Wing of the English/Philosophy Bldg.)
- Office hours: Tue & Thurs 3:40-5:00 PM (and by appointment)
- E-mail: [min-joo.kim@ttu.edu](mailto:min-joo.kim@ttu.edu) (best way to get hold of me)

### 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 the 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, binding, and constraints on movement.

There will be a textbook and some minimal reading assignments. But the course will proceed based largely on lectures and discussions about the weekly assignments. In addition to doing the weekly assignments, students will write a final term-paper on a topic related to the course by utilizing the acquired knowledge of theoretical syntax. They will also make an in-class oral presentation on their research papers.

Typically, conducting syntactic research involves taking the following steps:

- Identify a problem to work on.
- collect some data: You can obtain the needed data from various sources such as texts, the Internet, or by conducting fieldwork in the form of interviews with native speakers of the language.
- describe the data and make generalizations.
- situate the data in the context of the syntactic literature on this subject (general phenomena, or specifics on the data).
- analyze the data within some theoretical framework.
- present arguments in favor of your analysis; refute alternative analyses.

**B. Textbooks:** All supplementary reading materials will be sent via e-mail.

**Required:**

*A Generative Introduction* by Andrew Carnie. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. 2006, Wiley-Blackwell Publishing.

**Recommended:**

- *Introduction to Government and Binding Theory* by Liliane Haegeman. 1994. Blackwell publishing.
- *Syntax: A Minimalist Introduction* by Andrew Radford. 1997. 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 from various languages;
- how to formulate plausible hypotheses to explain the data;
- how to compare and evaluate various theories/hypotheses;
- 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	10%
2. Weekly homeworks	10 x 5% = 50%
3. Proposal for the final term paper	Not graded but required
4. Final term-paper	25%
5. Presentation on the term paper	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

1. **Attendance and participation:** 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 the class, having completed the reading assignments in advance, and even with some specific questions on them. In addition, you should be ready to present your own answers to the homework problems, and/or to talk about how you arrived at the answers.
2. **Homeworks:** One can learn syntax only by actually doing it. To this end, homework assignments are given out almost every week. Working on the homework problems will require you to apply what you have learned in class. Occasionally, however, you will have to think about some specific problems in advance as a way to prepare for the upcoming lecture(s).

Homework answers must be typed, printed, and stapled (possibly except for tree diagrams), and turned in on time. In addition, they should be in the form of short formal essays, ideally but not necessarily with a brief introduction and conclusion. This will help you to develop the skills needed for formal syntactic analysis and succeeding in the field of linguistics, e.g., how to argue

and develop an analysis. The length of the homework will vary depending on the content and the nature of the problem but it is likely to be between 3-4 pages, double-spaced.

There is rarely one absolutely correct answer and there will be cases where we cannot come up with an answer at all (given the inadequacies of the present syntactic theories or our own limited knowledge). In such cases, it will be important for you to demonstrate that you can clearly articulate your thinking process and build your argumentation in writing, rather than just presenting a simple solution to a complex problem.

3. **Proposal on the final term-paper:** by November 7<sup>th</sup>, you will submit a **two-paged, double-spaced** paper which clearly outlines the topic for your final term-paper. Your proposal must contain a preliminary literature review including the list of references you will build on, although it doesn't have to be exhaustive at this point. In addition, if relevant, you need to state the research methodology with which to investigate your topic.

One of the references included in your proposal should serve as a point of departure in your research, something you will be directly engaged in by strongly arguing for or against it. You are strongly encouraged to talk to me before deciding on your topic.

4. **Final term-paper:** should be **14-15 pages long, double-spaced excluding references**. Your term-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 or a book) that addresses a problem that interests you greatly and then go from there.

At this point in your development as a linguist, it will be both desirable and feasible if your term paper is a review article. If you choose to pursue this option, then, you are expected to provide a summary and a constructive criticism of the existing work you have chosen, by incorporating the research you have conducted on this topic. This means that you will have to include findings from several other relevant works on the topic.

**Evaluation criteria:** (i) organization and style and clarity of exposition (20%); (iii) thoroughness and accuracy of the literature review (40%); and (iv) originality of research (25%), and (v) strength of argumentation (15%).

5. **Presentation on the final term-paper:** at the end of semester, you will make a presentation on your research findings. This presentation has to be done professionally, accompanied by a hard copy handout. (Additionally, you may choose to use powerpoint slides.) Although this presentation will simulate a conference presentation, given the nature of your paper (i.e., it being more of a review article), 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 assigned; failure to do so will **lower your grade by two levels**, that is, an A becomes a C. More specific instructions on how to make the presentation will be given later.

**Evaluation criteria:** (i) structure/organization (30%); (ii) content (40%); and (iii) effectiveness of delivery (e.g., clarity, ability to maintain the audience's interests, professional demeanor) (30%).

**II. Course Schedule (subject to Change)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Notes</b>
8/29	Introduction and overview of the course	Ch. 1	Homework (HW) 1 given out
9/5	<b>No class: Labor Day</b>	Ch. 1	
9/12	HW 1 review Parts of Speech & Constituency, Trees and Rules	Ch. 2 & 3	HW 1 due HW 2 given out
9/19	HW 2 review Cont. & Structural Relations	Ch. 3 & 4	HW 2 due HW 3 given out
9/26	HW review Cont. & Binding Theory	Ch. 5	HW 4 due HW 5 given out
10/3	HW review X-Bar Theory	Ch. 6	HW 5 due HW 6 given out
10/10	<b>No class: Student holiday</b>		
10/17	Extending X-Bar Theory	Ch. 7	HW 6 due HW 7 given out
10/24	Theta-Roles and the Lexicon	Ch. 8	HW 7 due HW 8 given out
10/31	Loose ends & catching-up		HW 8 due No homework given out.
11/7	Head to Head movement	Ch. 9	<b>Paper proposal due</b> HW 9 given out
11/14	HW 9 review DP Movement	Ch. 10	HW 9 due HW 10 given out
11/21	HW 10 review Wh-Movement	Ch. 11	HW 10 due
11/28	Loose ends and wrap-up: may learn about Larson 1988, an influential article on the double object construction in English.	Ch. 12	
12/5	Student presentations		<b>Last day of classes</b>
12/8	<b>Final project due: 4 PM, at instructor's office</b> ; earlier submissions are encouraged. No late submission or electronic submission will be accepted.		

### 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 should be in 12 font size Times New Roman, paginated, printed, and stapled or clipped, with page numbers and clear section headings if relevant.
- Students are expected to be present in every class. In the event of missing the class, students must inform the instructor as soon as possible; otherwise, there will be serious consequences for their grades: Students with **more than 3 absences** without justification will receive **an automatic F** for the course.
- Students must be punctual to respect other students' time, let alone their own. To reiterate, being late for class more than twice without justification will lead to **lowering the course grade by one level**, i.e., an A becomes a B.
- 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 TTU e-mails on a regular basis.
- Students are encouraged to set up appointments with the instructor to discuss issues related to the course. 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.

#### 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, text-message, talk on the phone, nor 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.