

ENGL 5338 (001): SYNTAX

I. Basic Information

- **Class time:** Wednesday, 2:00 – 4:50 PM (from September 2 to December 9)
- **Location:** English/Philosophy Building **Rm 302**
- **Instructor Information:**
 - Name:** Dr. Min-Joo Kim
 - Office:** English/Philosophy Building, **Rm 480** (4th floor, East Wing)
 - Phone:** 742-2500 ext. 262
 - Office Hours:** Tue, 3:30 -4:50 PM; Wed, 1:00-1:50 PM; or by appointment
 - Email:** min-joo.kim@ttu.edu (**best way to get hold of me**)
 - Homepage:** <http://webpages.acs.ttu.edu/minjoo>
- **Overview of the course:**

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 read a journal article and do a critique on it. Furthermore, students will write a research paper, utilizing the acquired knowledge of syntax in linguistic analysis. They will also make an in-class oral presentation on their research papers. **All lecture notes, homeworks, and supplementary reading materials** will be sent **via e-mail**.
- **Prototypical way to conduct syntactic research:** it involves taking the following steps:
 - (i) Identify a problem to work on.
 - (ii) 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.
 - (iii) describe the data and make generalizations.
 - (iv) situate the data in the context of the syntactic literature on this subject (general phenomena, or specifics on the data).
 - (v) analyze the data within some theoretical framework.
 - (vi) present arguments in favor of your analysis; refute alternative analyses.

- **Texts:**

Syntax: A Generative Introduction by Andrew Carnie. 2nd edition. 2006, Wiley-Blackwell Publishing (**required**).

Introduction to Government and Binding Theory by Liliane Haegeman. 1994. Blackwell publishing (recommended).

Syntax: A Minimalist Introduction by Andrew Radford. 1997. Cambridge University Press (recommended).

- **Learning Outcomes:**

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

- (i) how to analyze syntactic data from various languages;
- (ii) how to formulate plausible hypotheses to explain the data;
- (iii) how to compare and evaluate hypotheses;
- (iv) how to build argumentation in order to make a new theoretical claim.

In addition to these fundamental skills in doing syntax, you will also become familiarized with the following topics:

- (i) word classes (traditionally known as “parts of speech”) and lexical vs. grammatical category distinction.
- (ii) structural relations (c-command, precedence, dominance)
- (iii) different types of pronominals and their binding conditions
- (iv) phrase structure rules and X-bar theory
- (v) structures of finite/nonfinite clauses, complement and adjunct clauses
- (vi) NP movement (passives, NP-raising)
- (vii) Raising vs. control
- (viii) null or empty categories (e.g., traces, null pronouns)
- (ix) head to head movement
- (x) wh-movement (in question formation, relative clauses, clefts)

- **Criteria for assessment:**

Assessment category	Percentage of Final Grade
1. Attendance & participation	5%
2. Weekly homeworks	30%: 10 x 3% = 30%
3. Proposal for the final term paper	5%
4. Journal article critique	20%
5. Term-paper	25%
6. Presentation on the term paper	15%

1. Attendance and participation: Being a graduate student, you are expected to come to each and every class. Hence this portion of the grade will be based largely on how actively you have participated in class discussion by critically but politely responding to others’ remarks and by showing keen interests in the subject matter. More concretely, you are expected to do the readings **in advance** and come to class with a couple of specific questions in mind. In addition, when we review the weekly assignments, you

should be prepared to **share** your own answers to the given problem sets with the rest of the class.

2. Homeworks: Homeworks are given out almost every week because one can only learn syntax by actually doing it.

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).

The answers should be written up as a brief but formal essay, with an introduction and conclusion. This will help you to develop the skills needed in doing formal syntactic analysis and succeeding in the field of linguistics, e.g., how to argue and develop an analysis.

There is rarely one absolutely correct answer and there will be cases where we cannot come up with an answer, given the limitations of the present syntactic theory. In such cases, what will be valued most highly will be whether you can clearly outline your thinking process and build your argumentation in your essay, rather than presenting one simple solution to a problem.

Homework answers must be **typed, printed, and stapled** (possibly except for tree diagrams), and turned in on time. No late homeworks will be accepted. The length of the homework will vary depending on the content and the nature of the problem but it is likely to be between 2-4 pages, double-spaced.

3. Journal article critique: Pick a paper that addresses an interesting topic in theoretical syntax or in a related discipline. You are strongly advised to select a paper that will serve as a basis for your final paper. In the critique, you are expected to provide a **summary and a constructive criticism** of the article. When you provide criticism, you must provide concrete data to illustrate the points, rather than simply offering subjective judgments. The critique should be **9-10 pages, double spaced**, and must be submitted in class. In addition to submitting a written critique, students may be asked to talk about the paper they critiqued in class.

4. A written proposal on the final term-paper: must be a two-paged, short paper which clearly outlines the topic you are interested to investigate and 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. Ideally, one of the references you include here will serve as a point of departure in your own research. You are strongly encouraged to **talk to me before** deciding on your topic. It is also recommended that you outline in the proposal the research methodology with which to investigate the topic.

5. Formal presentation of the research findings: you will share the research findings of your term-paper by making a formal presentation on it. This means that you will prepare a typed handout or power-point slides for your presentation, so that the audience can follow your talk, and also you'll give a talk in a professional manner as if you were at a conference. All presentations must occur **on the assigned date** in order to receive full credit. **Failure** to give a presentation will lower your grades **by 2 levels**, that is, an A will become a B, not B+. Tips on how to make a good presentation will be given later.

6. **Final paper:** should be **14-15 pages, double-spaced excluding references** and must be submitted **at class on the last day of classes**. No electronic submission will be accepted.

Papers will be evaluated based largely on the **following criteria:** (i) organization and style, (ii) clarity of writing, (iii) thoroughness of the literature review, (iv) originality of the research, and (v) the strength of argumentation.

II. Course Schedule (subject to Change)

Readings must be done **in advance**.

Date	Content	Reading	Notes
9/2	Orientation Intro to Generative Grammar	Ch. 1	Homework (HW) 1 given out
9/9	HW review Parts of speech	Ch. 2	HW 1 due HW 2 given out
9/16	HW review Constituency, Trees and Rules	Ch. 3	HW 2 due HW 3 given out
9/23	HW review Structural Relations	Ch. 4	HW 4 due HW 5 given out
9/30	HW review Binding Theory	Ch. 5	HW 5 due HW 6 given out
10/7	X-bar Theory	Ch. 6	HW 6 due HW 7 given out
10/14	Extending X-bar theory	Ch. 7	HW 7 due HW 8 given out
10/21	Theta-roles and the lexicon	Ch. 8	HW 8 due HW 9 given out
10/28	DP movement	Ch. 10	HW 9 due Reading Larson 1988 assigned
11/4	Double object construction	Larson 1988	Final project proposal due
11/11	Head to Head movement	Ch. 9	Journal article critique due HW 10 given out
11/18	Wh-movement and loose ends	Ch. 11	HW 10 due
11/25	No class: Thanksgiving Holiday		
12/2	Student presentations on final projects		
12/9	Student presentations on final projects		Final project due

III. Course Policies

A. Basic course-related requirements:

- In order to earn a passing grade, a student must successfully complete all course requirements.

- 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 4 absences** without justification will receive **an automatic F** for the course.
- Students must be punctual to respect other students' time, let alone their own. 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. Civility in the Classroom

- Students are expected to assist in maintaining 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.
- No behavior that will cause distraction or discomfort will be allowed such as chatting with someone in class, creating disruption, or responding rudely to someone's remarks or questions.
- Inappropriate behavior in the classroom will minimally result in a request to leave class. Furthermore, it can lead to lowering of the grade by more than one level.
- Students are encouraged to participate actively in class but no one should dominate class discussion. Such behavior will be considered inappropriate and hence will be subject to the same set of rules applied to inappropriate behavior. See above.

C. Academic Integrity

- This course follows the University's statement on academic integrity as in p. 82 of the *Bulletin of Texas Tech*: "It is the aim of the faculty of Texas Tech University to foster a spirit of complete honesty and a high standard of integrity."
- We will also abide 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 these **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.
- In sum, students must remember that every action has a consequence and they bear full responsibility for their own actions.
 - This class has no tolerance for cheating or plagiarism.
 - **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,
 - assisting 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 essentially identical expressions of material taken from books, encyclopedias, magazines, the Internet, or from the themes, reports, or other writings of a fellow student or any other person
 - Consequence of plagiarism will result in **an automatic F, regardless of the reason.**

D. Student 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.