

Introduction to Syntax (Ling 222)

Syllabus

Dr. Vita G. Markman

Department of Linguistics, Simon Fraser University

OFFICE: RCB 9216

PHONE: 604-268-7194

EMAIL: vita_markman@yahoo.com

OFFICE HOURS: Tues. 3 - 5pm; Wed 12 - 2 and by appointment

CLASS MEETS: Tu 9:30AM - 11:20AM WMC2220

Th 10:30AM - 11:20AM WMC 2220

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Linguistics 222 is an introduction to syntactic theory. Students will be familiarized with the concepts and terminology used in the modern theory of syntax. We will examine linguistic data from many unrelated languages and take steps towards analyzing it.

REQUIRED TEXT: *Maggie Tallerman Understanding Syntax, 2nd edition.*

Week 1 - Introduction

January 8th & 10th, 2008

Syntax and the meaning of life: some remarks on syntax, its nature, and its purpose and place in our lives; What does it mean to have a theory of syntax?

Some concepts used in syntactic theory; An overview of the course

HW1, DUE Jan. 15th, 2008: Read Ch.1 and Ch.2 (till p.51) in Tallerman.

Week 2 - Getting down to business: classes of words

January 15th & 17th, 2008

Student questions; Some concepts and misconceptions about syntax

Hierarchy in language;

Word Classes: Lexical vs. Functional Categories;

From words to phrases – NPs, VPs, PPs, and AdjPs

HW 2, DUE Jan.22nd, 2008: Finish Ch.; Read Ch.3. Written Problem Set 1 DUE Jan 22nd.

Week 3 - Looking inside sentences

January 22nd & 24th, 2008

Student questions; Words, phrases, and slots; More on lex. vs. functional categories

Simple sentences; Introduction to Complex Sentences; Crosslinguistic variation

HW 3, DUE Jan. 29th, 2008: Finish Ch. 3; Start Ch.4 (till p.106).

Week 4 - Head words and phrases

January 29th & 31st, 2008

Student questions; Heads vs. Phrases; Where is the head? Head-marking vs. Dependant-marking languages

HW 4, DUE Feb. 5th. Finish Ch4. Read Ch. 5 Written Problem Set 2 DUE Feb. 7th

Week 5 - Constituents

February 5th & 7th, 2008

Identifying constituents – constituent structure tests

Do all languages have the same constituents?

HW 5, DUE February 12th, 2008. Finish Ch. 5. Read Ch. 6 till p. 171

Week 6 - Constituency structure cont'd

February 12th & 14th, 2008

Student questions; Constituents in more detail – the X' notation

Introduction to relationships within the clause

Case systems: nominative – accusative vs. ergative languages

Split systems; Preparing for Midterm I.

HW 6, DUE February 19th. Finish Ch6. Written Problem Set 3 DUE Feb.21st

Week 7 - Case and Agreement Systems Cont'd; Grammatical Relations

February 19th & 21st, 2008

MIDTERM I – FEBRUARY 19TH, 2008 [Ch.1 – 5]

Student questions; properties of subjects

HW 7 DUE February 26th, 2008. Read Ch.7

Week 8 – Case and Agreement; Relationships within the clause – finish up

February 26th & 28th, 2008

Student questions; subjects and objects

Universals of language and case theory

Changing grammatical relations – an introduction

HW 8 DUE March 4th, 2008. Review Ch. 7 Written Problem Set 4 DUE March 6th

Week 9 – Processes that change grammatical relations

March 4th & 6th, 2008

Student questions; Deriving passive sentences; the applicative construction; the causative construction; Cross-linguistic variation

Going over Midterm I

HW 9 DUE March 11th, 2008. Read Ch. 8.

Week 10 – Wh-constructions: questions and relative clauses

March 11th & 13th, 2008

Student questions; Wh-questions;

Multiple Wh-questions; Crosslinguistic variation;

Focus movement;

Relative clauses (restrictive vs. non-restrictive)

HW 10 March 18th, 2008. Read Ch. 8 & 9 Written Problem Set 5 DUE March 25th

Week 11 – Wh-constructions: questions and relative clauses (cont'd)

March 18th & 20th, 2008

Relative Clauses

MIDTERM II – March 20th

Week 12

March 25th & 27th, 2008

Going over Midterm II

Getting more advanced: topic & reading TBA

Week 13 - All You Can Review!

April 1st & 3rd, 2008

Advanced topics cont'd; (TBA); Tying up loose ends –April 1st

All You Can Review!!! Q & A – April 3rd 2008

Final Exam: Take Home DUE April 10th 2008

** The syllabus is only a guide and is subject to change depending on the pace of the class. We may cover more or less information than is stated. The order of topics may also change**

CLASSROOM POLICY

Assignments and Exams

Assignments and exams will include problems that require you to describe, create generalizations, and sometimes account for various syntactic phenomena from different languages. They will be evaluated based on the correctness of your analysis and coherence of your argumentation. Points will be deducted for incomplete assignments or late assignments. I encourage you to work on the assignments in groups of FOUR or FIVE students, and hand in a single typed report of your answers. In this case, everyone in the group will receive the same grade. There will be FIVE (5) assignments, 20pts each.

COURSE GRADING:

2 Midterms (20% each)	50%
Written Problem Sets	25%
Final Examination	25%

Grade Breakdown

A+: 100 – 96% A: 95 - 92% A-: 91 - 89%

B+: 88 – 85% B: 84 - 81% B-: 80 - 77%

C+: 76 - 73% C: 72 - 69% C-: 68 - 65%

D: 64 - 57%

F: 56% and below

Course Expectations

1. Students are expected to attend all classes and to arrive on time so that classes may begin promptly. Announcements will be made at the beginning and end of classes regarding the assigned readings and the expectations for assignments and exams.
2. **Students are expected to have read all assigned readings before class.** Because many students will be learning about a new field of study in this class, some of the materials and concepts may seem fairly complex. Be prepared to read assigned readings and go over the lecture notes more than once.

3. Students are expected to bring the assigned readings and lecture notes to all class sessions.
4. If you must miss an exam because of illness, you are required to contact me prior to the exam. You may notify me by e-mail or leave a message at the office. When you return to class, I will need a note from your medical doctor specifying the date of your absence and the reason.
5. **MAKE UP EXAMS CANNOT BE GIVEN WITHOUT A DOCTOR'S NOTE!**
6. Students will be responsible for all materials covered in the assigned readings, homework assignments and lectures. Examinations will require students to refer to readings, homework assignments, lecture notes, and their own notes.
7. Email policy: If you need to ask me a question or give me comments through email, be sure to sign your name and course number. Please note that I can only reply to questions that can be answered in a sentence or two. Questions requiring longer replies should be asked in class or during my office hours.
8. Academic dishonesty in all forms violates the basic principles of integrity and thus impedes learning. More specifically, academic dishonesty is a form of misconduct that is subject to disciplinary action and includes the following: cheating, fabrication, fraud, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism. For more information on academic honesty and student conduct, please visit the following website: www.sfu.ca/policies/teaching/index.htm. If a student is found guilty of plagiarism or other form of academic dishonesty on a class paper, an assignment or an exam, an academic dishonesty report will be written for that student, and this report will be filed in the department. The student gets zero for the paper, assignment, or exam. If more than one academic dishonesty report has been filed for a student, the case can be presented to the University Board on Student Discipline.
9. Consult the department standards on class management and student responsibilities stated in www.sfu.ca/linguistics/undergraduate/standards.html, and exam procedures stated in www.sfu.ca/linguistics/undergraduate/Exam_Procedures.html.
10. Students requiring accommodations as a result of a disability must contact the Centre for Students with Disabilities (604-291-3112 or csdo@sfu.ca)