

EN 2406 THEORIES OF SYNTAX
(Updated Fall 2010)

UK LEVEL **5**
UK CREDITS: **15**

PREREQUISITES: WP 1010 Introduction to Academic Writing
 WP 1111 Integrated Academic Writing & Ethics
 EN 2213 The Structure of the English Language
 EN 2216 Introduction to Language

CATALOG

DESCRIPTION: Exploration of key issues of generative grammar from a Chomskyian perspective; arriving at Government and Binding theoretical concepts (theory-building) through analysis of natural language data, formulation and testing of hypotheses and evaluation of results.

RATIONALE: This course is an intensive introduction to Chomsky's ever-evolving model(s) of syntactic theory. Looking at data coming mostly from English and Greek, students examine constituent structure through application of a variety of tests (substitution, adjunction and movement) and learn to generate it and represent it graphically with a series of (elementary) tree-diagrams. Advanced concepts (such as Binding and Case theory) introduce students to reading and analyzing critically contemporary literature in generative syntax.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Recognize and describe the basic theoretical constructs underlying generative syntax;
2. Analyze and interpret data, cope with complexity of structure and account for counter-examples;
3. Demonstrate confidence in relying on his/her speaker's intuitions for passing judgement on grammaticality and acceptability;
4. Develop critical thinking and problem solving skills through exploration of and familiarization with a variety of tests, governing principles and theoretical approaches in order to determine nature of constituent structure.

METHOD OF TEACHING AND LEARNING:

- Teaching and learning strategies include:
- Lectures, class discussions, workshop-style pair work and group work during class meetings;
 - Assignment of formative exercises and other learning tasks to assist students in acquiring confidence and benefiting from independent study;
 - Timely feedback on assignments;
 - Additional print and audiovisual educational material posted on the Blackboard course template;

- Other relevant educational material put on reserve in the library;
- Individualized assistance during office hours for further discussion of lecture material, additional reading, assignments and examinations;
- Close collaboration with Librarian and Writing Center Coordinator to encourage students' good use of academic support services.

ASSESSMENT

Formative Coursework	0%	Homework assignments; problem-solving; article summaries and presentations
SUMMATIVE Coursework		
Comprehensive Final Examination (2 hours)	50%	A closed-book examination testing knowledge and understanding of issues discussed in class
Essay (2000-2500 words)	50%	One unified and coherent essay (at least 7-9 pages) on an issue discussed in class OR response(s) to assigned article(s)

The formative coursework prepares students for successful completion of the summative coursework.

The essay may test learning outcomes 1 to 4.

The comprehensive examination tests learning outcomes 1 to 4.

READING

MATERIAL: Carnie, A.. (2011). *Modern Syntax: A Coursebook*. CUP, Cambridge [CORE TEXTBOOK]

Bergmann, A, Currie Hall, K, & Ross, S. (2007). *Language Files: Materials for an Introduction to Language and Linguistics* (10th edition) Ohio: The Ohio State University Press.

Chomsky, N. (1957). *Syntactic Structures*. The Hague: Mouton

_____ (1965). *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

_____ (1988). *Language and the Problems of Knowledge: The Managua Lectures*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

_____ (1995). *The Minimalist Program*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

Cook, Vivian James, and Mark Newson (1996). *Chomsky's Universal Grammar: An Introduction*. (2nd ed.) Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Radford, A. (2009). *Analysing English Sentences: A Minimalist Approach*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press

Ackema, Peter and Hoop, Helen De (2006). [Introduction: Current Issues in Optimality Theoretic Syntax](#). *Linguistics*, Vol. 44, Issue 5, p873-887. (Database: Academic Search Premier)

Everett, Daniel L. (2007). [Challenging Chomskyan Linguistics: The Case of Pirahã](#). *Human Development* (0018716X), Nov 2007, Vol. 50 Issue 6, p297-299

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Longa, Víctor M. and Lorenzo, Guillermo (2008). [What about a \(Really\) Minimalist Theory of Language Acquisition?](#) *Linguistics*, Vol. 46, Issue 3, p541-570. (Database: Academic Search Premier)

Moskovsky, Christo (2004). [Third Person Effects on Binding.](#) *Linguistics*, Vol. 42, Issue 6, p1035-1048 (Database: Academic Search Premier)

WWW RESOURCES: Santorini, Beatrice, and Anthony Kroch. (2007). *The Syntax of Natural Language: An Online Introduction Using the Trees Program*. [CORE TEXT]
<http://www.ling.upenn.edu/~beatrice/syntax-textbook>.
<http://www.indiana.edu/~hlw/>

COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS: With the exception of the in-class examination, all written work must be word-processed on Word and adhere to APA guidelines for manuscript format and documentation.

SOFTWARE REQUIREMENTS: Word, PowerPoint, Blackboard

INDICATIVE CONTENT:

1. Phrase Structure (syntactic constituenthood, some basic linguistic relations)
2. X- Theory (Introducing and extending X-bar theory)
3. Functional Categories
4. -Theory and Case Theory
5. Binding Theory
6. Movement and Chains (Transformations: the passive, subject inversion, Wh-movement)
7. The Empty Category Principle
8. Optimality Theory
9. The Minimalist Program