Linguistics 216 ~ Generative Approach to Syntax  
Winter 2018  
Cherlon Ussery

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:00-2:00 (Weitz Commons), Wednesdays 4:45-6:15, and by appointment. I’m also available for Skype meetings on Thursdays (email me and we can set up a time). You’re also welcome to stop by my office.

Teaching Assistant: Anny Lei ~ leia@carleton.edu

This course provides us with the fundamental building blocks of syntactic inquiry within the generative framework. In 115, we acquire the skills to critically analyze data and construct analyses which account for the phenomena observed. While this course focuses on familiarizing us with the “received knowledge” in the field, we’ll still put the skills acquired in 115 to use. We will continue to motivate our own proposals and compare them to the standard theory.

Among the topics central to syntactic theory, and which we’ll explore, are: argument structure and the distinction between arguments and adjuncts, thematic roles and theta theory, the nature of infinitives, how case gets assigned to nouns and how verbs come to agree with nouns, the motivations for and the roles of various functional projections, the motivations for and conditions on movement operations, and the determiner phrase hypothesis.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE
The course is organized according to week-long units, and the readings cover the material for that week. The readings come from a variety of sources, which I will post on Moodle. I’ll also indicate on Moodle which readings are due for which class period. As of now, the syllabus is a rough estimate of how things will proceed. We might speed up, slow down, or add a topic that you all are interested in learning more about. So, there will likely be more than one iteration of this syllabus.

PRIMARY READINGS (These are augmented with readings from the literature.)

UNIT 1 - The Basics: X-Bar and Movement
Week 1: Getting back into tree-drawing

Week 2: Review and Setting the Stage for the Nature of Syntactic Inquiry: Identifying Constituents and Deriving Phrase Structure Rules  
• Reading: Tallerman – Chapters 1 and 2; Johnson – Chapter 1; Carnie – Chapters 1 and 3

Week 3: The Argument-Adjunct Distinction, Motivating X-Bar Theory, and Functional Projections  
• Reading: Carnie – Chapters 6 and 8 [Monday]; Johnson – Chapter 2 (through p. 54)  
• Friday, 1/19: Assignment 1 due

• Reading: Tallerman – Chapter 6. Carnie - Chapter 4, Section 4 (on c-command); Carnie – Chapter 10

- **Reading:** Carnie – Chapters 11 and 12; Tallerman – Chapter 8
  - McCloskey, James. 2000. Quantifier Float and Wh-Movement in an Irish English. Linguistic Inquiry. 31(1):57-84. (Read through Section 5)

- **Wednesday, 1/31: Assignment 2 due**

Week 6: Review

- **Mid-term Break: Monday, February 5**
- **Wednesday 2/7: Review/Catch-Up Day**
- **Friday 2/9: Exam 1**

UNIT 2 - A Deeper Look at Things

Week 7: More on Infinitives: Raising, Control, ECM, and the Varying Shapes of Clauses

- **Assignment 3: Response Paper to McCloskey 2000 due on Monday, 2/12**
- **Reading:**

Week 8: The Tree Grows: Introducing vP

- **Reading:** Carnie – Chapter 14; Johnson – Chapter 4
- **Friday, 2/23: Assignment 4 due**

Week 9: The Distribution of Pronouns: An Overview of Binding Theory and How It Interacts with Ditransitives

- **Reading:** Carnie – Chapters 5 and 17
- **Friday, 3/2: Exam 2**

Week 10: Presentations

**Final Papers due by midnight on March 14 [email only please]**

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**Course Requirements**

The purposes of this course are for you to learn the fundamentals of standard syntactic theory and to apply that theory to novel data. As such, much of this course involves “doing”. In addition to exams and a final project, there will be regular problem sets, both in and out of class.

**Exams – 40% (2 exams, each worth 20%)**

The exams are necessarily cumulative, since the material builds on previous material.

**Assignments (35%)**

Most weeks, there will be an assignment that is designed to get you to tackle some set of data that is related to the reading. In the problem sets, you’ll apply the technical tools that we’ve learned to new data. In some
instances, you’ll have all the tools you need, but in other instances, the theory will fall short, and you’ll need to propose a solution to a problem.

There are two types of assignments in this course. On some assignments, you will get a grade. On other assignments, you will get credit for tackling the problem, but will not get an actual grade. These assignments are designed so that you can take risks without worrying about being wrong. I’ll let you know ahead of time whether or not an assignment will be graded.

**Project (25%)**

You have the opportunity to apply our theory to a set of data of your choosing. There are three components to this project.

- **Project Proposal.** You’ll write up a 1 page proposal in which you describe the type of data that you would like to investigate, why you think these data are interesting, and a hint about what your analysis might be.

- **Presentation.** This is your opportunity to teach the rest of us about your data. You’ll give a 15-20 minute presentation in which you explain your data and your analysis of it. Your colleagues will then have a chance to ask questions and give you feedback. Presentations are during Week 10.

- **Paper.** The paper is your opportunity to formally explain your analysis. You’ll be expected to incorporate the theory that we’ve learned, but you will likely find that some amendments are required in order to account for your data. In your paper, you will not only address the data you are investigating, but also critique the theory that we have learned. Papers are due on the last day of finals.

**To Keep in Mind:**

Some of the readings are dense and difficult. The Johnson chapters, in particular, often methodically step through wrong-headed approaches that lead to dead ends before illustrating the best solution to the problem. It is, therefore, important to take in the reading as a whole, without committing to “learning” the first approach that is presented.

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**Course Policies and Other Useful Information**

**Policy on Homework**

This linguistics course is both about learning the standard tools of the trade and about applying those tools in order to analyze complex data. You’ll find that applying the principles behind the terms and the patterns behind the facts will facilitate your learning of them. Professional linguists collaborate all the time, and you are allowed to collaborate on assignments. Acceptable collaboration is when you talk through the concepts and problem sets with one or more of your classmates, you figure out the answers together, and you write up your own work. Unacceptable collaboration is when you copy someone else’s answers and I will handle these situations according to the College’s academic honesty policy. If you do collaborate, please write the names of your collaborator(s) on your assignment. Homework is due at the beginning of the class period (unless otherwise specified).

**Academic Honesty**

College policies obtain at all times in this course. If you are unfamiliar with these policies, please refer to the Complete Academic Honesty Handbook (found at http://apps.carleton.edu/campus/doc/honesty/complete/ http://apps.carleton.edu/campus/doc/integrity/) for details. Please feel free to speak with me about any questions or concerns you may have.
Attendance and Participation

There is no formal attendance or participation requirement. However, attendance is crucial to doing well in the course. The material covered in class builds on and supplements the readings, so we will sometimes cover things that are not in the readings. Also, we’ll spend a fair amount of time doing in-class activities that are designed to have you practice applying some of the concepts and technical tools that we’ll learn about. I expect everyone to participate in these activities. Please always ask questions when you don’t understand something.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Carleton College is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodations should contact the Coordinator of Disability Services, Andy Christensen, at 222-4464 or anchrist@carleton.edu, to begin the process.

Class Presentations and Public Speaking Support

Speech coaching is a student-staffed resource designed to assist you with class presentations, comps talks, and other speech-related events. Your coach can assist you with speech & communication skills including clarity, organization, articulation, projection, body language, eye contact, and effective use of aids (e.g., notes, PowerPoint, Keynote, etc.). Depending on your goals, your coach can also work with you on the content of the presentation: organization, voice, clarity, and, ultimately, persuasive impact. Individuals and groups are welcome to request a speech coach by completing a brief, online form - https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/asc/speakeasy/. The speech coach will meet you at a mutually convenient time and place. For more information, visit go.carleton.edu/speakeasy. Please remember this resource as you’re preparing for your presentation.

The Writing Center

The Writing Center, located in 420 4th Libe, has peer writing consultants who can work with you during any stage of the writing process (brainstorming to final proofreading). Hours and more information can be found on the writing center website - https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/asc/writingcenter/. You can reserve specific times for conferences in 420 4th Libe by using their online appointment system - https://writingcenter.carleton.edu/. Walk-ins are welcome, though writers with appointments have priority.

Time Management, Test-Preparation Strategies, and Study Skills

All Residential Life Area Directors are trained to work with you to improve your time management and academic skills. Their goals are to heighten your awareness of your personal strengths and skills and to offer different ways you can approach your academic work so you’re more efficient and effective. Meetings are by appointment; you simply need to email one of them to arrange a visit. For details and resources: Academic Skills Coaching website - https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/asc/academicskillsconsulting/.

Gould Library

Ask a librarian for help with your research in this class. You can drop by the library’s Research/IT desk - https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/library/help/help/researchit/ to ask any question you have, at any point in your process. Librarians help students find and evaluate articles, books, websites, statistics, data, government documents, and more. For more information on hours and librarians, visit the Gould Library website at go.carleton.edu/library. Iris Jastram is the librarian who works with the Linguistics Department. She is a fantastic resource!

And please use Anny and me as resources!