

# Graduate Syntax (Tentative Syllabus)

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<b>Course Info</b>	
Course#	LING 6021
Semester	Spring 2021
Time	M/W 11:50am–1:10pm
Location	GC 2781
Website	Canvas
Prerequisites	Review the “Prerequisites” section for more information

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<b>Instructor Info</b>	
Instructor	Aniello De Santo
Pronouns	He/His/Him
Email	aniello.desanto@utah.edu
Department	Linguistics
Office	LNCO 2315 or Zoom
Office hours	MW 3pm–5pm (See Office Hours section for more info)

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## 0.1 Course outline

### 0.1.1 Bulletin description (Official)

Groundwork in a modular constraint-based approach to syntactic competence. Focus on case-assignment, thematic roles, movement co-reference, empty categories, and levels of representation.

### 0.1.2 Actual description

This course aims to be an introduction to Generative Syntax (mainly, Minimalism) at the doctoral level. Such a course naturally has (at least) a four purposes:

- to familiarize students with broad architectural questions about the nature of syntactic knowledge
- to teach the tools of the syntactic trade: data gathering and generalization, theory formation, and the many forms of hypothesis testing, especially those involving applying

independently observed regularities to more and more phenomena in more and more languages

- to motivate prevailing analyses of standard syntactic phenomena in various languages (and relate them to typological counterparts, that is, to analyze variation as well as universality)
- to familiarize students with current tools and core assumptions/issues in Minimalism, so to prepare them for more advanced syntax classes in the department.

While this course's theoretical focus is mainly through the lenses of modern iterations of the Minimalist Program, it is my belief that a deep understanding of modern generative approaches cannot be reached without knowledge of the historical development of generative syntactic theory. Thus, the first weeks of the semester will be focused on reviewing major intellectual turns in the history of the field, following the rocky course of generative syntactic theory from its outset in 1957 into Minimalism. Additionally, the course will attempt to spend some weeks comparing generative approaches to usage-based frameworks (mostly Construction Grammar).

### 0.1.3 Teaching goals

- By the end of the course, students will be able to
  - Approach linguistic data and offer preliminary analyses
  - Provide Minimalist analyses of syntactic phenomena
  - Compare various accounts of a data set
  - Place Minimalist accounts in a wider context
- General Research skills
  - read state of the art syntax papers
  - evaluate theoretical analyses with respect to data
  - write about and present on novel research ideas/data/etc

### 0.1.4 Prerequisites

This is a doctoral level course that presupposes general familiarity with basic syntactic concepts, as for example in *Carnie, A. 2012. Syntax: A Generative Introduction*. However, I am aware and enthusiastic about the variety of backgrounds you all have. Thus, we will reintroduce basic terminology and tools in the first few weeks of the semester.

## 0.2 Topics

A tentative outline of the course progression is given in the table below. Topics might be shifted around based on class discussions, time, and student interests. We are colleagues, and I look forward to developing a seminar that is of interest to all of us! The list of readings is preliminary, papers on specific topics be added as appropriate as the semester proceeds.

<i>Wk</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Readings (for next class)</i>
1	Syllabus, Intro Linearity, Ambiguity, Constituency	SS Chpt 1-4; Adg Chp 1 SS Chpt 5-7; Adg Chp 2

<i>Wk</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Readings (for next class)</i>
2	Constituency Tests Properties of Trees	SS Chpt 6-8 Adg Chp 3; Extracts: Chosmky (65), Webelhuth
3	Labor Day Sum up: From SS to MP	Labor Day Adg Chp 4
4	Argument Structure Structural Relations	Adg Chp 5
5	Functional Categories: TP TP (cont.)	Pollock (1989) Adg Chp 6
6	Subjects, Case, and the EPP	
7	Case and Agree	Adg Chp 7-8
8	Fall Break	Think about Squib topic!
9	Finite + Non-Finite Complementation	
10	Finite + Non-Finite Complementation	Adg Chp 9; Squib Idea due
11	Wh-Movement	
12	Wh-Movement	
13	Buffer + Sum Up	
14	Issues with Minimalism (data, gradience)	
15	MP vs Construction Grammar	
16	Class Presentations	

### 0.3 Textbooks and Readings

Required textbooks and papers should be easily found online, or in the University's Library (i.e. no need to buy them). If you are having trouble finding them (or any other reading you are interested in throughout the semester), please let me know. We will chat about academic publishing the first day of classes.

#### 0.3.1 Required Readings:

- Adger, David (2003) *Core Syntax: A Minimalist Approach* (Adg in the list of Topics)
- Chomsky, Noam (1957) *Syntactic Structures* (SS in Topics)
- Additional papers or book extracts as posted on Canvas

#### 0.3.2 Additional References

There are a number of references you can use. Handbooks and overview articles provide a good starting point. The following list is not exhaustive; you can check these sources for starting to gather additional references. If you need help in finding or evaluating references, let me know. Similarly, if there are papers you are aware of on a specific topic, feel free to share them with me/the class! We are colleagues in this, it is very probable you will know some references better than me!

#### Textbooks

- Adger, A. 2003. *Core Syntax: A Minimalist Approach*. OUP
- Hornstein, N., J. Nunes and K. K. Grohmann. 2005. *Understanding Minimalism*. CUP
- Lasnik, H., J. Uriagereka and C. Boeckx. 2005. *A Course in Minimalist Syntax: Foundations and Prospects*. Wiley-Blackwell
- Radford, A. 1997. *Syntactic Theory and the Structure of English: A Minimalist Approach*. CUP
- Radford, A. 1997. *Syntax: A Minimalist Introduction*. CUP
- Radford, A. 2016. *Analysing English Sentences*. CUP (2nd edition)
- Uriagereka, J. 1998. *Rhyme and Reason: An Introduction to Minimalist Syntax*. MIT Press

### **Journals and series**

- Relevant Linguistic Inquiry monographs, Oxford Studies in Theoretical Linguistics, Oxford Linguistics, Research Surveys in Linguistics (CUP)
- Glossa
- Journal of Linguistics
- Language
- Language Acquisition
- Lingua
- Linguistic Inquiry
- Natural Language and Linguistic Theory
- Syntax

### **Handbooks and overviews**

- Baltin, M. and C. Collins (eds). 2001. *The Handbook of Contemporary Syntax*. Wiley-Blackwell
- Boeckx, C. 2011. *The Oxford Handbook of Linguistic Minimalism*. OUP
- Boskovic, Z. and H. Lasnik. 2006. *Minimalist Syntax: The Essential Readings*. Wiley-Blackwell
- Den Dikken, M. 2013. *The Cambridge Handbook of Generative Syntax*. CUP
- Everaert, M. H. van Riemsdijk, R. Goedemans and B. Hollabrandse, eds. 2006. *The Blackwell Companion to Syntax*. Wiley-Blackwell

### **Other**

- Boeckx, C. 2006. *Linguistic Minimalism: Origins, Concepts, Methods, and Aims*. OUP

- Boeckx, C. 2012. Syntactic Islands. CUP
- Chomsky, N. 1995. The Minimalist Program. MIT Press
- Hornstein, N. 2000. Move! A Minimalist Theory of Construal. Wiley-Blackwell
- Hornstein, N. 2009. A Theory of Syntax: Minimal Operations and Universal Grammar. CUP
- Additionally, there are a variety of descriptive grammars you might find useful when thinking of a squib topic.
- Another useful resource is this broad list of must-read syntax papers, compiled by Masoud Jasbi (UC Davis), with the help of Twitter: **Twitter Must-Read Syntax List**

### 0.3.3 Additional Resources: Conferences in Linguistics

Conferences are a good way to familiarize yourself with current state of the art questions in syntax. You can find a good starting list **here**: <https://linguistics.unc.edu/for-students/linguistics-conferences/> Some of these might also be good venues to submit a version of your final project for this class!

## 0.4 Grading and Course Requirements

Student grades are determined by the following components:

### 1. Participation (30%)

- You are expected to be actively engaged, ask questions, and participate in class discussions.
- Attendance is *not* required, and participation can take many forms:
  - Email, post in the course Discord Server, post on Canvas, come to office hours, etc.
- If possible (i.e. technology allowing), each class will be live streamed and recordings will be posted on Canvas
- Students can attend via zoom, in which case participating in the class discussion via the zoom chat counts towards participation

### 2. Assignments (30%)

- exercises, analyses of datasets, or critical evaluations of assigned readings.
- Collaboration on homework problems is encouraged (science is collaborative!), but students are encourage to then write up their own submission (i.e. collaborate on the ideas but do not copy and paste each other's text/trees/etc).
- Late submissions are generally accepted without penalty (nor need for doctor's notes or similia, I am *not interested in being a cop*). Life is messy! Just please communicate with me about your needs.

### 3. Readings (10%)

- at most two readings per week, but sometimes none beyond the lecture notes
- It is presupposed in the lectures that you have done the required readings.
- Reading comprehension may be tested as part of the homework

- I hope class discussion is going to be naturally engaging, but I reserve the right to introduce paper presentations by students if needed to stimulate engagement.
4. **Final project: Squib/Snippet/Conference Abstract (40%)**
- Part of graduate school is to learn how to work on ideas that you can then publish. While this is an introductory course, I want to encourage you to think about research while doing readings, assignments, class discussions, etc. Hence, as a final project I want you to work on a Squib or Snippet (or possibly a conference abstract). Squibs/Snippets are an interesting format because they do not require you to have a full solution to a problem: they can be observations about data puzzles, theoretical issues with a proposal, or something along these lines.
  - Here is a list of Journals that accept squibs (your final submission should be in the format required by your target journal): <http://www.sprach-blog.de/?p=674>
  - Kirby Conrod has a very nice blog post on how to write papers: **their blog**. Thanks Kirby!

## 0.5 University of Utah Grading Scale

Letter	Scoring
A	100% - 94%
A-	93.9% - 90%
B+	89.9%–87%
B	86.9%–84%
B-	83.9% - 80%
C+	79.9%–77%
C	76.9%–74%
C-	73.9% - 70%
D+	69.9%–67%
D	66.9%–64%
D-	63.9% - 60%
E	59.9%–0%

## 0.6 Covid Policies & Online component

Generally, I trust your judgment. These are weird times, and I hope we can all collaborate to create an environment that is safe for everyone. I welcome suggestions that can help maximize what you get out of this course while minimizing risks to your (and your families!) mental and physical health.

### 0.6.1 Masks

As you know, the University of Utah does not have a mandatory mask mandate in place. Nonetheless, as per CDC guidance, I recommend (but not require) that you wear a mask in class.

## 0.6.2 Testing and Staying home

- If you feel sick, please stay home! I will work with you to arrange ways to attend the class virtually and catch up on missed materials.
- Students must self-report if they test positive for COVID-19 via this website: <https://coronavirus.utah.edu/>
- UofU offers free, asymptomatic testing, you can find information about that and vaccine availability here: <https://healthcare.utah.edu/coronavirus/reserve-test/>

## 0.6.3 Zoom Meetings (to be updated first week of classes)

- If class technology allows, Zoom Meetings will take place during normal class time and synchronously. You are welcome to join class via these online meetings instead of in person.
- Meetings will be also recorded and also made available on Canvas.

# 1 General Policies

## 1.1 Contacting me

- Emails should be sent to [aniello.desanto@utah.edu](mailto:aniello.desanto@utah.edu)
- Please put LING 6021 as part of the subject of the email, and *never* leave the subject empty!
- Reply time < 24h in simple cases, possibly more if meddling with bureaucracy is involved.
- Do not expect quick replies to emails sent overnight and/or during the weekend.

## 1.2 Office Hours

- Office hours will take place twice per week either in my office in LNCO, or in a dedicated Zoom room (link available on Canvas).
- You do not need to schedule an appointment for these, you can just show up (but an heads up is welcome if you anticipate a long discussion).
- Extra office hours are also always available by appointment.

### 1.2.1 A Note on Office hours

You might feel like you need to have a specific question (e.g., about a homework) in order to come to office hours. This is *not* true. **Office hours are a space for us to discuss any issue/concern you might be having with the class, and you are always welcome regardless of whether you have a precise question or not.** Thus, you also do not need an appointment to show up to office hours. However, if you anticipate a longer meeting, it might be helpful for you to email me in advance so that we can set apart enough time and avoid collisions with other students.

### **1.3 Names/Pronouns**

Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name as well as *Preferred first name* (if previously entered by you in the Student Profile section of your CIS account, which managed can be managed at any time). While CIS refers to this as merely a preference, I will honor you by referring to you with the name and pronoun that feels best for you in class or on assignments. Please advise me of any name or pronoun changes so I can help create a learning environment in which you, your name, and your pronoun are respected. If you need any assistance or support, please reach out to the LGBT Resource Center: [https://lgbt.utah.edu/campus/faculty\\_resources.php](https://lgbt.utah.edu/campus/faculty_resources.php)

## **2 Accommodations**

Accommodations will be considered on an individual basis and may require documentation.

### **2.1 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability & Access, 162 Olpin Union Building, 801-581-5020. CDA will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability & Access. The website for the Center for Disability and Access: <https://disability.utah.edu>

#### **2.1.1 Extreme personal circumstances**

Please contact your instructor as soon as possible if an extreme personal circumstance (hospitalization, death of a close relative, natural disaster, etc.) is interfering with your ability to complete your work.

#### **2.1.2 Religious Practice**

To request an accommodation for religious practices, contact your instructor at the beginning of the semester.

#### **2.1.3 Active Duty Military**

If you are student on active duty with the military and experience issues that prevent you from participating in the course because of deployment or service responsibilities, contact your instructor as soon as possible to discuss appropriate accommodations.



#### **2.1.4 A personal note on diversity and accessibility**

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture.

I also aim to maximize accessibility for all my lecture materials. However, it is probable that I miss or underestimate some issues. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated.

Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. In addition, if any of our class meetings conflict with your religious events, please let me know so that we can make arrangements for you.

### **3 University Policies**

#### **3.1 Drop/Withdraw Policies**

Students may drop a course within the first two weeks of a given semester without any penalties.

Students may officially withdraw (W) from a class or all classes after the drop deadline through the midpoint of a course. A "W" grade is recorded on the transcript and appropriate tuition/fees are assessed. The grade "W" is not used in calculating the student's GPA.

For deadlines to withdraw from full-term, first, and second session classes, see the U's Academic Calendar.

### **4 Plagiarism and Cheating**

It is assumed that all work submitted to your instructor is your own work. When you have used ideas of others, you must properly indicate that you have done so.

Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses and may be punished by failure on an individual assignment, and/or failure in the course. Academic misconduct, according to the University of Utah Student Code,

"... Includes, but is not limited to, cheating, misrepresenting one's work, inappropriately collaborating, plagiarism, and fabrication or falsification of information. . . It also includes facilitating academic misconduct by intentionally helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic misconduct."

For details on plagiarism and other important course conduct issues, see the U's Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

## **5 Course Materials Copyright**

The Content is made available only for your personal, noncommercial educational and scholarly use. You may not use the Content for any other purpose, or distribute, post or make the Content available to others, unless you obtain any required permission from the copyright holder. Some Content may be provided via streaming or other means that restrict copying; you may not circumvent those restrictions. You may not alter or remove any copyright or other proprietary notices included in the Content.

Please see the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, Section III.A.5 regarding use and distribution of class Content and materials. <https://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php> Section III.A.5. prohibits the following: Sale or distribution of information representing the work product of a faculty member to a commercial entity for financial gain without the express written permission of the faculty member responsible for the course. (“Work product” means original works of authorship that have been fixed in a tangible medium and any works based upon and derived from the original work of authorship.)

### **5.1 Safety at the U**

The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message.

For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit [safeu.utah.edu](http://safeu.utah.edu).

To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, contact: Campus Police & Department of Public Safety, 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677), [dps.utah.edu](http://dps.utah.edu)

### **5.2 Wellness at the U**

Your personal health and wellness are essential to your success as a student. Personal concerns like stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, or cross-cultural differences can interfere with a student’s ability to succeed and thrive in this course and at the University of Utah.

Please feel welcome to reach out to your instructor or TA’s to handle issues regarding your coursework.

For helpful resources to manage your personal wellness and counseling options, contact: [wellness.utah.edu](http://wellness.utah.edu) or [womenscenter.utah.edu](http://womenscenter.utah.edu)

### **5.3 Addressing Sexual Misconduct**

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran’s status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed

or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801- 585-2677(COPS).

## **5.4 Campus Safety**

The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit [safeu.utah.edu](http://safeu.utah.edu).

## **6 Changes to the Syllabus**

This syllabus is not a contract. It is meant to serve as an outline and guide for your course. Please note that your instructor may modify it to accommodate the needs of your class.

You will be notified of any changes to the Syllabus.