

Linguistics 311: Syntax
Tues, Wed, Fri 1:30-2:20 pm
Clearihue A203

Instructor: Leslie Saxon
Office: Clearihue D355
Office hours: Wednesdays 3:00-4:00 pm and by appointment
Contact: saxon@uvic.ca; 250-721-7433 (voice messages also go to email)

TAs: Adar Anisman and Bukola Ariyo
Contact: aanisman@uvic.ca; ariyo716@gmail.com
Office hours: By appointment; some study sessions will be scheduled throughout the course.

The instructor and TAs can also be contacted through CourseSpaces.



Calendar description Study of sentence grammar using analysis, argumentation and theoretical bases of generative syntax. *Prerequisite: Ling 203*

Syntax is the study of how words are combined into larger phrases to make meaningful expressions. Besides studying the structure of phrases (including clauses and sentences), we also examine properties of words and of meanings. This course emphasizes analytic skills and observation of linguistic phenomena, as well as providing an introduction to theorizing about syntax.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the course, students can expect to:

- understand what it means to know the grammar of a language
- develop confidence in syntactic analysis achieved through a hands-on approach, with the goal of understanding the role of grammatical structure as one aspect of human nature
- acquire experience in close observation and analytical reasoning with respect to linguistic phenomena
- apply knowledge of linguistic terminology and grammatical concepts
- appreciate and respect the richness and diversity of language and language users throughout the world

Required books

Carnie, Andrew. 2012. *Syntax: A Generative Introduction, 3rd Edition*. Wiley.

Carnie, Andrew. 2012. *The Syntax Workbook: A Companion to Carnie's Syntax*. Wiley.

Suggested tree-drawing software (there are others; you will find it very handy to use some software)

TreeForm. <https://sourceforge.net/projects/treeform/>

Other readings (alphabetically listed; suggestions for one of our assignments; see CourseSpaces for links)

Bruening, B. (2013). *By* phrases in passives and nominals. *Syntax* 16(1): 1–41.

Cheung, Candice Chi-Hang. (2014). *Wh*-fronting and the left periphery in Mandarin. *Journal of East Asian Linguistics* 23(4): 393–431.

Cuervo, M. C. (2015). Causation without a cause. *Syntax* 18(4): 388–424.

Kaufmann, M. & Poschmann, C. (2013). Embedded imperatives: Empirical evidence from Colloquial German. *Language* 89(3): 619–637.

Kroeger, P. (2014). External negation in Malay/Indonesian. *Language* 90.1 (2014): 137–184.

Matsuoka, M. (2013). On the notion of subject for subject-oriented adverbs. *Language* 89(3): 586–618.

Paul, I. & Cortes, K. & Milambiling, L. (2015). Definiteness without D: The case of *ang* and *ng* in Tagalog. *The Canadian Journal of Linguistics / La revue canadienne de linguistique* 60(3): 361–390.

Roberge, Yves and Nelleke Strik. (2014). Two types of *wh*-omission in first language acquisition. *Canadian Journal of Linguistics* 59(2): 263–272.

Important dates at UVic

Friday 23 September	Last day for adding courses that begin in the Fall term
Monday 31 October	Last day for withdrawing from Fall courses without academic penalty
Wed-Fri 9-11 November	Reading Break, no classes
Friday 2 December	Last day of classes, Fall semester

Evaluation

	Value	Tentative Dates
In-class group work	10%	Fridays and honorary Fridays during the semester
Homework assignments (3)	30%	Fri 23 Sept; Fri 28 Oct; Tues 22 Nov
"Language Watch" assignment (1)	10%	Wed 5 Oct or earlier
Summary and discussion of an article (1)	10%	Tues 15 Nov or earlier
Midterm	10%	Friday 14 Oct
Final examination – essential requirement	30%	To be determined: exam period is 5-19 December

My Goals and Philosophy of Teaching and Learning

I am interested in linguistics as a scientific study, and I take delight in how we use language in creative, social, political, manipulative, playful, cultural, argumentative, artistic, thoughtful, and other ways. I also am committed to Indigenous languages in this country and elsewhere. I hope to draw you in to the study of syntax and give you tools to help you think about and appreciate what language is and how it is used.

Many of the tools in the linguist's tool-kit are analytical, useful for understanding the bits and pieces of language. Teaching and learning can be approached from many perspectives. In linguistics, there is lots of room for a hands-on approach, and I aim to foster an active engagement with the bits and pieces of language and also the larger issues of how language is used. This means I will be asking you to observe language around you and scrutinize it, and think about it using the tools developed in this course.

I see linguistic studies as contributing to your larger education by providing examples and opportunities for analytical reasoning, close observation, appreciation for technical terminology, grammatical knowledge and understanding, and appreciation of the diversity and power of language and languages and the people who speak those languages.

General Advice

- attendance and active participation will greatly contribute to your learning in the course
- your and your classmates' contributions are important and I really appreciate your comments and ideas
- we will be working collaboratively and I'm counting on people to help each other
- please talk to me if you have concerns about how the course is going
- if you are going to miss an important date or deadline it is very important to let me know the context as soon as possible; illness or serious hardships are acceptable reasons for missing deadlines. Talk to me about it.
- your work should be done according to the University of Victoria's policies on academic integrity:
<http://web.uvic.ca/calendar/FACS/UnIn/UARe/PoAcI.html>
- the UVic Library website and staff are excellent resources on many academic topics Please check the general library reference page, and the other sites listed below.

Our brilliant and helpful subject librarian

Ying Liu Email: yingliu@uvic.ca Phone: 250-721-8277

Linguistics subject guide
<http://libguides.uvic.ca/ling>

How to avoid plagiarism
<http://www.uvic.ca/library/research/citation/plagiarism/index.php>

Course Experience Survey (CES)

By taking part in this survey you are doing a great service to UVic, your department, and your profs. It is a way for you to provide feedback on your course experiences and it is a valuable opportunity. Thank you!

University of Victoria Grading Scale

- scores will be rounded to the nearest whole number and the final grade arrived at from there

<http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2016-09/undergrad/info/regulations/grading.html#>

Passing Grades	Grade Point Value	Percentage *	Description
A+ A A-	9 8 7	90 – 100 85 – 89 80 – 84	An A+, A, or A- is earned by work which is technically superior, shows mastery of the subject matter, and in the case of an A+ offers original insight and/or goes beyond course expectations. Normally achieved by a minority of students.
B+ B B-	6 5 4	77 – 79 73 – 76 70 – 72	A B+, B, or B- is earned by work that indicates a good comprehension of the course material, a good command of the skills needed to work with the course material, and the student's full engagement with the course requirements and activities. A B+ represents a more complex understanding and/or application of the course material. Normally achieved by the largest number of students.
C+ C	3 2	65 – 69 60 – 64	A C+ or C is earned by work that indicates an adequate comprehension of the course material and the skills needed to work with the course material and that indicates the student has met the basic requirements for completing assigned work and/or participating in class activities.
D	1	50 – 59	A D is earned by work that indicates minimal command of the course materials and/or minimal participation in class activities that is worthy of course credit toward the degree.
F	0	0 – 49	F is earned by work, which after the completion of course requirements, is inadequate and unworthy of course credit towards the degree.
N	0	0 – 49	Did not write examination or complete course requirements by the end of term or session; no supplemental.

More details on assignments. Please do not include cover sheets for your work.

In-class group work (10%) Each Friday class will be a time to explore ideas from that week's lectures through exercise sets and discussion carried out in groups. Some of the exercises will come from Carnie's workbook and others from other sources. Being present and completing work in these classes amounts to points towards your final grade.

Homework assignments (30%; due **Fri 23 Sept; Fri 28 Oct; Tues 22 Nov**) You will be given a set of exercises to hand in for a grade, worth 10% each. You will see a variety of types of questions, some from Carnie's workbook and others from elsewhere. We encourage you to discuss and debate the exercise questions among yourselves. For the written work that you hand in, each person does this individually. Please credit your classmates or others who you discussed the work with: write a brief acknowledgement at the top of your paper.

"Language Watch" (10%; **Wed 5 Oct or earlier**) Students will be asked to do a short "Language Watch" commentary on the language observable around us: from your observations, you will choose a striking syntactic usage in English (or another language that you speak fluently) and write a commentary on it, highlighting the

context of more usual usage and course content. There is a sample attached. The papers will be assigned a grade on the basis of:

- choice of topic in relation to the course's focus (it must be clearly relatable to our syntactic investigations)
- documentation of the context of use
- discussion of the usage and of the choices made by or available to users
- quality of observation about language
- appropriate use of terminology and materials from the course
- quality of the writing and the use of appropriate referencing, etc.

(If you use a language other than English please be sure that you give adequate glossing and translation to explicate the usage and its grammar!)

The commentary will be approximately 350-500 words typed [please indicate the word-count on your paper], **not more than one side of one sheet of paper—adjust margins so it will fit.** (If the language is not English this strict requirement can be relaxed slightly.)

Summary and discussion of an article (10%; Tues 15 Nov or earlier) To expand your reading in syntax, one of your assignments asks you to select an article in syntax and provide a brief summary and discussion of it. On the first page of this handout I have made a number of suggestions of articles you might look at, but please feel free to find a different article. Please check with me if you select a different article.

I suggest that your paper, which should end up being 1-2 pages in length, could include answers to the following questions, as well as other information that is important for understanding the authors' intent. (I have used the term "authors" but your article might have only a single author.)

0. full citation using the APA format or some other format that you are used to using
1. what research question(s) do the authors address?
2. what methodologies do the authors use in their research?
3. what conclusion(s) do the authors reach relative to their research question(s)?
4. what is the nature of the evidence that the authors use to reach their conclusion(s)?
5. in what ways are the authors' assumptions about syntactic structure different from what Carnie presents in our textbook?
6. discussion: what questions arise in your mind after reading the paper? do the authors raise questions for you about what you thought you knew? do the authors convince you about the validity of their argument? do the authors' conclusions make you want to research a related topic? what other articles do you want to read to learn more about the authors' point of view, and why? or other discussion

Your paper will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- accuracy, organization, and conciseness of the summary
- level of sophistication of the discussion
- originality of insights
- high standards of proofreading.

Midterm, final exam (10% Fri 14 Oct; 30% TBA) I will provide you with sample questions before the test. The questions will not ask you to memorize things but to use what you have learned.

