

Formal Analysis of Words and Sentences

Linguistics 260
Northwestern University
Winter 2018

Tuesday & Thursday, 9:30 – 10:50am
Tech M345

Instructor Information

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Course Web Page: On Canvas (canvas.northwestern.edu)

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Explain the overarching questions addressed by the study of syntax and morphology, and describe the research areas targeted by other subfields in linguistics. Define basic terminology in linguistics, syntax, and morphology.
2. Analyze data from English and other languages to discover regularities and patterns in the structure of words and sentences within and across languages.
3. Describe how the scientific method is used in linguistic research, and formulate rules/hypotheses to account for the structure of words and sentences.
4. Evaluate hypotheses about syntactic and morphological structure; generate data to test hypotheses; provide reasoning to support or refute hypotheses.

Course Description

In this class we will explore the formal structure of words (morphology) and sentences (syntax) in natural language. We will analyze data from a variety of languages (including English), focusing on the differences among morphological and syntactic systems, but also on the generalizations that can be made about all languages.

You will learn terminology and facts about syntax and morphology, but more importantly, the aim is for you learn the basic concepts, skills, and analytical thinking that are necessary to do formal linguistics. We will rely on the scientific method throughout the course. You will gain experience analyzing data, formulating and evaluating hypotheses, and supporting your reasoning. These skills have a broad application that goes far beyond this course.

The focus of this class is on formal (structural) aspects of language. For this reason, it fulfills the WCAS Formal Studies distribution requirement.

Readings

- Carnie, Andrew. 2013. *Syntax: A Generative Introduction, Third Edition*. Blackwell Publishing. Available at Norris Center Bookstore (hard or e-book copy) or online. *Be sure to purchase the third edition.*
- Other assigned readings are posted on **Canvas**

Student Responsibilities

You are responsible for making sure that you get the most out of your classes.

- **Attend class** regularly. You are responsible for material covered in lecture and class discussion. If you must miss class, make sure that you get notes from a classmate. In-class exercises are an important part of this class, and *will not be posted online*. If you have a legitimate reason for missing class, you can email me to request the in-class exercise from that day.
- **Communicate!** If you have any trouble with the course, if you have an emergency where you need to miss class (especially more than one class), etc., make sure that you contact me *as soon as possible* to let me know what is happening.

Come to office hours. Office hours are designed for students to come and get extra help, to talk in greater detail about interesting ideas, or to give feedback to the instructors. Please make use of them! If you cannot attend a scheduled office hour but need help, contact me or the TAs by email to set up an appointment.

Participate in class discussions. Participating in class is valuable because it helps you to be an active listener and increases the likelihood that you will understand and retain the material. Please ask questions in class if there is something that does not make sense. Asking questions is a way for you to give feedback to the professor and usually makes the class more interesting for everyone.

- Complete **readings and homework** on time. Being prepared means reading the assignment and jotting down your initial thoughts and questions *before* coming to class.

- **No laptops/phones/tablets.** Please leave your laptops/tablets/phones and other electronic devices in your bag during class. I will post lecture slides online, so you are free to access them before or after class, and print them out to bring with you if you wish. Please see me if you have extenuating circumstances that require the use of a device during class.

Assessment

Assessments in this course will not (for the most part) test you on memorized material, but will rather ask you to think about problems and analyze linguistic data you have not encountered before. In this way, the course develops your critical thinking skills and scientific reasoning (recognizing patterns and regularities, developing and evaluating hypotheses, formulating test data, explaining your reasoning). Homework assignments will give you an opportunity to develop these skills in low-stakes weekly problem sets.

- **Exams:** There will be two exams. Exams are closed-book. Exam II is not cumulative, except in the sense that material from the second half of the course builds on that from the first half. *No early or late make-up exams will be given. If you miss an exam, you will receive a “0” on it.* Exceptions will be made only in the case of serious, *documented* emergencies.
- **Quizzes:** There will be two quizzes. Quizzes will be closed-book, and are designed to serve as preparation for the types of problems you may encounter on an exam. Quizzes will be short, taking up about 15 minutes of class time. *As with exams, no early or late quizzes will be given. If you miss a quiz, you will receive a “0” on it.* Exceptions will be made only in the case of serious, *documented* emergencies.
- **Homework:** There will be six homework assignments, graded using a check plus, check, check minus system (which will be converted to the percentages listed below). Assignments are designed for you to develop your analytical and problem-solving skills as they apply to linguistic data. Doing exercises is a fundamental part of learning these skills. *Success in this class means doing the assignments along the way, rather than cramming right before a test. Therefore, late assignments will not be accepted for a grade, and will receive a “0” (zero).* If you know you will be absent on the day an assignment is due, you can arrange to turn in the assignment early. I encourage you to consult with fellow classmates on the homework assignments, but you are expected to *write up your homework independently* and in your own words. *If you work with others on the assignment, you must list their names.*

✓+	<i>Excellent</i> command of material. Extremely few or no errors/inaccuracies.	(100%)
✓	<i>Good.</i> Developing command of material, with some error(s).	(85%)
✓-	<i>Needs help.</i> Has not demonstrated command of material; pervasive errors.	(75%)
0	<i>Homework not received on time.</i>	(0%)
- **Class participation:** We have a shared goal of understanding the foundations of the study of syntax and morphology. A large part of our work to reach this goal will take place in class, through small group work and discussion. Consequently, regular attendance is a necessary part of this class. You are expected to participate actively in the course by contributing questions and comments, and engaging in small group work. While not a strict percentage of

your grade, active participation supports your learning and will enhance your likelihood of earning a higher grade on quizzes, exams, and homework.

- **Experimental Requirement:** Like all 200-level Linguistics classes, this course has an experimental requirement. Failure to complete this requirement will result in your final grade being lowered by one-third (i.e., bringing an A to an A-). Please see the Experimental Requirement document for full details on how to complete this requirement.
- There will be no make-up or extra credit assignments.

Breakdown of final grade:

Exam I	25%
Exam II	30%
Quizzes	5%
Homework	40%
Experimental Requirement	

Grading scale:

93-↑	A	77-79	C+
90-92	A-	73-76	C
87-89	B+	70-72	C-
83-86	B	60-69	D
80-82	B-	59-↓	F

Academic integrity

As with all courses at Northwestern University, registration in this course requires adherence to the University's principles regarding academic integrity (<http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/principles.html>). Suspected violations of academic integrity in this course will be immediately referred to the WCAS Assistant Dean for Academic Integrity. For details on procedures for handling suspected violations of academic integrity: <http://www.weinberg.northwestern.edu/handbook/integrity/>

AccessibleNU

Any student requesting accommodations related to a disability or other condition is required to register with [AccessibleNU](#) (847-467-5530) and provide professors with an accommodation notification from AccessibleNU, preferably within the first two weeks of class. All information will remain confidential.

Research opportunities

Students interested in linguistics are encouraged to participate in departmental research projects either through paid research positions or by registering for Independent Study (Ling 399) with individual faculty members. By giving students the opportunity to work closely with faculty and graduate students, research experiences enable students to see how knowledge is generated by the scientific community. Research experiences also enhance students' analytical skills and help students develop the technical skills required to become independent contributors to the academic community. It is envisioned that research experiences will give students a sense of the excitement of discovery and an appreciation for the creativity associated with scientific inquiry.

Information about research opportunities can be found at

<http://www.linguistics.northwestern.edu/research/undergraduate-opportunities/>

For more research opportunities and current news on undergraduate research at Northwestern:

<http://undergradresearch.northwestern.edu/>

<http://www.weinberg.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/enrichment-opportunities/student-research/>

Tentative Schedule:

This schedule is to be used as a guide only and is subject to change. Please consult Canvas for any changes.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic/Concepts</u>	<u>Readings</u>	<u>Quizzes/ Homework Due</u>
<i>Introduction and Foundations</i>			
Jan. 9, Tu Day 1	Language as a system. Grammar. Rules. Prescription vs. description. Scientific Method.	Canvas: Lg. Files Intro, O'Grady Ch. 1, Jackendoff Ch. 2 Carnie: Ch. 1 <i>Optional: Canvas: Pinker Ch. 1-2, 12</i>	
<i>Morphology</i>			
Jan. 11, Th Day 2	Words and morphemes. Word structure rules. Allomorphy.	Canvas: Lg. Files Morphology, O'Grady Ch. 4, File 4.1, 4.4	Student Questionnaire
Jan. 16, Tu Day 3	Affixation. Trees. Parts of Speech.	Carnie: Ch. 2 Canvas: Aronoff & Fudeman Ch. 4	
Jan. 18, Th Day 4	Inflection and derivation. Morphology in foreign languages.	Canvas: Aronoff & Fudeman, Ch. 6 (pp. 168-170), O'Grady, Ch. 4 Appendix (p. 140- 142), File 4.5	Homework 1
Jan. 23, Tu Day 5	Morphological processes. Compounds. Productivity.	Canvas: Aronoff & Fudeman, Ch. 8 (<i>also, go back and review O'Grady, Ch. 4, Aronoff & Fudeman, Ch. 4</i>)	Quiz 1
Jan. 25, Th Day 6	Rules v. Storage. Morphemes as rules. Building the model.	Canvas: Aronoff & Fudeman Ch 2 (pp. 49- 57)	Homework 2
<i>Syntax</i>			
Jan. 30, Tu Day 7	Constituent structure. Syntactic Categories. Phrase structure rules.	Canvas: Lg. Files Syntax, File 5.1 Carnie: Ch. 3	
Feb. 1, Th	EXAM I		
Feb. 6, Tu Day 8	Phrase structure continued. Ambiguity. Recursion.	Re-read Carnie Ch. 3	
Feb. 8, Th Day 9	Phrase structure in other languages. Structural Relations.	Carnie: Ch. 4	Homework 3

Feb. 13, Tu Day 10	C-command. Binding Theory.	Carnie: Ch. 5	
Feb. 15, Th Day 11	Subcategorization. X-bar theory. Structure of NPs. Structure of VPs.	Canvas: File 6.4, Carnie: Ch. 6 (pp. 165- 172 only)	Homework 4
Feb. 20, Tu Day 12	X-bar theory continued.	Carnie: Ch. 6 (pp. 172- 200 only)	
Feb. 22, Th Day 13	X-bar theory continued.	Carnie: Ch. 7	Homework 5
Feb. 27, Tu Day 14	X-bar recap. Transformations. Head-to- head movement. Wh- movement.	Carnie: Ch. 10 (pp. 243- 246, 308-312 only)	Quiz 2
Mar. 1, Th Day 15	Transformations continued.	Carnie: Ch. 8 (pp. 227- 237 only)	Homework 6
Mar. 6, Tu Day 16	Relationship between structure and meaning. Grammatical roles. Thematic relations. Morphosyntax. Acquisition of Syntax.	Canvas: Aronoff & Fudeman Ch. 7; Gleitman & Newport Ch. 1	
Mar. 8, Th Day 17	EXAM II		