Advanced Syntax (LING 402)

Spring 2023 • Tuesday/Thursday 11:00–12:20, GFS 330

Dr. Steven Foley (*they/them* or *he/him*)
foleys@usc.edu
Office: GFS 332
Office hours: Fridays 10:00 am – 12:00 pm, and by appointment
Course site on Blackboard

Course goals

This course covers some of the major empirical findings and theoretical developments in syntax. By considering phenomena from a range of languages, you will cultivate skills for formulating succinct but precise generalizations, developing theories that account for those generalizations, and testing predictions those theories make about other linguistic phenomena. Throughout the semester you will work towards your own research project, synthesizing descriptions of unfamiliar languages and engaging with theoretical literature in syntax. You will also gain experience presenting linguistic research, both previously published work and your own.

Requirements

Attendance and participation: Vital for a class like this is active participation during lecture. Whether they are naive or profound, questions and comments help everyone better understand course material. From my perspective, free association is always preferable to silence.

Readings: These will be drawn from textbooks and the primary theoretical literature. All readings will be available as pdfs on Blackboard. Please complete each reading before the lecture dedicated to it.

Homework assignments: Throughout the semester, there will be a few written assignments tasking you with analyzing a dataset with the theories introduced in class. You will have a week to complete each homework, and are strongly encouraged to come to my office hours or schedule an appointment before the due date. Collaboration with classmates is also welcome, but each student must submit a unique write-up. Please email me the final version either as a pdf or as a link to a Google Doc.

To create tree diagrams for your written work, I recommend using the free software TreeForm:
https://sourceforge.net/projects/treeform/
https://macdownload.informer.com/treeform/

Independent research project: The course culminates in a research project on a syntactic puzzle you identify in your native language or in a reference grammar of an unfamiliar language. The topic can but need not be related to what we discuss in class. Start brainstorming with me or on your own as soon as possible. You will be responsible for:

- A written proposal (1–3 pages), describing the project in broad strokes and identifying a few relevant descriptive and theoretical sources (three to five). Due Friday, March 10th.

- An in-class presentation (ca. 20 min) of your findings and analysis, using a handout. This will be followed by 5-10 min of questions from me and your classmates. You will sign up for slots during the last week of class (April 25th or 27th).

    - A draft handout will be due April 14th

- A final paper (8-15 pages; a 'squib') that reports the results of your research and incorporates feedback received during the presentations. Due at the end of our final exam period: 1pm on Tuesday, May 9th.

Late work: If you anticipate needing to turn in any assignments late, please be in touch before the deadline. Except in extenuating circumstances, I will deduct 10% from the first late assignment, 20% from the second, and not accept a third.

Grading

10%	Participation
40%	Homework assignments
5%	Draft handout for paper presentation
10%	Paper presentation
5%	Research project proposal
10%	Research project presentation
20%	Final paper

A	96% to 100%	D+	67% to 69%
A–	90% to 95%	D	64% to 66%
B+	87% to 89%	D–	60% to 63%
B	84% to 86%	F	Below 60%
B–	80% to 83%		
C+	77% to 79%		
C	74% to 76%		
C–	70% to 73%		

(All decimal points will be truncated, not rounded.)

Academic conduct

All ideas presented as part of your work for this class must be your own. If you use someone else's idea, expressed in print, online, or any other medium, or in personal communication, the author must be explicitly acknowledged. Plagiarism (presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words) is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Any violation of academic integrity will be reported to the office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards.

Please consult the USC student handbook, particularly the section on academic integrity, and also the library's guide to avoiding plagiarism.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX or to the Department of Public Safety.

Support systems

The Office of Student Accessibility Services provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange accommodations. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from OSAS. Contact them in person, online, or at (213) 740-0776.

Course schedule

Likely to change. Keep an eye out for announcements.

Week 1	Jan 10	Introduction	No readings
	Jan 12	Core concepts	Adger 2003, ch. 2
Week 2	Jan 17		Adger 2003, ch. 3
	Jan 19	Phrase & argument structure	Adger 2003, ch. 4
Week 3	Jan 24		Hornstein et al. 2005, ch. 6
	Jan 26		
Week 4	Jan 31	Case	Ura 2003
	Feb 2		
Week 5	Feb 7		Marantz 1991
	Feb 9		
Week 6	Feb 14	Binding	Carnie 2012, ch. 17
	Feb 16		Reuland & Everaert 2003
Week 7	Feb 21		Black 1996
	Feb 23	Control	n/a
Week 8	Feb 28		Hornstein 1999, Culicover & Jackendoff 2001
	Mar 2		
Week 9	Mar 7	Passive	Baker et al. 1989

	Mar 9	Review		
Spring Break	Mar 12–19			
Week 10	Mar 21	Passive	Collins 2005	
	Mar 23	*Wh*-movement	Adger 2003, ch. 9	
Week 11	Mar 28			
	Mar 30	Review		
Week 12	Apr 4	*Wh*-Typology	n/a	
	Apr 6	Ditransitives	Bruening 2010	
Week 13	Apr 11			
	Apr 13			
Week 14	Apr 18	Applicatives	Pylkkänen 2008, section 2.1, Wood & Zanuttini 2018	
	Apr 20	Meetings		
Week 15	Apr 25	Final project presentations		
	Apr 27			

Readings

Adger, David. 2003. *Core Syntax: A Minimalist Approach*. Oxford University Press.

Baker, Mark, Kyle Johnson and Ian Roberts. 1989. Passive arguments raised. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 20: 219–251.

Baltin, Mark and Chris Collins (eds.) 2003. *The Handbook of Contemporary Syntactic Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Barss, Andrew. 2003. Syntactic reconstruction effects. In M. Baltin and C. Collins (eds.), *The Handbook of Contemporary Syntactic Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Bayer, Josef and Lisa Lai-Shen Cheng. 2017. *Wh*-in-situ. In M. Everaert and H. van Riemsdijk (eds.), *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Syntax*. Second edition.

Boeckx, Cedric (ed.) 2011. *The Oxford Handbook of Linguistic Minimalism*. Oxford University Press.

Bruening, Benjamin. 2010. Double object constructions disguised as prepositional datives. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 41. 287–305.

Carnie, Andrew. 2012. *Syntax: A Generative Introduction*. Third edition, Blackwell Publishing.

Collins, Chris. 2005. A smuggling approach to the passive in English. *Syntax*, 8(2): 81–120.

Hornstein, Norbert, Jairo Nunes, and Kleanthes Grohman. 2005. *Understanding Minimalism*. Cambridge University Press.

Landau, Idan. 2013. *Control in Generative Grammar: A research companion*. Cambridge University Press.

Marantz, Alec. 1991. Case and licensing. In *Proceedings of ESCOL*, 234–253. Cornell Linguistics Club.

Pesetsky, David and Esther Torrego. 2011. Case. In C. Boeckx (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Linguistic Minimalism*. Oxford University Press.

Pylkkänen, Liina. 2008. *Introducing Arguments*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Reuland, Eric and Martin Everaert. 2003. Deconstructing binding. In M. Baltin & C. Collins (eds.), The Handbook of Contemporary Syntactic Theory. Oxford: Blackwell.

Ura, Hiroyuki. 2003. Case. In M. Baltin & C. Collins (eds.), T*he Handbook of Contemporary Syntactic Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell.