

# Syntax and Grammatical Theory (LING 535)

University of Southern California

Spring 2024 (January 8 to April 26)

Mondays, 1:00–3:20 pm (with a break from about 2:00–2:10)

GFS 220

## Instructor

Steven Foley

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GFS 332

Office hours by appointment

## Description

This second semester graduate course is designed to deepen students' understanding of syntactic theory, preparing them to engage in cutting-edge research. The primary empirical focus is A-bar movement, and the first half of the course unpacks its hallmarks — successive cyclicity, island-sensitivity, relativized minimality, etc. Complementary topics at the interface semantics and psycholinguistics are also discussed, according to the interest of the students and instructor. The primary course goals are to evaluate and develop arguments in syntactic theory: during in-class discussions, student-led paper presentations, and in written responses to homework assignments. The semester culminates with a final paper, which may pave the way for screening papers.

## Requirements

- 10% Class attendance and participation
  
- 10% Opt-out office hours
  - Weekly scheduled meetings (30 min) to discuss course content and homework
  
- 30% Homework assignments (ca. 8)
  - Email pdfs to Steven by 5:00 pm on the due date
  
- 30% In-class paper presentations (ca. 3)
  - See readings marked with asterisks in the schedule
  
- 20% Final paper (e.g., squib, experimental design proposal)
  - Topic proposal due March 15th
  - Workshopping presentation on April 22nd
  - Final version due May 1st, 4:00 pm PT

## Readings

- Aissen, Judith. 2011. On the syntax of agent focus in K'ichee'. In Kirill Shklovsky, Pedro Mateo Pedro, and Jessica Coon (eds.) *Proceedings of Formal Approaches to Mayan Linguistics I*. MIT Working Papers in Linguistics, 1–16.
- Bhatt, Rajesh. 2002. The raising analysis of relative clauses: Evidence from adjectival modification. *Natural Language Semantics*, 10. 43–90.
- Cable, Seth. 2010. *The grammar of Q: Q-particles, wh-movement and pied-piping*. Oxford University Press.
- Chomsky, Noam. 1977. On Wh-Movement. In P. Culicover, T. Wasow, and A. Akmajian (eds.), *Formal Syntax*. 71–132. New York: Academic Press.
- Davies, William D. and Stanley Dubinsky. 2003. On extraction from NPs. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*, 21. 1–37.
- Fox, Danny and David Pesetsky. 2005. Cyclic linearization and syntactic structure. *Theoretical Linguistics*, 31. 1–45.
- Hankamer, Jorge and Ivan Sag. 1976. Deep and Surface Anaphora. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 7(3). 391–428.
- Huang, Nick. 2022. How subjects and possessors can obviate phasehood. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 53(4). 427–458.
- Hulsey, Sarah and Uli Sauerland. 2006. Sorting out relative clauses. *Natural Language Semantics*, 14. 111–137.
- Johnson, Kyle. 2009. Gapping is not (VP-)ellipsis. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 40(2). 289–328.
- Kayne, Richard, Raffaella Zanuttini, and Thomas Leu (eds.) 2014. *An Annotated Syntax Reader: Lasting Insights and Questions*. Blackwell: Oxford.
- Keenan, Edward L. and Bernard Comrie. 1977. Noun phrase accessibility and Universal Grammar. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 8(1). 63–99.
- Keine, Stefan. 2017. Agreement and vP phases. In N. LaCara, K. Moulton & A.-M. Tessier (eds.), *A Schrift to Fest Kyle Johnson*. University of Massachusetts Amherst: Linguistics Open Access Publications 1. 177–185.
- Keine, Stefan. 2019. Selective Opacity. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 50(1): 13–61.
- Kotek, Hadas. 2014. *Wh*-fronting in a two-probe system. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*, 32. 1105–1143.
- Kwon, Nayoung, Yoonhyoung Lee, Peter C. Gordon, Robert Kluender, and Maria Polinsky. 2010. Cognitive and linguistic factors affecting subject/object asymmetry: An eye-tracking study of prenominal relative clauses in Korean. *Language*, 86(3). 546–582.
- Legate, Julie Anne. 2003. Some interface properties of the phase. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 34. 506–516.
- Mahajan, Anoop. 1990. The A/A-bar distinction and movement theory. Doctoral dissertation, MIT.
- Martinović, Martina. 2019. Interleaving syntax and postsyntax: Spellout before syntactic movement. *Syntax*, 22(4): 378–418.
- McCloskey, James. 2002. Resumption, successive cyclicity, and the locality of operations. In S. Epstein and T. Seely (eds.) *Derivation and Explanation in the Minimalist Program*. Blackwell. 184–226.
- McCloskey, James. 2017. Resumption. In *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Syntax*, eds. Martin Everaert and Henk C. van Riemsdijk. Wiley.
- Merchant, Jason. 2001. *The Syntax of Silence: Sluicing, Islands and the Theory of Ellipsis*. Oxford University Press.

- Marchant, Jason. 2008. Variable island repair under ellipsis. In Kyle Johnson (ed.), *Topics in Ellipsis*. Cambridge University Press. 132–153.
- Phillips, Colin. 2006. The real-time status of island phenomena. *Language*, 82(4). 795–823.
- Reinhart, Tanya. 1983. *Anaphora and semantic interpretation*. Routledge.
- Rizzi, Luigi. 1990. *Relativized Minimality*. MIT Press.
- Rizzi, Luigi. 2001. Relativizing minimality effects. In *The Handbook of Contemporary Syntactic Theory*, eds. Mark Baltin and Chris Collins. Blackwell.
- Rudin, Deniz. 2019. Head-based syntactic identity in sluicing. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 50(2). 253–283.
- Sichel, Ivy. 2014. Resumptive pronouns and competition. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 45(4). 655–693.
- Safir, Ken. 2019. The A/ $\bar{A}$  distinction as an epiphenomenon. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 50(2). 285–336.
- Sprouse, Jon, Matt Wagers, and Colin Phillips. 2012. A test of the relation between working-memory capacity and syntactic island effects. *Language*, 88(1): 82–123.
- Sprouse, Jon, Ivano Caponigro, Ciro Greco, and Carlo Cecchetto. 2016. Experimental syntax and the variation of island effects in English and Italian. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*, 34. 307–344.
- Srivastav, Veneeta. 1991. The syntax and semantics of correlatives. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*, 9. 637–686.
- Van Urk, Coppe and Norvin Richards. 2015. Two components of long-distance extraction: Successive cyclicity in Dinka. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 46(1). 113–155.
- Villata, Sandra, Luigi Rizzi, and Julie Franck. 2016. Intervention effects and Relativized Minimality: New experimental evidence from graded judgments. *Lingua*, 179. 76–96.
- Wagers, Matthew W., Manuel F. Borja, and Sandra Chung. 2018. Grammatical licensing and relative clause parsing in a flexible word-order language. *Cognition*, 178. 207–221.
- Wei, Ting-Chi, and Yen-Hui Audrey Li. 2016. How to *do so* in Mandarin Chinese. *Journal of East Asian Linguistics*, 25.

## **Schedule – likely to change**

### **Week 1 (January 8th)**

Introduction to A-bar syntax

Readings: Chomsky 1977, Kayne et al. 2014 – skim both for HW1

Assignment: HW 1, due Jan 16

### **Week 2 (January 15th – MLK Day)**

Make up half-class to discuss HW1?

### **Week 3 (January 22nd)**

The A/A-bar distinction in scrambling

Readings: Mahajan 1990

Assignment: HW 2, due Feb 4

### **Week 4 (January 29th)**

Deriving the A/A-bar distinction

Readings: Safir 2019

Assignment: TBD

### **Week 5 (February 5th)**

Relativized minimality

Readings: Rizzi 2001 (optional), \*Villata et al. 2016 [ZH], \*Sprouse et al. 2016 [YS]

Assignment: TBD

### **Week 6 (February 12th)**

Class canceled

### **Week 7 (February 19th – President's Day)**

Make up half-class on Thursday 2/22

### **Week 8 (February 26th)**

Abbreviated class: 2:00–3:20

Readings: McCloskey 2002, (optional: Van Urk & Richards 2015)

### **Week 9 (March 4th)**

Phase theory

Readings: Legate 2003, Keine 2017, Keine 2019

### **Spring Break (March 11th)**

### **Week 10 (March 18th)**

Phase theory

Readings: \*Davies & Dubinsky 2003 [ZH], \*Huang 2022 [YS]

### **Week 11 (March 25th)**

Linearization

Readings: Fox & Pesetsky 2005, Martinović 2019

Assignment: Homework 4, due April 5th

### **Week 12 (April 1st)**

Student presentations

Wei & Li 2016 [YS], Hu 2022 [ZH]

### **Week 13 (April 8th)**

Ellipsis

Readings: Hankamer & Sag 1976, Merchant 2008, Johnson 2009

Assignment: Prepare very short handout (1-2 pp.) about final paper for OHs on 4/15

### **Week 14 (April 15th)**

Ellipsis

Readings: Rudin 2019, Ranero 2021 [Ch. 3, skim Ch. 2]

### **Week 15 (April 22nd)**

Final project presentations