

Introduction to Grammatical Theory
Syllabus

Mondays and Wednesdays 12-1:50
APM 4218

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This course has four related goals:

- (i) Introduce syntactic argumentation
- (ii) Introduce syntactic phenomena
- (iii) Introduce Principles and Parameters
- (iv) Practice clear expository writing

In service of the first two goals, the course will be conducted in a bottom-up, problem set-driven manner. Syntactic phenomena will be introduced through problem sets and related class discussions. The analyses of phenomena will be done largely by you, as you propose and defend your solutions. In this way, argumentation will be a fundamental component of the course. I will try to push your solutions in a particular direction in subsequent discussions so that what we end up with is a general theory that resembles a version of Government and Binding/Principles and Parameters theory. This quarter we will concentrate on phrase structure, lexical entries, and clause-level phenomena such as passive and raising.

There will be roughly two problem sets per week. These should be written up as cogent, stand-alone papers addressing the data and questions in the problems. It should be possible for someone who has not seen the problem set to read and understand the issues, analyses, and arguments. This means that you must include the data in your writeups (that is, do not simply refer to data in the problem set). Since a goal of the course is to practice this type of expository writing, it is important to present these problems in as professional a manner as possible and to be sure to write sufficient prose.

There will be also a take-home midterm and a take-home final. These will be just like the problem sets, but a bit longer.

I encourage you to discuss your work with the other students. However, it is important that you write up your solutions on your own. Since I need to evaluate you individually, I will suggest you not work together if the work becomes too close.

While this course is a bit labor-intensive (for me as well as for you), it can be very rewarding - the best way to learn about linguistic phenomena is to discover it on your own. I hope we will have fun doing so.