
LINGUIST 401
Introduction to Syntax
Machmer E 37, TuTh 11.15-12.30
<http://blogs.umass.edu/moiry/courses/syntax-401/>

Magda Oiry
313 South College, 545-6826
Office Hours: TuTh 10-11 or by appointment
moiry@linguist.umass.edu

TA: Matthieu Decker
Office Hours: MWF 11-12 or by appointment
mpdecker@student.umass.edu

Themes: What syntactic properties are shared by all natural languages? What syntactic properties distinguish them? What do we know when we know a language? What are syntactic properties? How do we construct a theory of syntax? This course aims to equip students with the ability to address these questions in a precise and informed way. The topics include those that are central to a proper understanding of syntax: phrase structure, movement, grammatical relations, case, complementation, anaphora, and long-distance movement.

- Implicit knowledge and its acquisition, grammaticality, and related issues
- Categories
- Constituency
- Syntactic trees
- Parameters
- X-bar theory
- Case and Case-Related Movement
- Passivization
- Head Movement and the English Auxiliary System
- Binding Theory
- Wh-Movement

Prerequisites:

Linguist 201 (Introduction to Linguistics) or the consent of the instructor.

Requirements:

- regular quizzes (roughly once a week, around 10 in all, 10%)
- regular assignments (roughly once a week, around 10 in all, 40%) and three written questions (one for each set of topics: constituency, X-bar theory, binding theory and movement, 10%)
- an in-class mid-term exam on October 11 and a take home final exam, handed out on November 29 and due on December 6. (20% each)

Some Policies:

- If you feel unwell, you should stay at home. I will not need a medical slip but I will expect you to get in touch with me as soon as you feel better and make arrangements to make up missed work.

- I expect you to participate in class and pay attention. If I notice that you are not paying attention, I will ask you to leave the lecture and not grade your assignment for the week.

- You cannot work together on the take-home final exam. You are welcome to work together on the regular assignments, but unless the assignment is a group assignment, the actual assignments should be submitted individually. Please list the names of everyone you worked with at the top of each assignment.

- I prefer typed assignments. If you turn in handwritten assignments, they need to be very neatly written. Electronic submissions must be in pdf format.

- The assignments and exams will address only material that we covered in class (and appropriate extensions of it). So active and engaged participation in the class meetings is essential to your success on them.

- I will drop your lowest regular-assignment grade (even if it is a 0) if you participate in one of the experiments being run by UMass Linguistics researchers this semester. These experiments typically involve speaking, writing, or listening.

- Unless indicated otherwise, assignments will be due in class a week from the day on which they were assigned.

Readings and Required Text:

I will occasionally distribute short, compulsory reading assignments through the website.

Required Text: *Syntax: A Generative Introduction*, 2nd edition, Andrew Carnie, Blackwell Publishing, 2007. (ISBN 0-4051-3384-8) (ordered at UMass Textbook Annex).