LING 530 · Generative syntax  
Syllabus  

Time: Thu 10:00am – 12:20pm  
Room: GFS 330  
Instructor: Travis Major  
3601 Watt Way  
GFS 332  
Office hours: By Appointment  
Email: tmajor@usc.edu

1 General course description
The course is an introduction to the empirical results and major theoretical developments in generative syntax. It will provide you with the knowledge and skills necessary to read and critically evaluate past and current work, and to begin to do your own research in syntax.

2 Course requirements

2.1 Class attendance and active participation
Active participation in the class discussion is very important. Don’t be shy about asking questions! Especially if you haven’t had much prior experience in syntax, it is vital that you speak up in class, as otherwise we might be moving along too fast. If you feel like you don’t understand something, you are very likely not the only one.

2.2 Readings
The course reading materials will be made available on the Blackboard course page. There will be required readings, and there will be optional ones, which are recommended.

2.3 Homework assignments
There will be frequent homework assignments, typically given out on Thursday and due the following Thursday. You are encouraged to work on them together, but you need to write them up individually. Please submit them to me as a hard copy.

2.4 Term paper
At the end of the course, you will write a term paper on a topic of your choosing that is related to the topics covered in class. This should not be a topic that you have worked on before (i.e., it has
2.5 Grading

Homework assignments: 40%
Class participation: 20%
Term paper + presentation: 40%

2.6 Important dates (tentative)

10/9: Snippet (1-2 pages) due
11/6: Proposal + Outline
12/2: Final Presentations (in class)
12/9: Final Paper due

3 Recommended textbooks

To get us up to speed, we will work through Adger (2003) in combination with original readings. When we have developed a solid grounding in contemporary syntax, we will look at some more advanced areas. For the purposes of this class, the following textbooks are particularly helpful:


4 Blackboard

The course readings and homework assignments will be posted on the course Blackboard page.

5 The class e-mail list

I will send important announcements via e-mail. If you are registered for the class, you should be on the email list. Keep in mind that all emails will be sent to your USC email account. Make sure to check this account regularly.

6 Tentative schedule

References are provided at the end of the syllabus. Reading should be done before class (excluding week 1, of course).

1. **Introduction** (8/25)
   - **Obligatory:**
     Adger (2003: ch. 1–2)
     Chomsky (1965: ch. 1)
   - **Recommended:**
     Matthewson (2004)

2. **Phrase structure** (9/1)
   - **Obligatory:**
     Adger (2003: ch. 3)
     Adger (2003: 104–122)
   - **Recommended:**
     Stowell (1981: ch. 2)
     Chomsky (1995)

3. **VP shells** (9/8)
   - **Obligatory:**
     Adger (2003: 122–149)
4. More on VP shells (9/15)
   • Obligatory:
     Kratzer (1996)
   • Recommended:
     Ramchand (2008)
     Folli and Harley (2005)

5. TPs and head movement (9/22)
   • Obligatory:
     Adger (2003: ch. 5)
   • Recommended:
     Roberts (2003)

6. Head movement and word order (9/29)
   • Obligatory:
     Pollock (1989)

7. Subjects and objects (10/6)
   • Obligatory:
     Adger (2003: ch. 6)
   • Recommended:
     Johnson (1991)
     Baker, Johnson, and Roberts (1989)
     Bobaljik and Jonas (1996)
     McCloskey (1997)

8. No Class - Fall Break (10/13)
9. Hierarchies (10/20)
   • Obligatory:
     Ramchand and Svenonius (2014)
     Cinque and Rizzi (2015)
   • Recommended:
     Cinque (1999)
     Cinque (2004)

10. DP structure (10/27)
    • Obligatory:
      Adger (2003: ch. 7)
    • Recommended:
      Longobardi (1994)
      Ritter (1995)
      Boškovic (2008)

11. Case/Agreement (11/3)
    • Obligatory:
      Preminger (2011: ch. 2) Hornstein et al. (2005: ch. 4)
      Deal (2022)
    • Recommended:
      Deal (2015)
      Woolford (1997)
      Legate (2008: sect. 1+2)

12. CPs, control, and raising (11/10)
    • Obligatory:
      Adger (2003: ch. 8)
      Landau (2013: ch. 1+3)
    • Recommended:
      Zaenen, Maling, and Thráinsson (1985)
      Polinsky and Potsdam (2002)

13. Wh-movement and locality (11/17)
    • Obligatory:
      Adger (2003: ch. 9+10)
14. **No Class - Thanksgiving** (11/24)

15. **Final Presentations** (12/1)

7  **Academic conduct**

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. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* ([https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions](https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions)). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, [http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct).

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* ([http://equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu)) or to the *Department of Public Safety* ([http://adminopsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety](http://adminopsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety)). This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The *Center for Women and Men* ([http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/](http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/)) provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage ([http://sarc.usc.edu](http://sarc.usc.edu)) describes reporting options and other resources.

8  **Students with disabilities**

If you have a disability that requires special arrangements (e.g., note- and/or test-taking), please register with USC’s *Office of Disability Services and Programs*. Every effort will be made to accommodate those with registered disabilities.

**References**


