

Syllabus: LING 4202

Syntax 2

University of Minnesota
Fall 2017

Course

LING 4202 Syntax 2

Monday and Wednesday, 11:15 AM – 12:30 PM

Wulling Hall 220

<http://www.dustinalfonso.net/teaching/2017usyntax2>

Instructor

Dustin Alfonso Chacón

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Office hours: Wednesday 1:00 – 3:00

Please let me know in advance if you plan on coming to office hours Elliott Hall S313

Course description

This course is the second course in the undergrad-level Syntax sequence. In this course, we will elaborate on the model of grammar developed in Syntax 1, known as Government and Binding. We will compare this with the modern version of generative grammar, the Minimalist Program. Topics that we will cover include phrase structure, Case and theta roles, movement, and agreement.

Workload and grade calculation

- Homeworks 40%
- Journals 20%
- Final Paper 40%:

- Final Draft 25%
- Proposal 5%
- Presentation 10%

Your **letter grade** for the class will be assigned on the following scale.

A	93–100%	B	83–87%	C	73–77%	D	60–65%
A–	90–93%	B–	80–83%	C–	70–73%	F	0–60%
B+	87–90%	C+	77–80%	D+	65–70%		

Policies and other remarks

Final paper. At the end of the semester you’ll be asked to write a final paper examining one of the issues that we addressed in class. This paper should be 8–10 pages. You may either critically review the literature on some phenomenon in Minimalist syntax, investigate the syntax of some phenomenon in a language that you know using the Minimalist framework, or compare and contrast a GB and Minimalist analysis of some phenomenon.

I will ask that you turn in a proposal on days specified in the schedule. The proposal due date is to force you to have started investigating some topic earlier in the semester, and the rough draft is intended as a way for me to give you feedback. I will also give you feedback on your writing style, formatting conventions, etc., in addition to the argument. By this point, you should be developing a “linguistics” writing style – numbered sections, properly formatted examples, concise introduction and conclusions, foreshadowed conclusions, etc. I will give a handout on recommendations for writing style, and provide a rubric for how I will grade the final papers in due time.

Presentation. At the end of the semester, you will be asked to provide a presentation on your final paper. This should be approximately 15 minutes, plus 5 minutes for questions. You will be graded on conciseness, preciseness, and organization. You should also have a handout (preferred) or slides to accompany your talk. It’s best to think of this as a “mini-conference”, i.e., you should pitch your talk to an audience of professionals in syntax, but not necessarily presuppose fine-grained knowledge of the particular phenomenon or language under investigation. For instance, if you want to give an analysis of control structures in Assamese, you don’t need to remind us what control is, but you should discuss the differences between the PRO theory of control and the movement theory of control, and tell us a bit about the relevant Assamese facts before providing your analysis.

Participation. Participation and attendance are crucial. Although there is no participation grade or attendance grade, much of the material is not based on any textbook or any resource outside of class. For that reason, the lectures and the handouts are the definitive authority on the class material. Additionally, I expect that students come to class prepared to discuss the readings in detail, when readings are assigned. Minimalist analyses sometimes rely a great deal on abstract reasoning, and for that reason it’s crucial to see an analysis presented multiple times before it makes sense. I will post the handouts on the course website in case you miss a class, but it is your responsibility to understand it. If you need something clarified, your first course of action is to e-mail me, and your second course of action is to come to office hours.

Homework. There will be four homeworks in this class. You will have two weeks to complete each homework. Each homework will introduce a technical concept that we will then discuss in class. For that reason, it is imperative that you complete the homeworks on time. My official late policy is that you will lose a letter grade per day, i.e., if your homework is late but turned in on the same day, you will receive a B. If your homework is turned in the next day, then you will receive a C, etc. My unofficial late policy is **don't turn in homeworks late**. You won't win any favors by turning in something late. I will try to make the homeworks available before they are assigned, if you would prefer to get a head start on them.

Drawing Trees. At this stage, I expect that homeworks are turned in on-line in PDF format through e-mail. That means you will need to draw your trees electronically somehow. There are countless ways of doing this, and they depend on your word processor/document formatting package. Personally, I highly suggest that you learn to use L^AT_EX, as this comes with many tools (and accessible tutorials) for tree-drawing, but also tableaux drawing, example formatting, IPA, logic characters, etc. Googling “Latex for Linguists” will give you many options, and it's definitely a skill that students in Linguistics should eventually become used to. Personally, I use the forest package for tree-drawing and the linguex package for example formatting. I can provide the template code that I use for formatting documents with examples if you would like.

Journal. You will be asked to write two journal entries. You will be asked to find and read a paper on that topic that we did not assign in class, and write a 1–2 page summary of their findings or argument. This is intended to get you a reading primary literature. The first journal entry will be due around midterm time, on the same date as the final paper proposal. The second journal will be due during the 13th week of classes. A recommended strategy would be to find two papers that argue against one another, and design a final paper around this debate.

I highly recommend finding papers to write journal entries about from the following publications: *Linguistic Inquiry*, *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*, *Syntax*, *Glossa*, *Lingua*, and *Linguistics*. Additionally, there are some language group-specific journals that may be worthwhile. For instance, in South Asian Linguistics, the *Journal of South Asian Languages* has some quality publications. If you need recommendations, e-mail me.

Textbooks. There is no official textbook for this course. The first unit of the class will draw heavily from mainstream Government & Binding, the second unit of the class will draw heavily from early-to-mid Minimalism, and the third unit will focus on applying Minimalist ideas. Liliane Haegeman's 1994 textbook *Introduction to Government and Binding Theory* is the definitive GB textbook and may be a useful reference for the first half of the semester, and Norbert Hornstein, Kleantes Grohmann, and Jairo Nunes' (HGN) 2006 textbook *Understanding Minimalism* is the definitive early-to-mid Minimalism textbook. This course will draw heavily from HGN, so I recommend that you pick up a copy. If you expect to continue studying syntax, I **highly recommend** reading these books. Haegeman, HGN, and Noam Chomsky's (1995) *The Minimalist Program* are available in the lounge in Elliott Hall, but these three books are also available on Amazon. Additional class readings will be provided on a week-by-week basis.

Tentative Schedule:

This schedule is tentative.

Wk	Date	Topics	Readings	Notes
1	09/06	Intro;/ GB vs. Minimalism	Lasnik (2002)	
2	09/11	X' Theory	Carnie (2010) Ch. 2	
3	09/18	Case & Theta Theory	Haegeman (1994), Ch. 3 pgs 153–173 & 180–186	
4	09/25	GB vs. Minimalism	HGN (2006) Ch. 2	HW1 Due
5	10/02	The vP Hypothesis	Harley (2010)	
6	10/09	Merge	HGN (2006) Ch. 6	
7	10/16	Merge and Move	HGN (2006) Ch. 9.1–9.3	HW2 & Journal 1 Due
8	10/23	Islands	Boeckx (2012) Ch. 2	
9	10/30	Spell-Out and Phase Theory	Citko (2014)	Ch. 2 HW3 Due
10	11/06	Covert Movement	HGN (2006) 9.4; Pesetsky (2001) Ch. 1	
11	11/13	Control	Hornstein (1999)	HW4 & Proposal Due
12	11/20	(Spillover Region/Thanksgiving)		
13	11/27	(Spillover Region)		Journal 2 Due
14	12/04	Presentations		
15	12/11	Presentations		Paper Due

Bibliography

Boeckx, Cedric. 2012. *Syntactic Islands*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Carnie, Andrew. 2010. *Constituent Structure*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Citko, Barbara. 2014. *Phase Theory: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Haegeman, Liliane. 1994. *Introduction to Government and Binding Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Harley, Heidi. 2010. A Minimalist Approach to Argument Structure. In C. Boeckx (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Linguistic Minimalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hornstein, Norbert. 1999. Movement and Control. *Linguistic Inquiry* 30(1), 69–96.

Hornstein, Norbert, Kleanthes Grohmann, & Jairo Nunes. 2006. *Understanding Minimalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lasnik, Howard. 2002. The minimalist program in syntax. *TRENDS in Cognitive Science* 6(1), 432–437.

Pesetsky, David. 2000. *Phrasal Movement and Its Kin*. Cambridge: MIT Press