

Syllabus: LING 8210

Introduction to Syntactic Processing

University of Minnesota
Spring 2018

Course

LING 5900/8900 Introduction to Syntactic Processing

Monday, 1:00 PM – 2:15 PM

Elliott S225

<http://www.dustinalfonso.net/teaching/2018gmovement>

Instructor

Dustin Alfonso Chacón

homepage: <http://www.dustinalfonso.net/teaching/2018gmovement>

dustin@umn.edu

Office hours: Wednesday 2:30 – 4:30

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

Course description

This is the webpage for LING 5900 01/8900 01, Constraints on Movement, for Fall 2018. Here's where you'll find the schedule, readings, and slides.

One of the hallmark properties of human language is displacement, or situations in which a word or phrase is interpreted in one position but surfaces in another, (1). Although displacement is permitted from many constructions (2), there are also conditions on displacement, i.e., (3) is unacceptable.

- 1.) Who did you see *t* at the police station?
- 2.) Who did you see Dale with *t* at the police station?
- 3.) *Who did you see Dale and *t* at the police station?

In this class, we will examine modern approaches to constraints on movement. Topics will include the nature of island effects, phase theory, resumption, and overt/covert asymmetries. We will also examine semantic/pragmatic approaches, and considerations from psycholinguistics and language acquisition.

Workload and grade calculation

- Participation 10%
- Journals 30%:
- Final Paper 60%:
 - Final Draft 25%
 - Proposal 5%
 - Outline 5%
 - First Draft 10%
 - Presentation 15%

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 proposing an experiment that investigates some aspect of constraints on movement. This paper should be 12–15 pages for students enrolled in 8900, and 8–10 pages students enrolled in 5900. Your paper should include a short literature review, and then either a critical analysis of the literature, a proposed experiment, a syntactic/semantic analysis of island phenomena, or some similar project.

There will be a number of milestones throughout the semester for the final paper, including a proposal (1-2 pages maximum), an outline (1-3 pages maximum), a first draft, and a presentation (15-20 minutes). Both of these are a chance for you to get feedback to incorporate into the final paper, and to focus on the writing process.

Presentation. At the end of the semester, you will be asked to provide a presentation on your final paper. This should be approximately 15-20 minutes, plus 5-10 minutes for questions. You will be graded on conciseness, preciseness, and organization. You should also have a handout 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 the relevant domains (syntax/semantics, language acquisition, or psycholinguistics), but not necessarily presuppose fine-grained knowledge of the particular phenomenon or language under investigation.

Participation. Participation and attendance are crucial. I will make an effort to upload the slides to the course website. However, much of the learning process will center around discussing and critically analyzing the results of studies in-class. 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.

Furthermore, I will expect each student to present on papers in-class. For students enrolled in 8900, I expect that you present in at least different “units” (syntax, semantics/pragmatics, processing, language acquisition). For students enrolled in 5900, I expect that you present in at least two different “units”.

Papers and Software. 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 \LaTeX , 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. Students enrolled in 8900 will be expected to write 3 journal entries (10% each), and students enrolled in 5900 will be expected to write 2 journal entries (15% each). You will be asked to find and read a paper on a 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. A recommended strategy would be to find two papers that argue against one another, and design a final paper around this debate. You may begin this process at any time in the semester, but there are due dates assigned for the three journal entries, to ensure that this work isn’t procrastinated until the end of the semester.

Textbooks. There is no official textbook for this course.

Tentative Schedule:

This schedule is tentative.

Wk	Topics	Readings	Notes
1	Introduction		
2	Syntax Review	Chomsky (1977)	
3	Spell-Out and Islands	Uriagereka (1999); Fox & Lasnik (2004)	
4	Differences in Subjacency	Rudin (1988); Sprouse <i>et al</i> 2016	
5	Covert Movement	Pesetsky (2000); Cheng (2009)	Journal 1 Due
6	Information Structure	Erteschik-Shir & Lappin 1979; Ambridge & Goldberg 2008	
7	Semantic Exceptions	Truswell (2007); Kehler (1996)	Proposal Due
8	Intervention Effects	Beck (2006); Kotek (2017)	
9	Working Memory and Islands	Hofmeister & Sag (2010); Sprouse <i>et al</i> (2012)	
10	Resumption and Complexity	Alexopoulou & Keller (2007); Chacón & Phillips (2018)	Journal 2 & Outline Due
11	Using Islands in Processing	Phillips (2006); Yoshida <i>et al</i> (2014)	
12	Islands and Learnability	Pearl & Sprouse (2013); Phillips (2013)	
13	Subjacency in Children	de Villiers <i>et al</i> (2008); Sugisaki (2012)	First Draft Due
14	Parameter Setting and the ECP	Chacón <i>et al</i> (2018)	Journal 3 Due
15	Presentations		
Finals			Final Paper Due

Bibliography

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