

# Syntax 3

LING 671 — Fall 2015  
Tuesdays 2:25–5:25, Linguistics 117

## Instructor

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|---------------------|------------------------|
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| <i>office hours</i> | Thursdays, 1:00–2:30   |

## Content and objectives of the course

This course is an introduction to generative syntax for graduate students. The goal of the class is to provide a foundation in core topics and developments in syntactic theory. Through readings, discussion, presentation, and written assignments, you will develop skills in data analysis, theory formulation, and evaluation of arguments. A main objective of this class is to provide you with the tools to engage critically with primary syntactic literature and debates.

## Requirements and evaluation

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| in-class participation & article presentation | 40% |
| short assignments (×10, 5% each)              | 50% |
| final presentation                            | 10% |

## In-class participation and readings

In-class participation is an essential component of this course. Each week you will have roughly two article-length required readings. We are more-or-less following the organization of Johnson's (2004) textbook manuscript (on MyCourses), and I've listed the chapters in parentheses—J.1, J.2...—in case you would like to use this as a reference to supplement class discussion and other readings. All readings will be posted on the MyCourses site, and required readings should be completed before coming to class. Optional/background readings are truly optional. All students are expected to come prepared to contribute to class discussion. Your short assignments (below), are in part designed to prepare you for class discussion.

## Article presentation

Each student will be responsible for teaching a topic connected with one of the articles assigned for that class. Presenters will meet with me before the class to discuss the presentation, which should include: a brief summary of the background, goals, and motivation for the paper; connection to any relevant material already discussed in class; presentation of the proposal and critical discussion of the arguments; discussion of the predictions made by the analysis, and any questions that arise.

## Short assignments

Rather than a final paper, there will be regular short assignments over the course of the semester, roughly 1–3 pgs. each. You are encouraged to discuss assignments with classmates, but you must write up assignments on your own. More information will be provided in class.

All assignments should be submitted **to MyCourses by 5pm on the Monday before class** in PDF format. You have one 24-hour late pass to use at any point in the semester on any of the short assignments. Other assignments will not be accepted for credit without a medical note, but you are encouraged to turn them in for feedback nonetheless.

These short assignments will be graded on the 4-point scale below. Though this scale is coarse-grained, it has a few advantages: (1) it allows me to get your work back to you quickly; (2) the goal is that you will focus on the written feedback, rather than on a break-down of individual point deductions; (3) more fine-grained distinctions emerge as the result of averaging a number of assignments.

|    |       |                                       |                              |
|----|-------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
|    | (0/3) | assignment not done                   |                              |
| ✓– | (1/3) | assignment does not meet expectations | (come see me, we'll discuss) |
| ✓  | (2/3) | assignment meets expectations         | (good)                       |
| ✓+ | (3/3) | assignment exceeds expectations       | (excellent!)                 |

## Final presentation

For one of your last *Short Assignments* you will be asked to write a proposal for a squib—a squib which you do not have to write (but which I will not forbid you from writing!). For your final presentation, you will present on this topic.

In linguistics the term “squib” refers to a short paper that raises an interesting problem but may or may not actually solve it. Squibs go beyond just summarizing to make some original contribution. This could take the form of a critical review, discussion of a puzzle, comparison of differing account of the same empirical phenomenon, etc.

Your task for your final presentation is to identify and discuss the puzzle or problem you have identified (for the squib that you do not necessarily have to write). Your presentation should be clearly organized, connected to material we have covered in the course, and it should be made clear which contributions are original.

## Regulations

### Academic integrity

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the code of student conduct and disciplinary procedures (see [www.mcgill.ca/integrity](http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity) for more information).

If you are considering working on related topics for term papers in different courses, it is very important that you discuss this with all instructors involved in order to get approval.

### Right to submit in French

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

## Timeline

| week  | topic   | reading (subject to slight modification)  | due                 |
|-------|---|---|---------------------|
| 9/8   | What are we doing?<br>(J.1)                                 | □ - Chomsky (1965) – <i>Aspects</i> ch. 1 & ch. 2.3.3–2.3.4<br>□ - Chomsky and Lasnik (1993) – <i>P&amp;P</i> §1–2  |                     |
| 9/15  | Phrase structure;<br>Selection<br>(J.2)                     | □ - Grimshaw (1979) – <i>Complement selection</i><br>□ - Stowell (1983) – <i>Subjects across categories</i><br>☆ - Fukui (2001) – <i>Phrase Structure</i><br>☆ - Baker (1997) – <i>θ-roles and syntactic structure</i>              | ✍1                  |
| 9/22  | Expletives, EPP;<br>Case Theory;<br>Passives<br>(J.3.1–3.3) | □ - Bobaljik and Wurmbrand (2008) – <i>Case</i><br>□ - Chomsky (1982) – <i>GB</i> , pgs. 7–10<br>□ - Baker et al. (1989) – <i>Passive arguments raised</i><br>☆ - Baltin (2001) – <i>A-movements</i>                                | ✍2                  |
| 9/29  | Control<br>(J.3.4)  | □ - Polinsky and Potsdam (2002) – <i>Backwards control</i><br>□ - Landau (2006) – <i>Severing PRO from Case</i><br>☆ - Hornstein (1999) – <i>Movement and control</i><br>☆ - Landau (2003) – <i>Movement out of control</i>         | ✍3                  |
| 10/6  | Internal subjects;<br>Unaccusativity<br>(J.3.5–3.7)         | □ - Levin and Rappaport-Hovav (1995), pg. 34–81<br>□ - Sportiche (1988) – <i>Floating quantifiers</i><br>☆ - Perlmutter (1978) – <i>Unaccusative hypothesis</i><br>☆ - Koopman and Sportiche (1991) – <i>The position of subjs.</i> | ✍4                  |
| 10/13 | Wh-movement;<br>Superiority;<br>Islands                     | □ - Pesetsky (2000) – <i>Phrasal movement</i> , chs. 1–2<br>□ - Chomsky (1995) – <i>MP</i> , 225–252<br>□ - McCloskey (2002) – <i>Successive cyclicity</i><br>☆ - Chomsky (1986) – <i>Barriers</i> , pgs. 1–16                      | ✍5                  |
| 10/20 | Verb movement<br>(J.4)                                      | □ - Pollock (1989) – <i>Verb movement</i><br>□ - Matushansky (2006) – <i>Head movement in ling. theory</i><br>☆ - Roberts (2001) – <i>Head movement</i>   | ✍6                  |
| 10/27 | —— no class* ——   | —— <i>Jessica in TX</i> ——  |                     |
| 11/3  | DPs<br>(J.5)  | □ - Bernstein (2001) – <i>DP Hypothesis</i><br>□ - Ritter (1988) – <i>Construct State</i><br>☆ - Abney (1987) – <i>The English NP</i>   | ✍7 (NELS!)          |
| 11/10 | Binding;<br>Double objects<br>(J.6)                         | □ - Larson (1988) – <i>VP shells</i><br>□ - Aoun and Li (1989) – <i>Scope</i><br>☆ - Harley (2002) – <i>Possession and double objects</i><br>☆ - Haegeman (2004) – ch. 4  | ✍8                  |
| 11/17 | Subjects and $v^0$<br>(J.7)                                 | □ - McCloskey (1997) – <i>Subjecthood and subject properties</i><br>□ - Harley (2013) – <i>External arguments</i><br>☆ - Kratzer (1996) – <i>Severing the ext. argument</i>   | ✍9 (squib proposal) |
| 11/24 | Linearization;<br>Bare Phrase Structure<br>(J.8)            | □ - Kayne (1994) – <i>Antisymmetry</i> , pgs. 3–32<br>□ - Fox and Pesetsky (2005) – <i>Cyclic linearization</i><br>☆ - Johnson (1997) – <i>Review of Antisymmetry</i>   | ✍10                 |
| 12/1  | Cyclicity;<br>Phases  | □ - Richards (1999) – <i>Featural cyclicity</i><br>□ - van Urk and Richards (2015) – <i>Successive cyclicity</i><br>☆ - Chomsky (2000, 2001) – <i>MI, DbP</i>   |                     |
| *TBA  | <i>Class presentations</i>                                  |   |                     |

□ – required; ☆ – character building/extra background (optional); ✍ – writing assignment due

## Readings

- Abney, Steven P. 1987. The English noun-phrase in its sentential aspect. Doctoral dissertation, MIT, Cambridge, MA.
- Aoun, Joseph, and Audrey Yen-Hui Li. 1989. Scope and constituency. *Linguistic Inquiry* 20:141–172.
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- Bernstein, Judy. 2001. The DP hypothesis: Identifying clausal properties in the nominal domain. In *The Handbook of Contemporary Syntactic Theory*, ed. Mark Baltin and Chris Collins, 536–561. Blackwell.
- Bobaljik, Jonathan David, and Susi Wurmbrand. 2008. Case in GB/Minimalism. In *Oxford Handbook of Case*, ed. Andrej Malchukov and Andrew Spencer, 44–58. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chomsky, Noam. 1965. *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
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- Grimshaw, Jane. 1979. Complement Selection and the Lexicon. *Linguistic Inquiry* 10:279–326.
- Haegeman, Liliane. 2004. DP-Periphery and Clausal Periphery: Possessor Doubling in West Flemish. In *Peripheries: Syntactic edges and their effects*, ed. David Adger, Cecile de Cat, and George Tsoulas, 211–240. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Harley, Heidi. 2002. Possession and the double object construction. *Linguistic Variation* 2.
- Harley, Heidi. 2013. External arguments and the mirror principle: On the distinctness of voice and v. *Lingua* 125:34–57.
- Hornstein, Norbert. 1999. Movement and control. *Linguistic Inquiry* 69–96.
- Johnson, Kyle. 1997. A review of The Antisymmetry of Syntax. *Lingua* 102:21–53.
- Kayne, Richard S. 1994. *The antisymmetry of syntax*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Koopman, Hilda J., and Dominique Sportiche. 1991. The position of subjects. *Lingua* 85:211–258.
- Kratzer, Angelika. 1996. Severing the external argument from its verb. In *Phrase Structure and the Lexicon*, ed. Johan Rooryck and Laurie Zaring, 109–137. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Landau, Idan. 2003. Movement out of control. *Linguistic Inquiry* 34:471–498.
- Landau, Idan. 2006. Severing the Distribution of PRO from Case. *Syntax* 9:153–170.
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