

## LIN 4500 Introduction to Syntax

T 2-3/Th 3 (synchronous)

### ***Instructor***

Eric Potsdam

office: 4121 Turlington Hall

office phone: 294-7456

office hours: T periods 4 - 5, W periods 5 - 6, and by appointment

e-mail: [potsdam@ufl.edu](mailto:potsdam@ufl.edu)

### ***Course Description***

This course is an introduction to transformational syntactic theory, developed through the study of central aspects of English grammar. Using homework problems and in-class exercises, we will construct a model of (a fragment of) English. Coursework emphasizes problem solving, syntactic argumentation, and the ability to construct and work with a formal system.

### ***Objectives***

- gain exposure to some syntactic phenomena of English
- obtain basic control of current syntactic theory
- learn to construct and work with a formal linguistics system
- develop writing and syntactic argumentation skills

### ***Prerequisites***

The prerequisites for this class are Introduction to Linguistics (LIN 3010) and, ideally, an introductory course on morphosyntax (LIN 3460 Structure of Human Language) or consent of the instructor. Please talk to me if you have not taken the prerequisites or their equivalents. We will touch on basic concepts from LIN 3460 rather quickly in the beginning of the semester. The following textbook is recommended for reviewing these concepts (specifically, chapters 1 through 5):

Tallerman, Maggie. 2015. *Understanding Syntax*, 4th edition. London: Hodder Arnold.

### ***Course Materials***

There is no textbook for the course. All course materials will be available on e-Learning in Canvas, <https://lss.at.ufl.edu>, including a syllabus, homeworks, handouts, lecture slides, readings, and a detailed schedule.

### ***Requirements***

- |                      |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| • orientation        | 1%  |
| • homework           | 50% |
| • quizzes            | 10% |
| • exam 1 – in class  | 13% |
| • exam 2 – in class  | 13% |
| • exam 3 – take home | 13% |

*Orientation.* Online classes can feel impersonal if we never get to meet in face-to-face contexts. Sometime during the first two weeks of the semester (August 31 – September 11), please arrange to meet with me via Zoom or physically-distanced on campus. I want to find out a little bit about each of you and you should feel free to ask me questions as well.

*Homework assignments.* The primary vehicle for the course material is the homework assignments. There will be one or two each week. Approximately 20 are scheduled throughout the semester. You must turn in 10 homeworks. The lowest score will be dropped. Please space out the assignments that you do over the entire semester, Do not wait until the end of the semester to do all your assignments and do not do them all at the beginning of the semester in hopes of not having any work at the end of the term.

You are encouraged to *work on the homework problems with other members of this class only*. I encourage you to use the Discussions tool or Mail on Canvas to facilitate discussions. You must write up your solutions entirely on your own, without help, in accordance with the University of Florida Honor Code and the academic honesty guidelines. If you discuss the material with other members of the class, on your paper, indicate who you worked with. If you make specific use of a classmate's important idea, give them explicit credit for it in your solution. This is simply good academic practice and will not affect your grade.

Homeworks will be discussed during the class on which they are due. Late homeworks are thus of limited value. You may redo one homework during the semester if the grade is below C. The final grade on the homework will be the average of the two homeworks. Otherwise, late homework will not be accepted. Instead, plan on completing one of the other homeworks. Homeworks must be submitted electronically via Canvas by the beginning of the class in which they will be discussed.

I cannot prevent you from going to the internet to look for help in solving the homeworks. I discourage you from doing this however, for many reasons. The class will be more enjoyable and profitable if you solve the problems yourself and/or with your peers. You will also understand the material better if you work through it yourself rather than simply lifting it from another source. You are unlikely to find the "answer" online anyway, and will just waste precious time that you could have devoted to thinking about the material. A solution from the internet may not use a version of the theory that we have developed, in which case it will be evident if you have spirited it from another source. A "correct" solution that does not also show understanding will generally not be graded highly. If you do use any outside references whatsoever, even if it is only a Wikipedia page, standard academic practice requires that you cite them.

*Quizzes.* Each homework has a quiz associated with it. After you have addressed a homework, go to the Quizzes tool in Canvas and complete the associated quiz. It will be numbered the same as the homework. The quiz will consist of brief questions and must be completed prior to the start of class in which the homework is due. The goal of the quizzes is to check i) that you understand basic concepts and terminology and ii) that you have thought about the homework, even if you are not turning it in. You can retake a quiz as many times as you wish.

There will be *three exams*: two in-class exams and a take-home exam. The first in-class exam will be Tuesday, October 20. The second in-class exam will be on Tuesday, December 8, the last day of the class. Both in-class exams will take approximately one class period. The third exam is a take-home exam that is due via Canvas by Tuesday, December 15 at 5pm, although you may turn it in earlier.

*Attendance and participation* are essential. This is a class on *doing* syntax, not on reading about syntax. As stated above, there is no textbook; the course material comes from the class and the homework. Every class will build on the previous one, so being present, awake, and engaged in class is a vital part of succeeding. Thus, attendance and participation are important learning tools in the course, even though they are not an explicit part of your grade. As a reminder, even if you do not turn in an assignment, you are responsible for the related material and for working through the problem. This will allow you to more fully follow and participate in the class discussions.

While this course is delivered online, the course meets synchronously on Tuesday, periods 2 and 3, and on Thursday, period 3. You are expected to be in class during those times. Additionally, please keep in mind that all times listed on this syllabus and announced in class are Eastern Time (i.e., Gainesville time). If you are not located in the Eastern US time zone, you should adjust times for all synchronous activities and due dates accordingly.

As a general rule, class sessions will not be recorded, and you will not have the ability to record the class without the instructor's permission. Should you need to miss a class, you can get notes from other students and use the course materials related to that day.

### **Grading**

Homeworks will be graded using the letter scale below. The corresponding numerical score on a one hundred point scale is given. The evaluation criteria for homeworks is discussed on the Style Guide on Canvas.

A	96	excellent	C+	78	D	65	marginal work
A-	92		C	75	D-	62	satisfactory
B+	88		C-	72	E	30	unsatisfactory
B	85	good	D+	68		0	missing work
B-	82						

The course grading scale is as follows:

A	94 - 100	B	84 – 86.9	C	74 – 76.9	D	64 – 66.9
A-	90 – 93.9	B-	80 – 83.9	C-	70 – 73.9	D-	61 – 63.9
B+	87 – 89.9	C+	77 – 79.9	D+	67 – 69.9	E	< 61

Further information about UF's grading policies and the calculation of grade point averages is at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>.

### **Miscellaneous**

*Communication.* Most of our one-on-one communication will occur via Canvas mail. I expect that you are reading your email at least once per day.

*Missed/Late Work and Absences.* You should assume that late work will not be accepted. If you know that you cannot turn in a particular homework in time, a good strategy would be to pick another homework to turn in. All requests for exceptions due to illness, religious obligations, unexpected emergencies, or other extenuating circumstances must be made before the exam date or homework due date if at all possible. Absences are considered excused only after you have provided documentation of a conflict that is explicitly covered in the UF Attendance Policy (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>). If you are unable to

provide documentation, you may be able to have your absence excused by the Dean of Students Office in extenuating circumstances. All other absences are considered unexcused. Any unexcused absence from an exam will result in a zero.

*Academic honesty.* Academic misconduct, including but not limited to cheating and plagiarism, will not be tolerated. It may result in disciplinary action and an E for the course. The University has an Honor Code, which reads as follows: “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity”. You can read all about it at <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>. The bottom line is “On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” This includes relying on another student’s work from a previous instantiation of this course. Do not use others’ work in this class.

Copying or sharing any part of your homework assignments in any way, shape, or form is strictly prohibited. For computer work, this includes, but is not limited to, using the same file/document as someone else, using a modified file/document, or copying information between files/documents. No written work may be a joint effort in any way unless explicitly permitted and acknowledged.

*Computer Access.* The University requires that you have access to and on-going use of a computer. This should not be a tablet device or smartphone, but an actual desktop or laptop computer. To succeed in this course, you will also need a stable internet connection and appropriate space to take online exams. Minimum equipment specifications are available at: <https://it.ufl.edu/policies/student-computing-requirements/>.

*Netiquette.* Please be respectful of your classmates.

- Zoom in on time or a few minutes early if possible.
- Find a quiet indoor space with stable internet connection to attend class. The space should be conducive to work, including pair/group work. Make sure you are uninterrupted by other household members, including pets.
- When you are assigned to a breakout room, enable your webcam and microphone so that your partners may hear and see who they are working with.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Everyone sees what is behind you. Make sure the background is not distracting or something you would not want your classmates to see.
- Dress appropriately for class. Remember, everyone can see you.
- Follow the same rules of respectful interaction as you would in a face-to-face course. This is especially important in a remote situation, where multiple voices attempting to speak at once result in no one being heard.

*Accommodations for students with disabilities.* Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester.

*Evaluations.* Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they

receive, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via the evaluation system at <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at the public results website at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

*Campus resources.* The following health and wellness resources are available to students:

U Matter, We Care, [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), 392-1575

Counseling & Wellness Center, <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575

University Police Department, <http://www.police.ufl.edu>, 392-1111

Dean of Students office, <http://dso.ufl.edu>, 392-1261

Disability Resource Center, <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>, [DRCaccessUF@ufsa.ufl.edu](mailto:DRCaccessUF@ufsa.ufl.edu), 392-8565

Multicultural and Diversity Affairs, <https://multicultural.ufl.edu>, 294-7850

Office of Student Veteran Services, [vacounselor@ufl.edu](mailto:vacounselor@ufl.edu), <http://veterans.ufl.edu>, 294-2948

**Schedule**

The following is an initial estimate of the course schedule. Please see Canvas and class announcements for the most up-to-date schedule.

WEEK	DATE	CORE TOPICS	HW DUE/EXAMS	READINGS
1	Sept. 1	introduction		Carnie 2013 ch. 1, Myers 2009
	3			Carnie 2013 ch. 2
2	8	phrase structure		Carnie 2013 ch. 3
	10		HW 1	
3	15	constituency	HW 2	Radford 1988
	17		HW 3	
4	22	the lexicon	HW 4	
	24		HW 5	
5	29	X' theory		Cowper 1992
	Oct. 1		HW 6	
6	6		HW 7	
	8	clauses	HW 8	
7	13		HW 9	
	15		HW 10	
8	20	movement	in-class exam 1	
	22		HW 11	
9	27		HW 12	
	29		HW 13	Carnie 2013 ch. 5
10	Nov. 3		HW 14	
	5		HW 15	
11	10	word order	HW 16	
	12			
12	17		HW 17	
	19	infinitivals	HW 18	
13	24			
	26	no class		
14	Dec. 1		HW 19	
	3		HW 20	
15	8	closure	in-class exam 2	
	Dec. 15		take-home exam	due at 5pm

