

LIN331: Syntactic Theory


University of Toronto

Summer 2018

Instructor

Prof. Nicholas LaCara
Office: ss 4071
Hours: Wednesday 14:00 – 15:00
Email: nick.lacara@utoronto.ca

Location & Time

Room: Sidney Smith 2111
Days: Tuesday & Thursday
Time: 14:00 – 17:00
Website: [Quercus](#) 

Grader

Ilia Nicoll

1 Overview

This course is an introduction to the foundations and formal framework of current generative grammar, concentrating on Noam Chomsky's MINIMALIST PROGRAM. The course focuses on developments from previous forms of Principles and Parameters-based theories, highlighting the differences between Minimalist approaches to syntax and the previous mainstream theory, Government and Binding. We will look at several proposals and phenomena, including the elimination of D- and S-structure, Case assignment, movement, binding, and economy.

1.1 Course goals

The main goal of this course is to teach students Minimalist approaches to various syntactic phenomena. By the end of the course, students will be familiar with various proposals that have developed out of Minimalist inquiry. They should be able to articulate the differences between Minimalist analyses and their predecessors and devise basic hypotheses using Minimalist technology.

1.2 Expectations

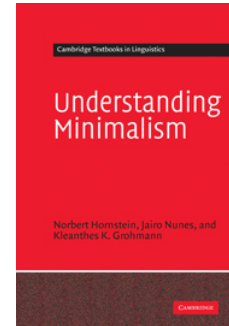
Coming in, I expect students to already have a firm grasp of basic syntactic concepts. From the beginning, the course will assume you have general knowledge about the structure of GB-style grammars (D-structure, s-structure, LF, and PF) and X'-structure; a basic understanding of A-movement and A'-movement; familiarity with control, raising, and ECM phenomena; and a basic understanding of how θ -roles and Case are assigned. The course will build on your knowledge of these phenomena, and we will be revising the theoretical assumptions that underpin their analyses.

2 Materials

All course materials other than the textbook will be made available on [Quercus](#) .

2.1 Textbook

The textbook for this course is *Understanding Minimalism* by Hornstein, Nunes, and Grohmann (2005). It is available from the UofT bookstore [☞](#) for \$72. The bulk of the course readings will come from this text; any additional optional readings will be made available on the Quercus [☞](#). Students may also find it useful to refer to a basic syntax textbook, such as Carnie's (2013) *Syntax: A Generative Introduction*. Particularly driven students may also be interested in Chomsky's (1995) *The Minimalist Program*. These two texts are totally optional.



3 Course requirements

3.1 Reading

You should expect to read about one chapter of the book per lecture. You should try to do as much of the reading as you can before the associated lecture (though given that this is a summer course, I understand you may find this difficult). The reading can be quite challenging and fairly lengthy, so don't worry if you cannot understand everything. Focus on the basic issues raised in each chapter. Keep track of the things you don't understand, and bring your questions to lecture!

3.2 Assignments

Assignments will be given out on an approximately weekly basis. They will be posted on Tuesday and they will be due the following Tuesday 30 minutes before the start of class (1:30 PM). They will be based on the current readings and lectures. They are intended to test your comprehension of material we have covered as well as your ability to extend concepts beyond the lectures and reading.

All assignments must be submitted electronically via Quercus as PDF documents (no .docx, .otf, Google docs, *etc.*). Submissions in any other format (hardcopy, submitted by email, uploaded in another file format, *etc.*) will not be accepted. You must type submissions. Some assignments will require you to include tree diagrams. I have uploaded a handout [Drawing Trees On a Computer ☞](#) on Quercus to help you with this.

3.2.1 Writing up assignments

You should do the associated reading as early as you can manage. Before writing up anything, you should first work through the questions, taking notes about potential answers; after this, write up a final version of the assignment based on your notes. This will help ensure that your work is clear and give you a chance to find any potential mistakes.

An important component of these assignments will be demonstrating how you arrived at your answers. *Make sure you answer every question you are asked, and do every task you are given.* Your answers will be evaluated based, in part, on how thorough they are; simply presenting the correct answer or tree diagram will not guarantee you good marks.

3.2.2 Working together

You are encouraged to work with others on assignments in this course. If you choose to do so, you must indicate who you worked with on each assignment (which you should do in a footnote on the first page). You must indicate if you worked alone

However, *each student must turn in their own work, written up in their own words*. You may not simply copy your work from another student, and you should not, under any circumstances, have somebody else's work *or notes* in front of you while you write up yours. This counts as [academic dishonesty](#). The easiest way to avoid this is to meet as a group to discuss the material, taking only very sketchy notes, and then write up the assignment after you have met.

3.2.3 Late work

We will often discuss assignments on the day they are due. This means that *no late work will be accepted without prior arrangements*. I understand that sometimes there are circumstances that are beyond your control; if an issue arises that prevents you from turning in your work on time, please come talk to me as soon as possible. Exceptions will be made for emergencies. Medical emergencies must be documented by an official UofT [Verification of Student Illness or Injury](#) form, submitted within one week of the original deadline, showing the student was ill at the time the assignment was due.

3.3 Final exam

There will be a final exam in the course, scheduled during the final exam period in August. Students are responsible for checking their exam schedule and reporting any conflicts. Do not make any travel plans before the schedule is published; travel conflicts are not accepted as a reason for missing an examination.

3.4 Participation

There is no formal attendance requirement in this course. However, all students are expected to contribute to class discussions and ask questions, and doing so will require you to attend regularly. If you must miss class, it is not necessary to notify me. However it is up to you to find out what you miss; please consult with our fellow students about what you missed.

4 Marks and evaluation

Marks in this course will be assigned following [the Department of Linguistics' grading policy](#). The Department of Linguistics follows the [University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy](#). Your overall mark for the course will be determined based on the following breakdown:

Requirement	%	Date(s) due
Participation	5%	Continuous
Assignments	60%	Weekly
Final exam	35%	TBA

5 Communication

You should feel free to communicate with me if you have any questions or concerns about the course. My email is listed on the first page, as are my office hours. If you cannot make my scheduled office hours, for whatever reason, we can schedule an appointment at a different time.

If you do email me, please include 'LIN 331' at the beginning of the subject line. Email is best used for administrative issues (*e.g.*, problems with Quercus, scheduling meetings). Questions about course content, readings, *etc.*, are better asked in class or during office hours. I will try to respond to emails within 24 to 48 hours. Do not email me your assignments.

6 Academic integrity

This course is governed by the University of Toronto's Code of Student Conduct and Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. Both of these can be accessed online via the site:

<http://www.utoronto.ca/academicintegrity/>

Suspected violations of these policies (including, but not limited to, plagiarism in submitted writing) will be reported to the Office of Student Academic Integrity.

7 Calendar

This is an outline of the course. The calendar is subject to change if necessary.

Wk.	Date	Lecture	Read	HW	Notes
1	Tu 03 July	Introduction	Ch. 1		
	Th 05 July	Architectural Issues	Ch. 2		Nick in Netherlands
2	Tu 10 July	Theta Domains	Ch. 3	HW1	9 July – Last day to enrol
	Th 12 July	Case Domains	Ch. 4		
3	Tu 17 July	Movement & minimality	Ch. 5	HW2	
	Th 19 July	Mid-semester consolidation	—		
4	Tu 24 July	Phrase structure	Ch. 6	HW3	
	Th 26 July	Linearization	Ch. 7		
5	Tu 31 July	Binding	Ch. 8	HW4	30 July – Last day to drop
	Th 02 Aug	Features	Ch. 9		
6	Tu 07 Aug	Economy	Ch. 10	HW5	
	Th 09 Aug	Catch- and wrap-up	—		

The final exam will be scheduled during the final exam period (16–22 August).

References

- Carnie, Andrew. 2013. *Syntax: A Generative Introduction*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 3 edition.
- Chomsky, Noam. 1995. *The Minimalist Program*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Hornstein, Norbert, Jairo Nunes, and Grohmann. 2005. *Understanding Minimalism*. Cambridge University Press.