

# Advanced Formal Syntax

Linguistics 5331

Spring 2020

M, W, 2:30-3:50PM, TH 110

## Instructors

Joey Sabbagh

Email: sabbagh@uta.edu

Office: Hammond Hall 126

Office Hours: Mon. 11AM-12PM (or by appointment)

Jeffrey Witzel

Email: jeffrey.witzel

Office: Hammond Hall 129

Office Hours: Tues. 2PM-3PM

## Course Description

This course is, on the one hand, a continuation of Linguistics 5330 (Formal Syntax). Building upon the basic theoretical framework introduced in Linguistics 5330, this course will focus on a set of topics that have been active areas of syntactic research for at least 50 years. Rather than focussing on developing explicit theoretical analyses of syntactic phenomenon, our focus will instead be on elucidating complex syntactic phenomenon that are important for the construction of syntactic theories, but which also inform and form the basis of work in psycholinguistics and sentence processing. The over-arching topic for this course is syntactic dependencies—i.e. dependencies that hold between two (or more) syntactic locations. We ask: (i) What types of syntactic dependencies are there?; (ii) What are the observable constraints on these dependencies?; (iii) Are these constraints grammatical and language-specific in nature, or are they explainable in terms of more general cognitive processes?

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the course, students will demonstrate understanding of some of the outstanding theoretical issues alive in current syntactic and psycholinguistic research, gain comfortability reading the literature, as well as be able to lead discussion of theoretical readings from the primary literature. Also, students will be demonstrate strengthened ability to carry out syntactic analysis.

## Course Requirements & Grade Basis

- **Discussion leading (30%):** In groups of two, students will lead discussion on an article from the reading list below. Each student should expect to be in a discussion group at least twice throughout the semester (=15% grade for each presentation). Students are expected to prepare a clear and accessible handout for their presentation, which is to include relevant facts from the articles.
- **Problem sets (50%):** There will be 4-5 problem sets throughout the semester, handed out towards the end of each module.
- **Contribution of discussion board (20%):** Each student is expected to post a brief question or set of questions relating to the readings that will be discussed in class. Question(s) should be posted 24 hours in advance of the date when the discussion will occur.

Students are expected to keep track of their performance throughout the semester and to seek guidance from available sources if their performance drops below satisfactory levels.

## Outline of Topics to be Covered and Reading Assignments

The topics covered in this semester are broken up into 4 modules. Each module is associated with a set of readings from the primary literature. Note that the readings listed below (discussion of which will be led by individual groups of 2) are subject to additions or subtractions as we go along. Additional optional readings will be added to our class website (Canvas) as well.

### Module 1: A-Bar Movement

Topic 1: Wh-Movement: Basic Properties and Diagnostics

Topic 2: Issues of Long-Distance Wh-Movement

- I. : The Successive-Cyclic Hypothesis.
- II. : Morphosyntactic Evidence for Successive-Cyclicity
- III : Psycholinguistic Evidence for Successive-Cyclicity.

*Readings:*

- Pesetsky, David. 2013. Phrasal Movement
- Gibson & Warren 2004. Reading-time evidence for intermediate linguistic structure in long-distance dependencies. *Syntax* 7:1.

- Marinis, Theodore, et. al. 2005. Gaps in second language sentence processing. *SSLA*, 27.
- Pliatskias, Christos, and T. Marinis. 2013. Processing empty categories in a second language: When naturalistic exposure fills the (intermediate) gap. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*. 16:1.

## **Module 2: Island Constraints**

Topic 3: Ross' Islands (a taxonomy)

- I. Subject, Complement, Adjunct Asymmetries.
- II. Brief Overview of Theoretical proposals.

Topic 4: Psycholinguistic Perspectives and Issues.

*Readings:*

- Phillips, Colin. 2012. On the nature of island constraints (I): Language processing and reductionist accounts. In J. Sprouse & N. Hornstein (eds), *Experimental syntax and island effects*. Cambridge University Press.
- Sprouse, Jon et. al. 2012. A test of the relation between working-memory capacity and syntactic island effects.
- Sprouse, Jon, et. al. 2013. Deriving competing predictions from grammatical approaches and reductionist approaches to island effects.
- Yoshida, Masaya, et. al. 2013. On the origin of islands. *Language and Cognitive Processes*.
- Wagers, Matthew and C. Philips. 2009. Multiple dependencies and the role of the grammar in real time processing. *Journal of Linguistics*, 45.

## **Module 3: Reconstruction**

Topic 5: Review of the Facts.

Topic 6: Psycholinguistic Perspective and Issues.

Topic 7: "Lebeaux-effects" and Argument/Adjunct distinctions.

*Readings:*

- Omaki, Akira. 2019. Rebels without a clause: Processing reflexives in fronted wh-predicates. *Journal of Memory of Cognition*.

## **Module 4: Ellipsis**

### **Module 4a: VP-Ellipsis**

Topic 8: Intro to VP-Ellipsis

Topic 9: Constraints on Ellipsis

Topic 10: Psycholinguistic Perspectives and Issues

#### *Readings:*

- Merchant, Jason. Ellipsis: A survey of analytical approaches. Ms. University of Chicago.
- Phillips, Colin, and D. Parker. 2014. The Psycholinguistic of ellipsis. *Lingua* 151.
- Kim, Christina and J. Runner. 2018. The division of labor in explanation of verb phrase ellipsis. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 41.

### **Module 4b: Sluicing**

Topic 11: Intro to Sluicing

Topic 12: Island Repair

Topic 13: Psycholinguistic Perspectives and Issues

#### *Readings:*

- Merchant, Jason. *The syntax of silence*. (Selected chapter)
- Yoshida, Masaya, et. al. 2013. Predictive processing of syntactic structure: Sluicing and ellipsis in real time sentence processing. *Language and Cognitive Processes*, 28:3.

## **University Policies**

**Drop Policy:** Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University

may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://wwweb.uta.edu/aaofaof/>).

**Disability Accommodations:** UT Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide “reasonable accommodations” to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification in the form of a letter certified by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting: The Office for Students with Disabilities, (OSD) [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or calling 817-272-3364. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability).

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) [www.uta.edu/caps/](http://www.uta.edu/caps/) or calling 817-272-3671 is also available to all students to help increase their understanding of personal issues, address mental and behavioral health problems and make positive changes in their lives.

**Non-Discrimination Policy:** The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit [uta.edu/eos](http://uta.edu/eos).

**Title IX:** The University of Texas at Arlington (“University”) is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination based on sex in accordance with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment; and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE Act). Sexual misconduct is a form of sex discrimination and will not be tolerated. For information regarding Title IX, visit [www.uta.edu/titleIX](http://www.uta.edu/titleIX) or contact Ms. Jean Hood, Vice President and Title IX Coordinator at (817) 272-7091 or [jmhood@uta.edu](mailto:jmhood@uta.edu).

**Academic Integrity:** Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

*I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington’s tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence. I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System Regents' Rule 50101, Section 2.2, suspected violations of university's standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the University.

**Electronic Communication:** UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

**Campus Carry:** Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. Under the new law, openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/news/info/campus-carry/>

**Student Feedback Survey:** At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as "lecture," "seminar," or "laboratory" shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student's feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington's effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

**Final Review Week:** A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week unless specified in the class syllabus. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

**Emergency Exit Procedures:** Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit.

When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

**Student Support Services:** UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to [resources@uta.edu](mailto:resources@uta.edu), or view the information at: <http://www.uta.edu/universitycollege/resources/index.php>.