

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS
DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS

Syntax – LING 4055/5310/6020
Spring Semester 2026

General Information:

Instructor: Dorian Roehrs
Email: roehrs@unt.edu
Main office: (940) 565-4552

Office hours: **MW 1:30 – 2:00 (LANG 409L)** and by appointment

Class meets: **MW 2:00 – 3:20**

Important Dates:

Term Paper/Final project: **Monday, May 4 (by midnight)**

Course Description and Objectives:

The purpose of this course is to help students acquire formal tools for linguistic theory, and to help them make their first steps toward applying those tools to natural language syntax, the study of linguistic structure. The focus will be on modelling syntactic intuitions of human beings about possible sentences and other structures.

The goals of this course are twofold:

- 1) to develop the conceptual tools needed for the analysis of structure
- 2) to get acquainted with a number of issues in syntax

The main language of investigation will be English, but we will also discuss examples from other languages as presented in the textbook and other materials. More generally, the course aims at further developing analytical linguistic skills and a deeper understanding of language. The class is participatory (this is not a lecture course); that means, students should take notes on their readings at home.

Required Text:

Carnie, Andrew. 2021. *Syntax: A Generative Introduction*. 4th ed. Wiley Blackwell.

Video clips (based on textbook):

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSEZ6duRxX6R25mhRO06QnQ>

Instructor-generated handouts

General Course Policies:

1. Attendance: Repeated unexcused absences and tardiness will affect your grade significantly. Three tardies are the equivalent of one absence. You are allowed a maximum of two (2) absences without penalty. After

two absences, your attendance grade will suffer in percent. After the eighth (8th) absence, you will receive a failing grade for the entire class. Under certain circumstances, special accommodations can be made at the instructor's discretion.

2. Participation: Careful preparation for class and regular, active participation are the foundation of this course!

3. Homework: There are reading, video, and exercise assignments due for each class period. These assignments will consist of taking notes and doing some exercises. It is recommended to do the assignments in the following sequence: chapter video clips, textbook chapter, chapter exercises. In addition, students will write two chapter papers.

4. Quizzes: Students will take a number of quizzes, comprehension quizzes for undergraduates and skill quizzes for graduates. In addition, there will be some optional quizzes for extra credit, skill quizzes for undergraduates and comprehension quizzes for graduates.

5. Term Paper/Final Project: The Term Paper/Final Project will consist of a longer paper. It will be based on the material studied in class:

- Undergraduate: It will be about retracing the discussion of the book.
- Graduate: The material presented in the book will be applied to a different language.

The due date is **May 4**.

7. Length and Formatting of Write-ups:

Chapter Papers (2): 2 - max. 3 pages
Term Paper/Final Project: 7 - max. 10 pages

12-point font, Times New Roman, double-spaced, 1-inch margins all around

COLLECTIVE WORK. Students are allowed (in fact, encouraged) to work together on the homework assignments. However, every student will turn in their own write-up (and not a copy of somebody else's).

All class communication will be sent to your official UNT email address.

Evaluation:

Attendance, Preparation, <i>Active</i> Participation	10%
Quizzes	15%
Undergraduate: comprehension quizzes	
Graduate: skill quizzes	
Write-ups of Chapter Papers (2 x 20 points)	40%
Term Paper/Final Project	35%
Undergraduate: Term Paper	35%
Graduate: Presentation of Final Project	5%
Graduate: Write-up of Final Project	30%
Optional Quizzes (10 out of 11 at average of 80%)	(5 %)
Undergraduate: skill quizzes	
Graduate: comprehension quizzes	

Grade Distribution:

A = 100 – 90%
B = 89.9 – 80%
C = 79.9 – 70%
D = 69.9 – 60%
F = 59.9 – 0%

Religious Holidays:

In accordance with Section 51.911 of the Texas Education Code, UNT will allow a student who is absent from class for observance of a religious holy day to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time. Students are required to file a written request with each professor within the first 15 days of the semester to qualify for an excused absence. A copy of the state rules and procedures regarding holy days and the form for notification of absence from each class under this provision are available from the Registrar's Office.

American with Disabilities Act Compliance:

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the Office of Disability Access website at <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>. You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

Acceptable Student Behavior:

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at <https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-012>

Sexual Discrimination, Harassment, & Assault

UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses. UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

UNT's Dean of Students' website offers a range of on-campus and off-campus resources to help support survivors, depending on their unique needs: <http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources>.

The UNT Survivor Advocates can be reached by emailing SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or calling 940-565-2648. The UNT Survivor Advocates connect students who have been impacted by violence to resources (counseling, health, safety, academics, legal, etc.), and act as their advocate. They can assist a student by filing protective orders, completing crime victim's compensation applications, contacting professors for absences related to an assault, working with housing to facilitate a room change (if needed), and connecting students to the many other resources that are available, both on and off campus. They are here to help! For more information see <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/sexual-misconduct/reporting-sexual-misconduct>

Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT):

The student evaluation of teaching effectiveness is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. A short survey will be made available to you at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. I am very interested in the feedback I get from students, as I work to continually improve my teaching. I consider SPOT to be an important part of your participation in this class.

Tentative Schedule

PLEASE NOTE THERE WILL BE NO RIGID ADHERENCE TO THIS SCHEDULE, SHOULD THE CLASS NEED MORE TIME FOR SOME LESSONS AND LESS TIME FOR OTHER LESSONS.

Legend: M = Monday, W = Wednesday, UG = undergraduate, GR = graduate

week	contents	major assignments
WEEK 1 Jan. 12 – 16	M: Introduction to course; Chapter 1: Gen. Gram. W: Chapter 1: Generative Grammar	W: Read Chapter 1, Videos 1, exercises
WEEK 2 Jan. 19 MLK-Day Jan. 19 – 23	W: Chapter 2: Parts of Speech	W: Read Chapter 2, Videos 2
WEEK 3 Jan. 26 – 30	M: Chapter 2: Parts of Speech W: Chapter 3: Consituency, Trees, and Rules	M: Chapter 2 exercises W: Read Chapter 3, Videos 3
WEEK 4 Feb. 2 – 6	M: Chapter 3: Consituency, Trees, and Rules W: Chapter 3: Consituency, Trees, and Rules	M: Chapter 3 exercises W: Chapter 3 exercises
WEEK 5 Feb. 9 – 13	M: Chapters 4 & 5: Struct. Rel. & Binding Theory W: Chapter 6: X-bar Theory	M: Paper 1 (UG & GR) W: Read Chapter 6, Videos 6
WEEK 6 Feb. 16 – 20	M: Chapter 6: X-bar Theory W: Chapter 6: X-bar Theory	M: Chapter 6 exercises W: Chapter 6 exercises
WEEK 7 Feb. 23 – 27	M: Chapter 7: Extending X-bar Th. to Funct. Cat. W: Chapter 7: Extending X-bar Th. to Funct. Cat.	M: Read Chapter 7, Videos 7 W: Chapter 7 exercises
WEEK 8 March 2 – 6	M: Chapter 7: Extending X-bar Th. to Funct. Cat. W: Chapter 8: Constraining X-bar: Theta Theory	M: Chapter 7 exercises, Paper 2 (UG) W: Read Chapter 8, Videos 8
Spring Break		
WEEK 9 March 16 – 20	M: Chapter 8: Constraining X-bar: Theta Theory W: Chapter 9: Theta Grids and Functional Cat.	M: Chapter 8 exercises W: Read Chapter 9, Videos 9
WEEK 10 March 23 – 27	M: Chapter 9: Theta Grids and Functional Cat. W: Chapter 9: Theta Grids and Functional Cat.	M: Chapter 9 exercises W: Chapter 9 exercises
WEEK 11 March 30 – April 3	M: Chapter 10: Head-to-Head Movement W: Chapter 10: Head-to-Head Movement	M: Read Chapter 10, Videos 10 W: Chapter 10 exercises
WEEK 12 April 6 – 10	M: Chapter 10: Head-to-Head Movement W: Chapter 11: DP Movement	M: Chapter 10 exercises W: Read Chapter 11, Videos 11
WEEK 13 April 13 – 17	M: Chapter 11: DP Movement W: Chapter 11: DP Movement	M: Chapter 11 exercises; Paper 2 (GR) W: Chapter 11 exercises
WEEK 14 April 20 – 24	M: Chapter 12: Wh-movement and Loc. Constr. W: Chapter 12: Wh-movement and Loc. Constr.	M: Read Chapter 12, Videos 12 W: Chapter 12 exercises
WEEK 15 (Pre-final w) April 27 – May 1 May 1 Reading D.	M: Chapter 12: Wh-movement and Loc. Constr. W: Presentations and feedback	M: Chapter 12 exercises W: Presentation of Final Project (GR)
Finals	May 4	Write-up of Term Paper/Final Project