

# LINGUISTICS 222 - INTRODUCTION TO SYNTAX

Course Syllabus

Department of Linguistics - Simon Fraser University – Spring Semester 2011

INSTRUCTOR: **DR. MAITE TABOADA**

**Class:** Tuesdays 10:30-11:20; Thursdays 9:30-11:20, WMC 3220

**Office:** RCB 8206

**Office hours:** Tuesdays 11:30am -12:30pm (or by appointment)

**Phone:** 778-782-5585

**E-mail:** mtaboada@sfu.ca

**Course Web Page:** <http://www.sfu.ca/~mtaboada/ling222/ling222.html>

(Check frequently for new material and announcements)

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a basic introduction to syntactic analysis and argumentation. It covers word classes (e.g., 'noun', 'verb') and grammatical categories ('tense', 'case'); simple and complex sentences, relative clauses; head words and their dependents (complements, adjuncts and specifiers); constituent structure, constituent structure tests, and tree diagrams; relationships within sentences (word order, accusative and ergative case systems and agreement, grammatical relations); and syntactic processes (passives, antipassives, applicatives). Problems and discussion will focus on many different languages in addition to English. The prerequisite for this course is Ling 220.

## REQUIRED TEXT

Tallerman, Maggie (2005) *Understanding Syntax*. London: Arnold. (2nd edition).

**Note:** We will be using the second edition, which contains different material and exercises than the first. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct edition, and that you submit the exercises for the second edition.

## COMPONENTS OF THE COURSE

The course consists of lectures, which will also contain some practice exercises. You are supposed to read the corresponding material *before* coming to class. Material to be covered follows the schedule below and will also be announced in class.

Assignments will be distributed each week. These assignments will not be graded based on correct answers; rather full credit will be given for turning in *complete* assignments on time, at the beginning of the class on the day they are due. You may not receive credit if the assignment is incomplete or very poorly done. Late assignments will not be accepted.

In-class exams will be closed-book, essay format, with some short-answer questions. Students will be required to write essays describing natural language data from a variety of languages. Grades will be based on clear and logical argumentation using academically correct English. Prior to each exam, format will be further explained, and review sheets will be provided.

## COURSE EXPECTATIONS

1. Students are expected to attend all classes and to arrive on time so that classes may begin promptly. Announcements will be made at the beginning and end of classes regarding the assigned readings and the expectations for exams.

2. Students are expected to have read all assigned readings *before* class. Because many students will be learning about a new field of study in this class, some of the materials and concepts may seem fairly complex. In such cases, students should read assigned readings and go over the lecture notes multiple times.
3. Students will be responsible for all materials covered in the assigned readings and lectures. Examinations will require students to refer to readings, lecture notes, and their own notes.
4. Assignments are due at the *beginning* of class. Late assignments will not be accepted.
5. If you have to miss an in-class exam because of illness, you are required to contact me *prior* to the exam. You may notify me by e-mail or leave a message at the office. When you return to class, I will need a note from your medical doctor specifying the date of your absence and the reason. There is a good chance that I will call the doctor to confirm the note.  
Following departmental policy, make-up exams for midterms will not be given under any circumstances. If you have a doctor's note for the date of the exam, the weight of that exam will be added to the final exam. Unexcused absences from exams will result in a grade of zero for that exam. Further, under no circumstances will students be allowed to write the final exam early or late. If you have travel plans or career plans in April, you are responsible for ensuring that they do not conflict with the final examination schedule.
6. Students will be respectful of other students and the instructor. In particular, students will not talk while the instructor or another student is talking.
7. Students should familiarize themselves with the Department's Standards on Class Management and Student Responsibilities at:  
<http://www.sfu.ca/linguistics/undergraduate/standards.html>
8. Cell phones: please make sure that your cell phone (or any other noise-making device, including alarms) is turned off during class.
9. Academic dishonesty in all forms violates the basic principles of integrity and thus impedes learning. More specifically, academic dishonesty is a form of misconduct that is subject to disciplinary action and includes the following: cheating, fabrication, fraud, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism. For more information on academic honesty and student conduct, please visit the following websites:  
[http://students.sfu.ca/calendar/for\\_students/academic\\_honesty.html](http://students.sfu.ca/calendar/for_students/academic_honesty.html)  
<http://www.sfu.ca/policies/teaching/index.htm>  
If a student is found guilty of plagiarism or other form of academic dishonesty on a class paper, an assignment, or an exam, an academic dishonesty report will be written for that student. This report is filed in the department. The student receives a grade of zero for the paper, assignment, or exam. If more than one academic dishonesty report has been filed for a student, the case can be presented to the University Board on Student Discipline.
10. Please note that students requiring accommodations as a result of a disability must contact the Center for Students with Disabilities (778-782-3112 or [csdo@sfu.ca](mailto:csdo@sfu.ca)).
11. All student requests for accommodation for religious practices must be made in writing by the end of the first week of classes or no later than one week after a student adds a course.

### **E-MAIL POLICY**

You are welcome to submit questions and comments via e-mail. Please keep the following in mind when sending your message.

1. I cannot always respond to messages late in the evening or on weekends. If you send a message late on Friday or during the weekend, I might not reply until the following week.
2. I can only respond to questions that can be answered in a sentence or two. Questions requiring longer replies should be asked in class or during office hours.

3. Please proof-read your e-mail message to make sure that your question is clear. In addition, I would appreciate questions that are expressed in an appropriately polite manner.
4. Please always sign your name and the course number. Make sure the Subject line contains the name of the course ("Ling 222"). Anonymous messages will not be answered. Further, if your message does not clearly address the content of the course, or the Subject line is simply "hi", there is a good chance that it will be classified as spam, and discarded automatically.
5. Because of the large number of e-mail messages that I receive, it may be several days before I am able to reply to your message.

### TIPS FOR SUCCESS

In general, students who do well in this course follow these principles:

- Attend class regularly
- Do all assignments and exercises
- Ask questions in class or during office hours
- Keep up with new material
- Maintain a positive attitude
- You can also think of forming study groups, to work on assignments together, or to discuss the readings.

### COURSE GRADE

The course grade is based on credit earned for assignments, two in-class exams and a final exam, according to the weights below.

|             | DATE                    | WEIGHT |
|-------------|-------------------------|--------|
| Assignments | Throughout the semester | 10%    |
| Midterm I   | February 3              | 25%    |
| Midterm II  | March 17                | 25%    |
| Final Exam  | April 18, 3:30-6:30 pm  | 40%    |

Percentage scores on assignments and exams will be based on objective criteria. Final letter course grades will be computed from percentage scores on assignments and exams. The following table provides a rough estimate of grade breakdowns for the final grade. Due attention will be given to the verbal descriptions listed below. There is no university-wide standard scale. An instructor adopts a grade scale appropriate to the level and content of the course.

|         |    |                           |        |    |                                   |
|---------|----|---------------------------|--------|----|-----------------------------------|
| 97-100% | A+ | Extraordinary performance | 73-76% | C+ | Satisfactory performance          |
| 93-96%  | A  | Excellent performance     | 69-72% | C  | Marginal performance              |
| 89-92%  | A- |                           | 65-68% | C- |                                   |
| 85-88%  | B+ | Good performance          | 57-64% | D  | Unsatisfactory performance (fail) |
| 81-84%  | B  |                           | < 56%  | F  |                                   |
| 77-80%  | B- |                           |        |    |                                   |

**GRADE APPEALS**

If a student wishes to contest the marking of an exam or assignment, the instructor can agree to remark his/her entire exam at the instructor's convenience and not in front of the student. A grade reconsideration may raise the grade, lower the grade, or leave the grade unchanged, as stated in Policy T20.01, clause IV.2.

The only reason a grade change will be made is if there is an arithmetic error or if it has been determined that the exam deserves a lower grade or a higher grade after it has been remarked.

The following are NOT reasons for reconsideration of a grade:

- The student is on probation
- The student wants to get into Business or any other program
- The student worked hard and thinks this should be a factor
- The student does not like the grade scale
- The student's score is x% below the next grade and would like the instructor to ignore the difference

**TOPICS AND READING OUTLINE**

Note: The readings correspond to the Tallerman book, 2nd edition. "1.1" means "Chapter 1, Section 1.1". Under assignments, the exercises are those at the end of each chapter.

| Week | Date               | Topic   | Read (before class) | Assignments   |
|------|--------------------|---|---------------------|---|
| 1    | Jan. 6             | Introduction<br>What is syntax?   | 1.1, 1.2            |   |
| 2    | Jan. 11<br>Jan. 13 | Why do languages have syntax?<br>Word classes   | 1.3<br>2.1, 2.2     | Assignment 1 due:<br>Exercises for chapter 1<br>(1-5) |
| 3    | Jan. 18<br>Jan. 20 | Syntax of the major word classes,<br>grammatical categories<br>Simple sentences, finiteness,<br>complex sentences           | 2.3<br>3.1, 3.2     | Assignment 2 due: Ch.<br>2 (1-6)                      |
| 4    | Jan. 25<br>Jan. 27 | Cross-linguistic variation in clause<br>types<br>Cont.  | 3.3                 | Assignment 3 due: Ch.<br>3 (1-5)                      |
| 5    | Feb. 1<br>Feb. 3   | Review<br><b>Midterm I</b>  |                     |   |
| 6    | Feb. 8<br>Feb. 10  | Heads and their dependents,<br>head-initial and head-final<br>languages<br>Head-marking and dependent-<br>marking languages | 4.1, 4.2<br>4.3     | Assignment 4 due: Ch.<br>4 (1-3)                      |
| 7    | Feb. 15            | <i>Reading break; no classes</i>  |                     |   |

|    |         |   |          |  |
|----|---------|---|----------|--|
|    | Feb. 17 | <i>Reading break; no classes</i>                                      |          |  |
| 8  | Feb. 22 | Discovering the structure of sentences, relationships within the tree | 5.1, 5.2 | Assignment 5 due: Ch. 4 (4-5)                                    |
|    | Feb. 24 | Developing detailed tree diagrams and tests for constituent structure | 5.3      |  |
| 9  | Mar. 1  | Relationships within the clause, order of phrases within the clause   | 6.1, 6.2 | Assignment 6 due: Ch. 5 (1-7)                                    |
|    | Mar. 3  | Case systems, agreement   | 6.3, 6.4 |  |
| 10 | Mar. 8  | Grammatical relations   | 6.5      | Assignment 7 due: Ch. 6 (1-4)                                    |
|    | Mar. 10 | Cont.   |          |  |
| 11 | Mar. 15 | Review  |          | <i>Assignment 8 due: Ch. 6 (5-7)</i>                             |
|    | Mar. 17 | <b>Midterm II</b>   |          |  |
| 12 | Mar. 22 | Passive, antipassive  | 7.1, 7.2 | Assignment 9 due: Ch. 7 (1-4)                                    |
|    | Mar. 24 | Applicative and causative constructions                               | 7.3, 7.4 |  |
| 13 | Mar. 29 | Wh-questions, focus   | 8.1, 8.2 | Assignment 10 due: Ch. 7 (5-6)<br>Assignment 11 due: Ch. 8 (1-3) |
|    | Mar. 31 | Relative clauses  | 8.3, 8.4 |  |
| 14 | Apr. 5  | Conclusion  | 9        | Assignment 12 due: Ch. 8 (4-5)                                   |
|    | Apr. 7  | Review  |          |  |
|    | Apr. 18 | <b>Final exam</b> , 3:30 pm. Place TBA                                |          |  |