

**LING 696A, Seminar in Syntax And Semantics**  
**Generative Syntax From the Outside; Minimalism and its Detractors**

Who: Andy Barss & Heidi Harley

When: Wednesdays, 3-5:30

Where: Douglass seminar room (if we all fit)

This seminar has dual (although overlapping) themes: linguistics and its connection to the other cognitive sciences; and minimalist syntax and its critiques from within the field. So we'll be looking at (sentence-level) formal linguistics from two critical perspectives: other disciplines which interface with linguistics, and competitors to one framework (minimalism) within the field of linguistics itself.

This will be a participant-driven seminar (indeed to first topic was suggested last spring by interested graduate students), and so we will jointly decide what readings to explore, and what topic areas to cover.

Readings will be drawn from the following sources (along with others suggested by participants in the first few weeks):

- Carson Shultze, *The Empirical Base of Linguistics: Grammaticality Judgments and Linguistic Methodology*(1996), U. Chicago Press.
- *The Nature of Explanation in Linguistic Theory*(2003). Moore and Polinsky (eds). CSLI Publications.

And anything else you'd like to suggest!

Requirements for registered participants:

- at least one presentation of a reading
- a term paper (which can be a thesis chapter or other lighter writing assignment for dissertators), topic to be approved by both instructors
- regular participation.

Some specific issues (please feel free to toss more in):

- What is the historical and current status of the competence/performance distinction?

- (How) does the derivational approach to syntax&semantics in generative grammar fit with / map onto theories of language comprehension and production? Once you get past the easy answer (“it’s a competence model, so ignore anything about performance in real time!”), what are we left with? This is a particularly pressing point in Minimalist syntax, since notions of economy and limitations on computational search domains are central to the framework.
- What is the scientific validity of using grammaticality/acceptability/meaning judgments as the core empirical basis of the field?
- How do those judgments map onto other ways of measuring speakers’ evaluations of sentences?
- Is Minimalism a particularly good, or particularly awful, example of scientific theorizing about language (the natural world)? Are linguists working in this domain even good scholars?
- Is the organization of the language system as rendered in MP sensible when we move beyond narrow syntax? How autonomous are different aspects of language? (Note that this connects to issue 2).
- What is the connection between the conception of language in the MP and recent work on evolutionary psychology? This is addressed by a recent paper by Chomsky, hauser, and Fitch, and series of commentaries of replies between them and Steve Pinker and others.

Seminar discussion possibilities: Participants—pick one (or two! or THREE!) to present to the group. There are 85 possibilities listed below! :) They are in no particular order, though each individual article or chapter has been given a number for you to refer to when picking. Then (below) pick a date to present on. We could have one or two presentations on any given date.

#### Minimalism: generalities and specifics

- 1 Chomsky, N. 2005. "Three factors in language design." *Linguistic Inquiry* 36.1, pp. 1-22
- 2 Chomsky, Noam. 2000. Minimalist inquiries: The framework. In *Step by step: Essays on minimalist syntax in honor of Howard Lasnik*, ed. by Roger Martin, David Michaels, and Juan Uriagereka, 89–155. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press
- 3 Lasnik, H. 2001. Derivation and representation in modern transformational syntax. In M. Baltin and C. Collins (eds.) *Handbook of Syntactic Theory*. Blackwell, pp. 62-88.
- 4 Rizzi, Luigi. 2001. Relativized minimality effects, in Mark Baltin and Chris Collins (eds.), *The Handbook of Contemporary Syntactic Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell. 89-110.
- 5 Collins, Chris. 2001. Economy conditions in syntax, in Mark Baltin and Chris Collins (eds.), *The Handbook of Contemporary Syntactic Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell. 89-110.

The Chomsky/Hauser/Fitch exchanges with Jackendoff & Pinker

- 6 Hauser, Marc, Noam Chomsky, and Tecumseh Fitch. 2002. "The Faculty of Language: What Is It, Who Has It, and How Did It Evolve?" (*Science* Vol 298, Issue 5598, 1569-1577, 22 November 2002)
- 7 Steven Pinker and Ray Jackendoff 2005 "The faculty of language: what's special about it?" (*Science* Volume 95, Issue 2, March 2005, Pages 201-236)
- 8 N. Chomsky, M.D. Hauser and W.T. Fitch. 2005. "Appendix. The Minimalist Program." *Cognition* [presumably should be read together with Fitch, Hauser and Chomsky, 2005. "The evolution of the language faculty: Clarifications and implications. *Cognition*, to which it is the appendix.]
- 9 Jackendoff, R. and S. Pinker. 2005. "The Nature of the Language Faculty and its Implications for Evolution of Language." *Cognition* 97.2, pp. 211-225

Bever's take on the language faculty & relation to other cognitive capacities

- 10 Bever, T. To appear. The role of the individual in explaining language universals – Minimalist Behaviorism To appear in Christiansen, M, Collins, C. and Edelman, S., eds, *Language Universals*. Oxford University Press (2007).

NLLT Topic...Comment articles on the GB→ MP transition:

- 11 Lappin, Levine, and Johnson. 2000. THE STRUCTURE OF UNSCIENTIFIC REVOLUTIONS. NLLT 18-3, 665-671.
- 12 Holmberg. 2000. AM I UNSCIENTIFIC? NLLT 18-4, 837-842.
- 13 Reuland. 2000. REVOLUTION, DISCOVERY, AND AN ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLE OF LOGIC. NLLT 18-3, 843-848.
- 14 Roberts. 2000. CARICUTURING DISSENT. NLLT 18-3, 849-857.
- 15 Piattelli-Palmarini. 2000. THE METRIC OF OPEN-MINDEDNESS. NLLT 18-3, 859-862,
- 16 Uriagereka. 2000. ON THE EMPTINESS OF 'DESIGN' POLEMICS. NLLT 18-3, 863-871.
- 17 LLJ. 2000. THE REVOLUTION CONFUSED: A RESPONSE TO OUR CRITICS. NLLT 18-3, 873-890.

Readings from Moore & Polinsky, eds, "The nature of explanation in linguistic theory." Selected chapters:

- 18 1. Explanations in Linguistics *John Moore and Maria Polinsky*
- 19 2. Exo-Skeletal vs. Endo-Skeletal Explanation: Syntactic Projections and the Lexicon *Hagit Borer*
- 20 3. On the Notion 'Showing Something' *Greg Carlson*

- 21 4. Linguistic Theory, Explanation and the Dynamics of Language *Peter W. Culicover, Andrzej Nowak, and Wojciech Borkowski*
- 22 5. Explaining Infixation *John Haiman*
- 23 6. Efficiency and Complexity in Grammars: Three General Principles *John A. Hawkins*
- 24 7. An Historical Explanation of Some Binding Theoretic Facts in English *Edward L. Keenan*
- 25 8. In Search of the Golden Slash: Prospecting for the Biological Explanations of Language *Robert Kluender*
- 26 9. Generative Grammar and Beyond *S.-Y. Kuroda*
- 27 10. Explanation in Cognitive Linguistics and Cognitive Grammar *Ronald W. Langacker*
- 28 11. Meaning, Function, and the Autonomy of Syntax *Frederick J. Newmeyer*
- 29 12. Minimalism and Explanation *Robert D. Van Valin, Jr.*

Culicover & Jackendoff 2005. *Simpler Syntax*: OUP. Selected chapters

**PART I Cutting Syntax Down to Size**

- 30 1. Why Simpler Syntax?
- 31 2. How did we get here? Principles and early history of mainstream syntax
- 32 3. Later History of Mainstream Syntax
- 33 4. Flat Structure

**PART II The Syntax-Semantics Interface**

- 34 5. Basic Clause Structure
- 35 6. The Grammatical Function Tier
- 36 7. Bare Argument Ellipsis and its Relatives
- 37 8. VP Ellipsis and its Relatives
- 38 9. Discontinuous Dependencies

**PART III Binding and Control**

- 39 10. Mme. Tussaud Meets the Binding Theory
- 40 11. *Something Else* for the Binding Theory
- 41 12. The Semantic Basis of Control in English

**PART IV Connections Between Clauses**

- 42 13. Semantic Subordination Despite Syntactic Coordination
- 43 14. The View from the Periphery: The English comparative correlative
- 44 15. What is Language Like? Moving On

The Linguistic Review 2005, issues 2-4: Linguistics as a science

- 45 Ritter, Nancy A. 2005. On the status of linguistics as a cognitive science
- 46 Cheney, Dorothy L. and Robert M. Seyfarth. 2005. Constraints and preadaptations in the earliest stages of language evolution

- 47 MacNeilage, Peter F. and Barbara L. Davis, 2005. Functional organization of speech across the life span: A critique of generative phonology
- 48 Tomasello, Michael. 2005. Beyond formalities: The case of language acquisition
- 49 Goldin-Meadow, Susan. 2005. What language creation in the manual modality tells us about the foundations of language
- 50 Culicover, Peter W. 2005. Linguistics, cognitive science, and all that jazz
- 51 Gross, Steven. 2005. The nature of semantics: On Jackendoff's arguments
- 52 Wilkins, Wendy. 2005. Anatomy matters.
- 53 Lieberman, Phillip. 2005. The pied piper of Cambridge.
- 54 Baynes, Kathleen and Michael S. Gazzaniga Lateralization of language: Toward a biologically based model of language
- 55 Walenski, Matthew and Michael T. Ullman, 2005. The science of language
- 56 Myachykov, Andriy, Russell S. Tomlin and Michael I. Posner 2005. Attention and empirical studies of grammar
- 57 Ferreira, Fernanda. 2005 Psycholinguistics, formal grammars, and cognitive science
- 58 Bybee, Joan and James L. McClelland. 2005. Alternatives to the combinatorial paradigm of linguistic theory based on domain general principles of human cognition
- 59 Goldberg, Adele and Alex Del Giudice. 2005. Subject-auxiliary inversion: A natural category
- 60 Marantz, Alec. 2005. Generative linguistics within the cognitive neuroscience of language
- 61 Boeckx, Cedric and Massimo Piattelli-Palmarini. 2005. Language as a natural object – linguistics as a natural science. p. 447-

Seuren, Pieter A.M. *Chomsky's Minimalism*, OUP. Selected chapters:

- 62 1. Introduction
- 63 2. The Mechanism of the MP under Scrutiny
- 64 3. The Language Faculty
- 65 4. Questions of Method and Adequacy
- 66 5. What Is Functional about the MP?
- 67 6. What Is Conceptually Necessary about the MP?
- 68 7. Surface-Driven Elements of Semantic Interpretation
- 69 8. The Embarrassment of Evidence

Postal, Paul. 2002. *Skeptical Linguistic Essays*. Selected chapters of part 2, "Studies in Junk Linguistics" (Available on his website)

- 70 Chapter 7: Junk Syntax 1: A Supposed Account of Strong Crossover Effects
- 71 Chapter 8: Junk Syntax 2: 'There Remain a Few As Yet Unexplained Exceptions'
- 72 Chapter 9: Junk Ethics 1: Advances in Linguistic Rhetoric
- 73 Chapter 10: Junk Refereeing: Our Tax Dollars at Work

- 74 Chapter 11: Junk Ethics 2: The Most Irresponsible Passage
- 75 Chapter 12: Junk Reasoning 1: If It Doesn't Follow Automatically, then Its Pretty  
Much Got to at Least Virtually Follow, and If Not, Don't Worry, It Is Still  
Unquestionably Natural
- 76 Chapter 13: Junk Reasoning 2: '(Virtually) Conceptually Necessary'
- 77 Chapter 14: Junk Linguistics: The Bottom Line

On methodologies:

Carson Shultze, *The Empirical Base of Linguistics: Grammaticality Judgments and Linguistic Methodology*(1996), U. Chicago Press, selected chapters:

- 78 1: Introduction
- 79 2: Definitions and Historical Background
- 80 3: Judging Grammaticality: The Nature of Metalinguistic Performance
- 81 4: Subject-Related Factors in Grammaticality Judgments
- 82 5: Task-Related Factors in Grammaticality Judgments
- 83 6: Theoretical and Methodological Implications
- 84 7: Looking Back and Looking Ahead
  
- 85 Sorace, Antonella and Frank Keller. 2005. [Gradience in Linguistic Data](#). *Lingua* 115:11, 1497-1524.

...You name it!

Available dates for presentations:

Sept. 13

Sept. 20

Sept. 27

Oct. 4

Oct. 11

Oct. 18

Oct. 25

Nov. 1 [Heidi out of town (yes, *again!*)]

Nov. 8

Nov. 15

Nov. 22

Dec. 6