

Ling 403/503: Foundations of Syntactic Theory Syllabus

Who: Dr. Heidi Harley
Where: Harvill 404
When: 3-4:15, Mon & Wed

Office: Communications 114b
Office hours: Tuesday 10-12, or by appointment

Prerequisites: (undergrad): Ling 300, **minimum grade=B!**
(grad): None, but basic syntactic knowledge is assumed

Textbooks: *Understanding Minimalism*, by Hornstein, Nunes and Grohmann
Syntax: A Generative Introduction, **2nd edition!** by Carnie

Other readings: Will be made available during the course of the semester

Requirements:

6-7 Homeworks (due when specified)	40%
Official Question (each student's week on schedule)	10%
Mystery Construction (grad and honors, each student's date on schedule)	10%
Final paper topic statement (due Nov. 14)	10%
Final paper (due Dec. 5)	30%

Requirement Descriptions:

Homeworks: Problem sets will be assigned approximately biweekly from either of the two textbooks. They will be due the week after they are assigned.

Official Question (OQ): Each student must come up with at least one Official Question over the course of the semester. It should deal with the class discussion or the readings of the previous or upcoming week. It can be of any level of sophistication at all — simple, complicated, clarificatory, counterproposal, whatever; the 10% credit is awarded for emailing it to me **on time**, not for content. I'll answer the OQs of the week briefly either in class or over email to the whole classlist.

Your official question is due to me by email **by midnight on Sunday at the *beginning* of the week you have been assigned in the schedule.** That is, Greg and Brent, who have to come up with the OQs for next week, should email them to me by midnight **this Sunday**, Aug. 26th.

Mystery Construction (MC): Each graduate student and undergrad honors student will make a brief, 15-minute presentation to the class. The date of your presentation is listed in the schedule. You can trade dates with your classmates at any time up to two weeks before your presentation.

The Mystery Construction presentations are designed to introduce you to some of the syntactic phenomena of natural language that are *not* being treated in depth by the textbooks or theories we will be discussing. Each student has been randomly assigned a different mystery construction; again, you can trade constructions with your classmates up to two weeks before your presentation.

The week before your presentation, you are to schedule a meeting with me at which you will run through a preliminary version of your presentation, and I will provide you with suggestions and feedback before your *début* in class. (So, for example, Alexandra, who's scheduled to give the first MC presentation on Oct. 3, will meet with me the previous week, sometime between Sept. 24 and 29th.)

The presentations will follow a fairly fixed format; a sample Mystery Construction template is provided in this course packet. The idea is to present examples of the construction in question from two or possibly more languages and to briefly **describe** what is going on in the construction (not necessarily to provide an analysis of it, though if you find a good and easily-explained analysis somewhere or come up with one yourself, that is great). I will provide you with at least one reference to a paper discussing your mystery construction from which you can draw illustrative data and other information.

You should plan on talking for about 10 minutes; the total presentation and class discussion of the material should **not** go for longer than 15 minutes. My idea is that I will present course material for 30 minutes, then hand over to the mystery construction presenter for the day for 15 minutes, and then for me to get up and go back to my presentation of course material for another 30 minutes.

Final paper topic statement: This should be one or two paragraphs of text and possibly examples describing the topic or question you would like to investigate for your final paper. You must also include at least two or three references to papers that will be primary sources for your research. Total length not to exceed a page or be less than 1/3 page, single spaced. Again, you receive credit for handing it in **on time** and with all the required elements, not for content!

Final paper: A paper (squib, really) on the syntactic topic of your choice, not to exceed 15 pages, double-spaced. This can be a summary of some of the key literature on a topic you are interested in, or it could be original research of your own—a new treatment of old data, an old treatment of new data, a new treatment of new data...