

SYLLABUS

LING 201: Linguistic Theory and Analysis II

1 The course

The aim of this course is to teach you how think like a linguist: that is, to develop, evaluate, and improve hypotheses about language in a precise and rigorous way. We'll primarily focus on syntax (sentence structure) and semantics (the structure of meaning). Along the way we'll briefly touch on morphology (word structure), pragmatics (meaning in context), and psycholinguistics (how the brain processes language).

2 Contact information

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3 Requirements

The principal requirements for the course are:

- Three take-home assignments.
- Two exams. The final will be take-home. The midterm may be take-home or in class (to be determined).

- Contributing to class discussion—during lecture, tutorials, or both.
- Optionally, participating in 'Linguistics Outside the Classroom' (LOC) for extra credit—which means either participating in an experiment or writing a one-paragraph summary of a talk.

Outside of class You will collaborate on your take-home work with two other people and turn in a joint write-up. Each collaborator must be able to defend the proposed solution. You may discuss your work with other students not in your group, but other people's ideas must be properly cited.

In class Because we won't rely on a textbook, *coming to class is crucial*. If you miss classes, you are likely to miss information that will be necessary to understand the assignments and subsequent discussion. If you anticipate having to miss class frequently, do not take this course.

LOC credit Participation in Linguistics Outside the Classroom (LOC) is optional for this course. This is a means of increasing your involvement in learning about linguistics outside of regular classroom instruction. There are two ways of doing so:

- One way is by participating in one or more points' worth of experiments being run by researchers in the Department of Linguistics. To sign up for experiments, please visit [the SONA online booking system](#) to register to participate. Experiments typically take between 15 minutes and 1 hour and offer the opportunity to contribute to and learn about linguistics research first hand. Your participation in research is voluntary.
- A second way of completing this requirement is by attending Linguistics research seminars or colloquia and writing a one-paragraph summary of each talk, which you turn into your instructor *within a week of attending*. You can browse the talk series on the linguistics department's [online events calendar](#).¹

¹There are fewer talks during the summer term, but there are two conferences at UBC this summer you might be interested in: the 50th [Annual Conference on African Linguistics](#) (May 22–25) and the [Canadian Linguistics Association](#) (June 1–3). These are professional conferences and you should observe the relevant norms of politeness. One such norm is that you should arrive on time

The credits associated with experiments vary according to their duration, and attending a talk and writing a summary constitutes two LOC points.

4 Grading

You'll be graded on a point system:

- The assignments will be 10 points each.
- The exams will be 20 points each.
- You will receive a 10-point participation grade.
- You will receive 5 bonus points for participating in LOC.

Your final grade for the semester will be the percentage of the available points that you've earned. It will map onto a letter grade according to the UBC's standard scale (if you are an undergrad²):

90–100	A+
85–89	A
80–84	A–
76–79	B+
72–75	B
68–71	B–
64–67	C+
60–63	C
55–59	C–
50–54	D
00–49	F

This is subject to UBC's broader policies about grading, which include the possibility of 'scaling' your final grade to accord with institutional goals.

for a session (which may consist of several regular talks or one longer one) and not leave before the session is over. If you would like to help with organizing and therefore get free registration, send an email to acal.50@ubc.ca or go to the [CLA website](#).

²The mapping from percentages to letter grades is different for grad students. Consult the [UBC Calendar](#) for details.

5 Reading

You may want to refer to the following textbook as a supplemental resource. It's also used in higher-level syntax classes at UBC:

Sportiche, Dominique and Koopman, Hilda and Stabler, Edward. 2013. *An Introduction to Syntactic Analysis and Theory*. John Wiley & Sons Inc. Hoboken, UK.

It's [available online](#) through the library. We will not rely on it in detail or follow it chapter-by-chapter. It is, of course, *not a substitute for coming to class*—much of what we discuss will have no direct counterpart in the textbook, and where there is overlap, the conclusions will often have been arrived at differently.

You may also want to read this:

Pinker, Stephen. 1994. *The Language Instinct: How the Mind Creates Language*. William Morrow & Company, New York.

It's an informal and often entertaining popular-science discussion of some of the big issues surrounding language and linguistics, written by a psychologist. It leaves out a great deal—above all, essentially all of semantics—but it's helpful in situating theoretical linguistics in the context of cognitive science more broadly.

6 Communication

Our primary medium for communication will be Canvas. You'll get assignments that way, and you should turn them in that way too, in the form of a PDF file. Please *don't* submit files in Word or any other format. Please turn assignments in on the due date *before the start of class*.

7 Other notes & policies

Disability? Please notify me during the first two weeks of the course to make any special arrangements to accommodate a disability. If you haven't already done so, you should contact the UBC Centre for Accessibility.

Academic integrity Don't plagiarize. The structure of the course may make this a little trickier than it might seem. If someone that isn't actually a coauthor of your write-up gives you an idea that you use or build on, say in the write-up who it was. *Don't look for solutions to the problems on your assignments online.* In most cases, this isn't possible, but in all cases, it's a form of cheating. For more on the university's academic integrity policies, look at the university's Academic Honesty and Standards statement.

Social media and copyright issues Don't share course materials (handouts, assignments, etc.) with anyone outside of class. Don't record anything that happens in class without my prior approval.

8 Agenda

Here is a roadmap of some of the topics we'll discuss in something like the order we'll discuss them. The pace at which we proceed will depend in part on how you (the students) respond, and we may linger longer on certain points or otherwise change course to respond to particular interests.

- linguistics, linguistic knowledge, and linguistic intuitions (today)
- **syntax**: how words fit together (about three weeks)
 - prescriptive rules and why they aren't interesting
 - grammar as a mental machine
 - phrase structure
 - recursion
 - morphosyntax
 - complementation and subcategorization
 - movement
 - syntactic variation
- *midterm exam*
- **semantics and pragmatics**: how does language convey and encode ideas? (about two weeks)
 - what kind of meanings are there?
 - compositionality: how meanings are assembled
 - the meanings of basic categories

- more abstract meanings: determiners and beyond
- implicatures: conveying without saying
- **the bigger picture**: language and the mind (final week)
 - a taste of psycholinguistics
 - what about animal communication?
 - modularity of mind
- *final exam*