Course Information: What this class is about and what we will do

Course Description

This course introduces students to syntax—the study of sentence structure in language—with primary focus on English, secondary focus on Spanish, and some considerations of English-Spanish bilinguals. Syntax can be thought of as a computational system that allows speakers to produce an infinitely large number of sentences. This largely unconscious cognitive system allows speakers to produce hierarchically structured sentences in a systematic way. Researchers who investigate syntax seek to understand why sentence structure is the way it is across languages, what system of knowledge underlies speakers’ production of sentence structure, and why syntax is learned so well by young children for whom many other aspects of cognition are still not well developed. Researchers interested in syntax also seek to understand how the two syntactic systems of bilinguals develop, interact, and influence each other.

In this course, students will learn the basic concepts of syntax as applied to English and, to some degree, Spanish. More specifically, students will learn how English and Spanish form hierarchically structured sentences, how structure building and syntactic operations are operationalized and theorized across the two languages, and how the syntax of the dominant language influences the syntax of the non-dominant language.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- understand and use core syntactic terms and concepts to describe syntactic structures in English and Spanish;
- develop and use the analytical skills necessary to draw the syntactic structure of basic sentences in English and Spanish, and substantiate these analyses with arguments;
- understand and explain how the similarities and differences between English and Spanish have been operationalized and theorized;
- understand and discuss effects of the dominant syntax on the non-dominant syntax in bilinguals.
Materials

Required Readings

Textbook:

Articles:

Course Requirements and Assessment

Students taking this course will be assessed as follows:

- Examinations (30%): There will be two exams (15% each), one towards the middle of the semester, and one at the end of the semester. Material for the exams will be taken from lectures, readings, and assignments. There will be no final/comprehensive exam for this course.

- Syntactic analysis assignments (50%): Students will complete six syntactic analysis assignments (6%, 7%, 8%, 9%, 10%, and 10%). Additional information about the assignments will be provided on Blackboard.

- Participation and attendance (5%): Participation and attendance are extremely important to do well in the course. They will both be tracked using iClicker (see Technology Requirements below). Students will be allowed to have up to three unexcused absences throughout the semester. Each day that students participate in class by answering iClicker questions will count for 0.1% (25 classes = 2.5%), and each day that they attend class will count for 0.1% (25 classes = 2.5 %). This excludes the two class periods that will be used for the exams and the allowed three unexcused absences.

- Final paper (15%): Students will write a final paper on how the two syntactic systems of bilinguals develop, interact, and/or influence each other. The paper should include at least three empirical studies published after 2000 in scholarly journals.

Students can also earn up to 2% in extra credit by participating in up to 4 credits of SONA experiments (0.5% in extra course credit per SONA credit). SONA is a Human Participant Pool System used for research conducted by faculty in the Department of Psychology and the Department of Latin-US and Linguistics. Students earn course credit by completing experiments that investigate a variety of issues in psychology and/or linguistics. Many of the studies posted
in SONA are immediately relevant to linguistics because they investigate language use or depend on language use. A tutorial will be provided in class to show you how to use SONA to participate in research and earn extra credit for this class. An alternative assignment option will be provided to you should you prefer not to participate in research. The deadline for completing either type of extra credit assignment is **May 2, 2024** (last day of class).

**Group Work Policy**

Group work is encouraged for all assignments. However, each student must submit their own write-up of each assignment, explaining the syntactic analysis they adopted in their own words. Any directly copied work is not allowed.

**Grading**

Grades will be assigned as follows:

- >89.45% = A
- 79.45-89.44% = B
- 69.45-79.44% = C
- 59.45-69.44% = D
- <59.45% = F

IMPORTANT: There will be no rounding up of grades. The instructor will not respond to emails that ask for adding or rounding points to the final grade, nor will she grant the opportunity for extra assignment for extra credit outside the options outlined in the syllabus.

**Technology Requirements**

*Blackboard*

Course content is delivered in class and via the Internet through the Blackboard learning management system. Students should ensure that their UTEP e-mail account is working and that they have access to the Web and a stable web browser. Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox are the best browsers for Blackboard; other browsers may cause complications. When having technical difficulties, update your browser, clear your cache, or try switching to another browser.

*Microsoft Office*

Students will need to have access to a computer, ideally a personal laptop. They will need to download or update the following software: Microsoft Office and Adobe Acrobat Reader. Students should check that their computer hardware and software are up-to-date and able to access all parts of the course. If students do not have a word-processing software, they can download Word and other Microsoft Office programs (including Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and more) for free via UTEP’s Microsoft Office Portal. Click the following link for more information about **Microsoft Office 365** and follow the instructions.
Syntactic Tree Generators

Below are three websites that can generate syntactic trees. These websites provide students with a window in the web browser where they can enter a labeled bracketed structure, which the program then converts automatically into a syntactic tree. Students can save this tree to their computer as an image and insert them directly into a Word document for their syntactic analysis assignments. Students should play around with the syntactic tree generators and use the generator they like the most. phpSyntaxTree can include arrows to display syntactic movement and allow different types of alignments. RSyntaxTree does not, but it makes the bracketing structure easier to visualize and understand.

- ironcreek.net/phpsyntaxtree/
- mshang.ca/syntree/
- yohasebe.com/rsyntaxtree/

iClicker

A cloud-based student response software, iClicker, will be used in class this semester. This will help the instructor understand what students know, give students a chance to participate in class, and ultimately increase how much students learn. This will also provide students with feedback on how well they comprehend course concepts and help them master challenging concepts. The instructor will also use this software to keep track of attendance; please refer to the attendance policy (below) for more information. The use of iClicker in this course will account for 20% of your final grade (participation and attendance).

Students are required to bring a device to participate in iClicker sessions during class. Students can participate with a smartphone, tablet, or laptop. They can download the iClicker student mobile app via the App Store or Google Play, or they can use the iClicker web app by signing in as a student at iclicker.com. It is students’ responsibility to set up their iClicker Student account in a timely fashion, as well as making sure that their device is working properly. If students do not have an existing iClicker student account, then they will need to create one to be able to participate in class. Students will also need to connect to either UTEP’s Wi-Fi (UTEPSecure) or to their mobile data plan while using iClicker.

Blackboard integration. iClicker is integrated with Blackboard, which will pull students’ names directly into the iClicker roster. Below is important information for ensuring that iClicker works for students.

1. If students have an existing iClicker student account that uses the email address associated to their Blackboard profile, they will automatically be added to the iClicker course. If the iClicker system does not find a matching iClicker student account, students will receive an email from iClicker Support with instructions to update their existing account's profile or create a new account.

2. If students receive an email prompting them to create or update their iClicker student account, they should include the correct account information. If they already have an iClicker account, they should NOT create a new account. Instead, they should log in
and edit their existing account’s profile to avoid confusion and potential loss of points due to multiple accounts. Students should contact UTEP Technology Support if they do not remember their account email or password. Their iClicker profile should include the same email address as used in their Blackboard Profile and their UTEP student ID.

3. Students will be automatically dropped into this course upon creating a student iClicker account. If students don’t see this course in their account, they should use the + sign to search for the course:
   ● In the “Find Your Institution” field, enter The University of Texas at El Paso
   ● In the “Find Your Course” field, enter LING 3302&5309 Syntax CRN 222863&20606 Spring/2024.
   ● Select “Add This Course” and it will be added to the main Courses screen of the iClicker account.

   Note: Upon signing up for a new account you will see a message about a 14-day free trial. You will not need to purchase a subscription after the 14-day free trial is over because the use of iClicker is provided to you for free by UTEP.

   How to participate in iClicker sessions during each class. Each time the class meets, students should log into iClicker (https://student.iclicker.com/#/login or the iClicker Student app on your device) and make sure they have selected this course from the main screen of the iClicker Student account. When the instructor starts a session, students should click the Join button that appears on your screen, then answer each question that the instructor asks in iClicker. For all question types except Multiple Choice, students should press Send/Enter.

   IMPORTANT: The instructor has turned on the Attendance GPS location requirement for iClicker in the class. Students need to allow the device they are using to reveal their location in order to successfully check in. If students are not physically in class when they try to join the instructor’s session, they will not be counted as present. If students have any issues with their device’s geolocation, they should refer to the Attendance Geolocation Troubleshooting Guide or contact the UTEP Technology Support HelpDesk. It is students’ responsibility to regularly check their iClicker grades for any discrepancies and bring them to the instructor’s attention within 72 hours.

   If students encounter technical difficulties beyond their scope of troubleshooting, they should contact the UTEP Help Desk as they are trained specifically in assisting with technological needs of students. Please do not contact the instructor for this type of assistance. The Help Desk is much better equipped than the instructor is to assist you!

   Course Communication: How we will stay in contact with each other

Students should not hesitate to speak with the instructor for questions about or discussion of any issue or topic related to class. Here are communication channels that can be used outside of class time:
Office Hours: The instructor will hold in-person for student questions and comments about the course. Virtual office hours on Zoom are also available by appointment. Office hours will be held on Monday 11-12 and Wednesday 10-11. If these times do not work with students’ schedules, they should contact the instructor to make an appointment at a different time.

Email: UTEP e-mail is the best way to contact the instructor. Every attempt will be made to respond to students’ e-mail within 48 hours of receipt. When e-mailing the instructor, be sure to email from your UTEP student account, and please put the course number in the subject line. Always begin your e-mail with a greeting (e.g., “Dear Prof. Tremblay”) and always end it with a salutation (e.g., “Best regards,”). In the body of your e-mail, clearly state your question. At the end of your e-mail, be sure to put your first and last name, and your university identification number.

Announcements: Check the Blackboard announcements frequently for any updates, deadlines, or other important messages.

Course Policies: What you need to do to be successful in the course

Attendance

Attendance is extremely important to do well in the course. Attendance will be tracked with iClicker (see Technology Requirements above). Students will be allowed to have up to three unexcused absences throughout the semester. Each day that students attend class will count for 0.1% (25 classes = 2.5%). This excludes the two class periods that will be used for the exams and the allowed three unexcused absences. Students have more than three unexcused absences will need to provide evidence of a compelling reasons for having missed class, and this evidence will need to be provided within 2 weeks of the missed class period. It is preferable to receive advance approval from the instructor for a missed class.

Course Drop Policy

You will not be dropped from the course. However, students who feel they are unable to complete the course successfully should talk to the instructor and then contact the Registrar’s Office to initiate the drop process. If you do not, you are at risk of receiving an “F” for the course.

Late Assignment Policy

All assignments will lose 20% of their total grade (i.e., 0.2 of 1%, 1.6 of 8%) for EACH day that they are late, except in cases of documented serious emergency or with advance approval of the instructor.

Technology Policy

Students should not use cell phones in class other than to use iClicker and receive emergency phone calls or phone calls about someone in their care. Students can use a laptop to take notes, but
since slides will be made available after each class, there is no need to write down everything from the slides; instead, notes should focus on what is *not* on the slides (e.g., oral explanations of bullet points on the slides). Checking email, texting, and so forth, is distracting for students and for others. If students believe their situation warrants an exception to this policy, they should talk individually to the instructor.

**Alternative Means of Submitting Work in Case of Technical Difficulties**

It is strongly recommended that students submit their work with plenty of time to spare in the event that they have a technical issue with the course website, network, and/or their computer. It is also recommended that students save all their work (answers to discussion questions, papers, etc.) in a separate Word document as a back-up. This back-up will serve as evidence that they completed the work, and students will not lose credit. If students are experiencing difficulties submitting their work through the course website, they should contact the UTEP Help Desk. Students can email me their back-up document as a last resort.

**Incomplete Grade Policy**

Incomplete grades may be requested only in exceptional circumstances after students have completed at least half of the course requirements. Students should talk to the instructor immediately if they believe an incomplete is warranted. If granted, a contract of work to be completed with deadlines will be established.

**Accommodations Policy**

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Students who become pregnant or have parenting responsibilities may also request reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. The UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) will process requests for accommodations based on a disability, pregnancy, or parenting. Contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915-747-5148, email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal.

**Scholastic Integrity**

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another as one's own. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest
act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All suspected violations of academic integrity at The University of Texas at El Paso must be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR) for possible disciplinary action. To learn more, please visit HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline.

iClicker activities fall under the provisions of the campus academic honesty policy. Students must not engage in academic dishonesty while participating in iClicker activities. This includes but is not limited to:

- Answering polling questions while not physically in class;
- Looking at other students’ devices while answering live questions;
- Submitting votes for a fellow student.

Any student found to be in violation of these rules will lose participation points for the entire term and may be reported to the Dean of Student Discipline.

**Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy**

Use of AI technologies or automated tools, particularly generative AI such as ChatGPT or DALL-E, is *not allowed* for assignments in this class. Each student is expected to use analytical, critical, and creative thinking skills to complete tasks and not rely on computer-generated ideas. Any writing that contains red flags for AI use will be scrutinized. Students may be asked to complete additional assignments if AI is suspected. Any direct use of AI-generated materials submitted as your own work will be treated as plagiarism and reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR).

**Plagiarism Detecting Software**

Some of students’ coursework may submitted to SafeAssign, a plagiarism detecting software. SafeAssign is used review assignment submissions for originality.

**Copyright Statement for Course Materials**

All materials used in this course are protected by copyright law. The course materials are only for the use of students currently enrolled in this course and only for the purpose of this course. They may not be further disseminated.

**Course Resources:** Where you can go for assistance

UTEP provides a variety of student services and support. Please refer to the QR code below for a listing of campus resources or visit https://www.utep.edu/advising/student_resources/student-success-resource-hub.html.
## Course Schedule: What we will cover when

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jan. 16</td>
<td>Introduction: Let’s get parsing!</td>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
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<td>Jan. 18</td>
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<td>Jan. 23</td>
<td>The Subject Noun Phrase and Basic Phrase Structure</td>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Jan. 30</td>
<td>The Verb Phrase, Constituency, and Movement</td>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
<td>Assignment 1 DUE</td>
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<td>Feb. 1</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Feb. 6</td>
<td>The Prepositional Phrase and Complements vs. Modifiers</td>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
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<td>Feb. 8</td>
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<td>Feb. 13</td>
<td>The Complementizer Phrase in Verb Phrases</td>
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<td>Feb. 20</td>
<td>The Complementizer Phrase in Noun Phrases</td>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Mar. 5</td>
<td>Review</td>
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<td>Mar. 14</td>
<td>Spring Break – No Classes</td>
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<td>Mar. 19</td>
<td>Silent Categories</td>
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<td>Mar. 21</td>
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<td>Main Verbs and Simple Tenses</td>
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<td>Auxiliaries and Compound Tenses</td>
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<td>Apr. 9</td>
<td>Tense and Negation</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Apr. 16</td>
<td>Interrogatives, X-Bar Theory, and Adverbs</td>
<td>Chapter 11</td>
<td>Final Paper Proposal DUE (LING 5309)</td>
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**LING 5309 students:** Final paper due on Wednesday, May 8th, by the end of the day