

Generative Syntax

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Office hours: Monday 2:30PM - 4:30PM (PST) in person or by Zoom

Lecture: Tuesday, 3:00PM - 5:50PM in Rolfe 4330

Course Description:

This course will examine basic principles of generative syntax as they apply to specific syntactic structures of English and Spanish primarily. The goals of the course are: (i) to learn basic techniques of syntactic analysis (e.g. constituent analysis, proposing and justifying syntactic structures and movement rules); (ii) to become acquainted with some of the theoretical principles of syntactic theory; and (iii) to gain a deeper understanding of particular aspects of Spanish syntax. No previous knowledge of (generative) syntax is assumed. Coursework emphasizes syntactic argumentation (with few ad hoc postulations), problem solving, and the ability to construct and work with a formal system.

Course Objectives:

The main objectives of the course are to (a) understand the basics of (current) syntactic theory, (b) develop syntactic and analytical argumentation skills, and (c) gain exposure to some syntactic phenomena of Spanish. Via class lectures, in-class exercises, and discussions of homework problems we will construct a model of (a fragment of) Spanish.

Course Materials: Handouts, assignments, and any extra readings will be posted on the course website:

<https://bruinlearn.ucla.edu/courses/143456>

- Required book:
 - *An Introduction to Syntactic Analysis and Theory* by Dominique Sportiche, Hilda Koopman, & Edward Stabler.
- (Strongly) recommended book:
 - *The Syntax of Spanish* by Karen Zagona.

Course Requirements:

All students are expected to do the assigned readings (before or after lecture), attend all lectures, participate in class, and return the assigned work by the due dates and times.

- **Assignments:**
 - (i) Assignments must be typed and sent to me via email before the due date and time. Please, include the question above each answer.
 - (ii) If a question requires technical notation (e.g., syntactic tree analyses), that portion may be hand-written, photographed, and pasted as an image on the document. Alternatively, you may use the software [TreeForm](#) (recommended) or other available resources (e.g., Google Jamboard on a tablet if you have a stylus pen, LaTeX – Qtree or Jtree packages).
 - (iii) Every assignment file you email me should have the following format as file name: LastName, Name – Assignment X. E.g., Mateu, Victoria – Assignment 1.docx
 - (iv) I encourage you to discuss class material with others, but you must do your homework *on your own*. This will help you gauge how well you understand the material.
 - (v) Late assignments will not be accepted except for legitimate reasons (e.g., sickness, injury, loss of relative), in which case an extension may be given if asked *in advance*. Evidence of your excuse may be requested.
- **Final Paper:** The final paper may be:
 - Theoretical squib: Discussion of a debate in the syntactic literature either specifically within Spanish or a more general one for which the facts of Spanish offer tangible insights. You may compare competing syntactic analyses and use Spanish data to adjudicate between them or propose a new syntactic analysis for a Spanish construction.
 - Experimental proposal: Examination of the acquisition (or loss) of a morphosyntactic feature or construction in a Spanish population (child L1, child/adult L2, heritage speakers, bilinguals, clinical populations, adults from different dialects...). It must have a *novel* component to it, i.e. a feature that has not been examined before, or a proposal that offers substantial methodological improvements, and it must be theoretically motivated (e.g., the question “do English L1-Spanish L2ers ever make the mistake “manzana la”? is not theoretically-motivated). It may also consist of a pilot study or corpus study (if time allows it!).
- The final paper will have four components.
 - i) The **proposal** for the topic you would like to explore will be due Week 8, November 15. The idea is basically to pick a question you wished we were covering (in more depth) in class, read up on it, and report on it.
 - ii) A **draft** of the paper will be due Week 9, November 22. The paper draft is required but will not be graded.
 - iii) The **presentation** is a summary of your paper with a handout or ppt and will take place the last day of class, November 29. Presentations will be about 15 minutes long with 10 minutes afterwards for discussion and questions.
 - iv) The **final paper** will be due on Finals Week (Wednesday December 7). The final paper will be an improved and extended version of your draft –it should be at most 15

pages long double-space, and should summarize and synthesize different approaches to the topic you've found, with your own critical commentary.

- Ideas include, but are not limited to:
 - Where can subjects be located in Spanish (Spec-VP, Spec-TP, Spec-CP...)?
 - How are VSO and VOS orders derived (in focus movement, topicalization, yes/no-questions, *wh*-questions)?
 - What is the syntax of (e.g., sentential, constituent) negation in Spanish?
 - What is the syntax of possessive DPs/proper names across different Romance languages?
 - What clitic combinations are possible vs. not? (e.g., The Person Case Constraint, Clitic Logophoric Restriction...)
 - What can overt vs. *pro* subjects refer to? (e.g., The Overt Pronoun Constraint)
 - What is the syntax of *ser/estar*?
 - What is the syntax of Spanish psychological predicates (*temer, preocupar, gustar...*)?
 - What is the syntax of the subjunctive mood? How does it interact with negation? or binding?
 - What is the syntax of imperatives?
 - What is the syntax of passives/impersonals/middles?
 - What is the syntax of comparatives?
 - What is the syntax of ellipsis?
 - What's the syntax of preposition stranding and pied-piping and what constrains access to the former?
 - What's the syntax of DPs with multiple adjectives?
 - How do different Spanish populations acquire/perform on these constructions?
- **Attendance and Participation:** Attendance and active participation are essential. This is a graduate class and as such attendance and ACTIVE participation are expected. You are given no credit for either, however, failure to actively participate and or come to class will have a negative impact in your ability to understand and follow the materials. You are entitled to miss a class without any explanation or documentation. After this, you must provide a legitimate excuse. Travel for conferences or to otherwise represent the university are always excused.

Final grade breakdown:

- Assignments 50%
- Proposal 10%
- Class presentation 10%
- Paper 30%

COVID-19 policies

Currently, UCLA does not require [daily symptom monitoring](#), [indoor masking](#) and [weekly surveillance testing](#), although **masking** indoors remains **strongly recommended**. For these and other recommendations and requirements — including information vaccines and boosters, isolation and quarantine, and entry to campus events — please see: [COVID protocols at a glance](#).

If you are **experiencing symptoms** of COVID-19 or have been **in contact** with someone confirmed to have been infected, immediately **call the Ashe Center's COVID-19 Hotline** at 310-206-6217. I will do my best to support students who are complying with the requirement to stay home due to COVID-19 symptoms and/or a positive COVID-19 test. **Contact me *in advance*** if you need to stay home, and we will make alternative arrangements for you.

Lastly, note that significant changes in the public health landscape could require UCLA to make changes to instruction — including adjusting classroom density, shifting to hybrid or completely remote instruction. The [COVID-19 Pivot Plan \(PDF\)](#) describes the criteria that will inform possible changes in our operations. Please, **stay alert to emails**, and thank you for your cooperation!

Students with Special Needs

Students needing academic accommodations based on a disability should contact the Center for Accessible Education (CAE) at (310) 825-1501 or in person at Murphy Hall A255 within the first two weeks of the term, as reasonable notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. For more information visit: www.cae.ucla.edu.

Class syllabus:

Because this is a small class with potentially *very* different backgrounds, the pace and final coverage is **subject to change**.

Please, stay alert in class and check your email often for updates.

Week	Date	Topic	Assignments
1	9/27	Word categories and Constituency <i>Readings: ISAT Ch. 1, §2.1, Ch. 3 (not §3.5)</i>	
2	10/4	Phrases, X-bar Theory, and Binding Theory <i>Readings: ISAT Ch. 4, Ch. 5, §6.1-§6.7, §7.1-§7.4</i>	
3	10/11	Locality of Selection and the Basics of Movement <i>Readings: ISAT §6.8-§6.9, Ch. 8 (not §8.4 or §8.9)</i>	HW1 due (10%)
4	10/18	Cont'd	HW2 due (10%)
5	10/25	The DP Domain: quantifiers, proper names, agreement, modification <i>Readings: ISAT §8.4; Zagana §2.5-2.9</i>	HW3 due (10%)
6	11/1	The VP Domain: Intransitives (unaccusatives/unergatives), VP-shells, passives, modification	HW4 due (10%)

		<i>Readings: ISAT Ch. 12, §13.4; Zagona Ch. 3, §4.1, §4.2</i>	
7	11/8	The VP Domain: Raising/Control <i>Readings: ISAT §8.7.2, Ch. 9</i>	HW5 due (10%)
8	11/15	The VP Domain: Clitics <i>Readings: Zagona §4.4</i>	Proposal due (10%)
9	11/22	The CP Domain: Topic/Focus, Wh-movement, Relative clauses, Constraints <i>Readings: ISAT Ch. 10, Ch. 14</i>	Draft due
10	11/29	Presentations	Presentation due (10%)
Finals	12/7		Paper due