

**LING 787 DL1: Syntax II**  
**Fall 2020**

Lecture: T 4:30-7:10 Online (Zoom)  
Professor: Sylvia L.R. Schreiner  
sschrei2@gmu.edu  
Office hours (Zoom): M 1:30-2:30, T 3-4p  
(On-campus office: Robinson Hall B 378C)

TA: Giulia Masella Soldati  
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Office hours (Zoom): by appointment

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*If you have questions, concerns, or want feedback about any aspect of this course, please contact one of us via email or drop by virtually during office hours!*

**Prerequisites:** Please talk to me if you have not taken LING 786 (Syntax I) or equivalent.

**Course Description**

This course is the second semester of graduate syntax. We will be continuing your study of formal generative syntax by studying transformational grammar, focusing on X' theory and Minimalist approaches to classic and modern problems for syntactic analysis.

I want you to:

- Build on your skills of syntactic analysis and argumentation;
- Become (more) familiar with phenomena that are well-known in the field;
- Become familiar with the major aims, methods, successes, and failures of Minimalist approaches, and compare them to older approaches;
- Improve your ability to interact critically with primary literature; and
- Improve your ability to undertake original syntactic research and analysis, and to write up your research like a syntactician.

**Course Format and Schedule**

Blackboard Course Site: [202070.82469 LING-787-DL1 \(Fall 2020\)](https://blackboard.gmu.edu/course/202070.82469/LING-787-DL1(Fall2020))

- This is a synchronous online course, but practically speaking it will be something of a “hybrid” in terms of synchronicity. Our units will operate on a Friday-Thursday cycle.
- Each week by Friday I will post one or more brief lecture videos, along with other required or optional resources (video and otherwise). You will be responsible for reading the required reading(s) and accessing any required videos or other resources. Homeworks and discussion posts will be based on these lectures and readings.
- Discussion posts are due on Monday nights. On Tuesdays we will have our synchronous class meeting, during which we will discuss the discussion posts you’ve made, answer questions, and clarify anything from the material that needs clarifying. Respond to at least one post by a classmate by Wednesday night. Homeworks are due Thursdays. Here’s the schedule laid out in calendar form (and a possible schedule for you—obviously not the only way of doing things. Maybe you have family responsibilities on the weekend and can’t do class work then, maybe you work during the week and have to do all your asynchronous work for this class on Sunday afternoons, etc.):

	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>
<b>Class schedule</b>	New unit starts (lecture video(s) and discussion prompts posted)				Synchronous class session		
<b>Suggested activity</b>	Watch lecture video(s), read material	Watch lecture video(s), read material	Start homework	Post discussion responses	Discuss, ask questions in class	Finish homework	
<b>Due</b>				Discussion post			Homework, Discussion response(s)

### Resources

All course policies, calendars, assignments, and readings from outside the textbook will be posted on our Blackboard site. The copy of the syllabus posted there will always be the most up-to-date one, and supersedes the one posted on the first day.

- **Required textbook:** Carnie, Andrew. 2013. *Syntax: A Generative Introduction, Third Edition*. Wiley-Blackwell. ISBN: 978-0470655313.

Note: George Mason Bookstore will only sell textbooks and course materials online prior to the start of the fall semester. In order to maintain social distancing protocols, the bookstore will limit the number of customers that can come into the store at a given time.

Useful (not required) textbooks:

- Adger, David. 2003. *Core Syntax*. Oxford: Oxford UP.
- Hornstein, Norbert, et al. 2005. *Understanding Minimalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- Citko, Barbara. 2014. *Phase Theory: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP. ISBN: 978-1107040847
- Radford, Andrew. 2004. *Minimalist Syntax: Exploring the structure of English*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.

### Course Requirements

#### 1. **Homework exercises (50%)**

I will give you problems to think about and reason through, or data to analyze, and you will write up your thoughts/answers and turn them in via our Blackboard site. You are allowed and even encouraged to work with others to complete these assignments, but what you turn in must be your own work, in your own words. Please acknowledge anyone you worked with by noting their name(s) at the beginning of your writeup.

#### 2. **Discussion posts (10%)**

Make a post to the week's discussion board each week by Monday night. Respond to at least one of your classmate's posts by that Thursday night. Posts can be questions, comments, or musings, but should be related to the material under study for that week. Simple clarification questions are ok, but questions or comments that connect the material to previous discussions, other languages, or other concepts you know about are better.

#### 3. **Wikipedia project (40%)**

Your semester-long project will focus on creating or improving a Wikipedia page (or part of a page) on a less-well-known language or syntactic phenomenon. You will complete several lead-up assignments, culminating in a significant contribution to a Wikipedia page. This contribution, together with a brief squib-style write-up, make up your final project grade.

## **Grading Breakdown**

Grading is based on a point system. There are 1000 possible points, and your final grade is determined by the total number of points earned.

<i>Discussion posts &amp; responses</i>	100 points
<i>Homework</i>	500 points (point totals vary)
<i>Wikipedia project</i>	400 points
<i>Scaffolded assignments</i>	150 points
<i>Final Wikipedia page contribution</i>	150 points
<i>Final write-up</i>	100 points

990-1000 A+	870-899 B+	
930-989 A	830-869 B	600-799 C (unsatisfactory/passing)
900-929 A-	800-829 B-	<700 F (unsatisfactory/failing)

## **Course Policies**

### **Zoom procedures and etiquette**

- *Technology:* We will be using the Zoom platform for class meetings and office hours. Please familiarize yourself with it before the first day of class. If you have any questions, please let me know or take a look at the Zoom help pages on the GMU ITS web page: <https://its.gmu.edu/service/zoom/>. Links to each of our class meetings and each instance of office hours are located in the “Zoom Course Meetings” tab on Blackboard. Use of a computer is recommended; tablets and phones will also work but make sure you download the app ahead of time. We will also be using an online whiteboard through a browser during some synchronous sessions, which may be difficult for those joining via phone.
- *Recording:* So that you can view class meetings again, to help students who may miss a class meeting, and to support students using assistive technologies, class meetings will be automatically recorded and uploaded to the Zoom cloud server. Links will be posted on our course Blackboard page. I will remove these videos from the cloud server at the end of the semester and would ask that you delete any you have downloaded at that time. However, we can’t control where local copies go. So, please note the following:
  - If your video is on, your likeness will be recorded.
  - If your microphone is on, your voice will be recorded.
  - If you type in chat, your message will be recorded. (Exception: Private chats sent to individuals who do not have recording privileges do not end up in transcripts.)

Given these facts, and because any of you may have other privacy concerns regardless of recording, you will never be required to turn on your video or microphone or contribute to chat. If you would like to contribute in one of these ways but do not wish to be recorded, you are welcome to type “off the record” in the chat window, and I will pause the recording for you to ask a question or make a comment in whatever modality you like. You can still contribute to discussion without video, mic, or chat by responding to my yes/no questions using the Zoom yes/no tool, asking to slow down or speed up or for a break using those tools, or responding to polls. Note that I will never record office hours unless everyone in attendance asks for a recording to be made.

- *Mic and video:* If you choose to (sometimes) have your mic and/or video on:
  - Please keep yourself muted when not talking. Our course meetings are set to start with everyone muted. If you end up unmuted and I mute you, please don’t be offended. 😊

- You are welcome to keep your video on during class, though if you are having connectivity issues it may help to turn it off. If you have your video on and there is a cute pet or baby in the house, at least one cute pet or baby appearance is required during the semester. ☺ (Though if your cat is going to be actively clawing at your screen the whole time, maybe turn your video off so it's easier for the rest of us to concentrate.)
- *Attendance:* You are expected to attend all synchronous meetings and recitation sections. Due to the extraordinary global circumstances in which we find ourselves this semester, I will not be monitoring attendance as part of your grade. However, if you cannot attend a particular meeting, please email me. You don't need to explain why you can't attend, but please let me know.
- *Start time:* We will start our sessions within the first couple of minutes of the scheduled time. If for some reason you are only available later, joining late is better than not joining at all—but please make sure you're muted when you join.
- *Your name:* I need to be able to identify you in order to let you in from the waiting room, and to call on you if you want to ask a question. Please use the following format for your Zoom name when you come to class: first (given) name, last (family name) initial, pronouns (e.g. Sylvia S. (she/her); Ali M. (he/him); Sola T. (she/her or they/them), etc.). You can change this at any time by clicking on the 'participants' menu, going to your name, clicking 'more', and choosing 'rename'.
  - If your name is different from what I will see in our official rosters, please just send me an email so that I know which roster name to associate you with.
  - If you have privacy concerns and would like not to have your name listed, you are free to use a pseudonym for class, but please let me know beforehand (again, so I know which roster name to associate you with).
  - If your pronouns are less well known, please feel free to email me beforehand to let me know how to pronounce them.
- *Interacting:* If you want to ask a question or make a comment during class, please use the 'raise hand' feature on Zoom and wait for me to call your name. Since we're a small class, if I don't notice your hand, please feel free to speak up. If I ask a yes/no question of the whole class, you can respond using the yes/no features. If I'm explaining something and you want me to slow down or speed up, use those features. If you want to do the equivalent of nodding thoughtfully in class and don't want to have your video on, you can use the 'thumbs up' reaction. If someone has just said the most brilliant thing you've ever heard, feel free use the 'applause' reaction. ☺ If you need to step away from the computer for a moment, feel free to put up the 'away' sign.

## Late Work

- Late work is generally not accepted. That being said, things happen, and this semester is likely to be more full of...things...than usual. Please contact me *before* the due date if there are extenuating circumstances that you think will prevent you from completing an assignment on time, and we will try to work something out. If an emergency comes up, contact me as soon as you can. If I don't hear from you and your assignment just comes in late, I won't accept it for credit (though I will still provide feedback).

## Communication and Grades

- I am available to answer brief questions via email, but please allow a minimum of 24 hours for a response. (Please don't wait until the night before the assignment is due; you might not receive a response before class.) When emailing, please *include "LING 787" in the subject of your email* and provide a subject line that makes it as clear as possible what you are emailing about.

- Any detailed questions about assignments or material should be handled in class or office hours, as email often isn't conducive to providing the most helpful kind of answer. If your schedule doesn't allow you to come to my office hours, please email me so that we can set up an appointment at a mutually convenient time. If you wish to make an appointment, in your email please include times that you are available, and do not expect to make an appointment with less than 48 hours' notice.
- My scheduled office hours are reserved just for you! Please come by, if only to say 'hi', at least once during the semester. Otherwise I'll just be sitting on Zoom, sadly waiting for students. Don't wait until you are feeling really lost to talk to me.
- I will, from time to time, email you on your Mason account with important information. It is your responsibility to check your email daily in order to receive these messages.

### **Diversity and Inclusion**

As you know, George Mason University is an incredibly diverse institution. This course will provide an inclusive environment for learning about the science of language. Please show respect for your fellow students and the experiences and identities they bring to our classroom. Many related resources are available for students at Mason, including through the [Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Multicultural Education \(ODIME\)](#), [International Programs and Services](#), [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning Resources](#), and the [Military Alliance Program](#).

### **Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, and Interpersonal Violence**

Your education should be free from all forms of interpersonal harassment and violence. If you have been harassed, assaulted, or subjected to sexual misconduct or any other form of interpersonal violence, please seek assistance. Please note that as a faculty member and designated "Responsible Employee," I am required to report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason's [Title IX Coordinator](#) per [university policy 1412](#). If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact the [Student Support and Advocacy Center](#) (703-380-1434), [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (703-993-2380), [Student Health Services](#), or [Mason's Title IX Coordinator](#) (703-993-8730; [cde@gmu.edu](mailto:cde@gmu.edu)).

### **Policy on Academic Integrity**

Mason has an Honor Code (<http://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/full-honor-code-document/>). Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. This includes copying work from other students or other sources without proper citation and allowing others to copy from your work. If you are unsure about what constitutes cheating or plagiarism, please don't be afraid to ask me. Students are encouraged to work together on homework assignments; however, each student must turn in their own work. If you work with someone else on a homework assignment, please note the names of the individual(s) you worked with on the top of your assignment.

The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe and can include a grade of "0" on an assignment, a failing grade in the course, or further disciplinary action. All suspected honor code violations will be reported. *Please* come and talk to me if you feel that you are struggling in the course, and we will work together to help you succeed.

### **Accommodations for Disabilities**

If you have a documented learning disability or other condition that may affect academic performance you should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with Disability Services (SUB I, Rm. 4205; 993-2474; <http://ds.gmu.edu>) to determine the accommodations you need; and 2) talk with me to discuss your accommodation needs.

### **Religious Holidays**

If a class or due date conflicts with a religious holiday, please notify me as soon as possible, but no later than one week prior to the holiday, so that any necessary arrangements can be made.

**Enrollment**

Students are responsible for verifying their enrollment in this class. Schedule adjustments should be made by the deadlines published in the Schedule of Classes. After the last day to drop a class, withdrawing from this class requires the approval of the dean and is only allowed for nonacademic reasons.

- Last Day to Add: 8/31
- Last Day to Drop: 9/15 (with 50% tuition refund. With 100% refund, 9/8)

**Coronavirus Resources**

[Mason's website on Coronavirus/COVID-19](#) is the official source for university updates. It also provides information and resources regarding the university's response for students, faculty and staff. Please check this webpage regularly for updates. If you have individual concerns about the university's response, please contact [safety@gmu.edu](mailto:safety@gmu.edu).

***Tentative Course Calendar*** (subject to change)

**Readings outside the text for each week are posted on Blackboard.**

	Lecture(s) (posted by previous Friday morning)	Readings (read before and/or after viewing lecture material)	Discussion post due (Mon)	Class date (Tue)	Assignments and discussion response(s) due (Thu)
Week 1 8/24-8/28	--	Syllabus	--	8/25	--
Week 2 8/31-9/4	Introduction & Generative Grammar	Carnie Ch 1 & 2 Radford 2004 Ch 1 Op: Wasow 2001	8/31 Welcome Discussion & Discussion 1	9/1	9/3 Responses only
Week 3 9/7-9/11 <i>Labor Day</i>	Constituency, Structural Relations, Binding Theory	Carnie Chs 3, 4, 5 Adger 2014	--	9/8	9/10 Homework 1
Week 4 9/14-9/18	X' theory	Carnie Chs 6, 7, 8	9/14 Discussion 2	9/15	9/17 Project 1
Week 5 9/21-9/25	Movement in X'	Carnie Chs 10, 11	9/21 Discussion 3	9/22	9/24 Homework 2
Week 6 9/28-10/2	Movement in X'	Carnie Chs 12, 13	9/28 Discussion 4	9/29	10/1 Project 2
Week 7 10/5-10/9	Raising, Control, and Ellipsis in X'	Carnie Chs 15, 16	10/5 Discussion 5	10/6	10/8 Homework 3
Week 8 10/12-10/16 <i>Fall break</i>	Catch up	--	--	NO CLASS (due to fall break)	--
Week 9 10/19-10/23	Minimalism: Introduction	Citko 2014 Ch 1, Gallego 2010 Ch 1	10/19 Discussion 6	10/20	10/22 Homework 4
Week 10 10/26-10/30	Minimalism: Head movement	Radford 2004 Ch 5 Matushanksy 2006	10/26 Discussion 7	10/27	10/29 Homework 5
Week 11 11/2-11/6	Minimalism: Head movement	Dekany 2018	--	NO CLASS (election day)	--
Week 12 11/9-11/13	Case study: Ergativity	Mithun 2001 Ch 4 Coon 2013	11/9 Discussion 8	11/10	11/12 Homework 6
Week 13 11/16-11/20	Case study: Tense and Aspect	Carnie 9 Stowell 2012 Demirdache & Uribe Etxebarria 2007	11/16 Discussion 9	11/17	11/19 Project 3
Week 14 11/23-11/27 <i>Thanksgiving</i>	Case study: Non- configurationality	Hale 1983 Bliss 2017	11/23 Discussion 10	11/24	--
Week 15 11/30-12/4	Work on presentations	--	--	12/1 Presentations	--
Finals 12/9-12/16					12/15 Final project (7:15 pm)