

SPN 6855 Structure of Spanish: Morphosyntax

M periods 9-11  
UST 108

**Instructor**

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**Course Description**

This course is an introduction to transformational (morpho)syntactic theory, developed through the study of central aspects of Spanish grammar (e um pouco de português). Via class lectures, discussions of homework problems and in-class exercises, we will construct a model of (a fragment of) Spanish. Coursework emphasizes problem solving, syntactic argumentation, and the ability to construct and work with a formal system.

**Objectives**

- gain exposure to some syntactic phenomena of Spanish/Portuguese
- understand the basics of (current) syntactic theory
- develop syntactic and analytical argumentation skills

**Prerequisites**

The prerequisites for this class are SPN 6705 (Foundations in Hispanic Linguistics) or SPN 3700 (Introduction to Hispanic Linguistics) or LIN 3010 (Introduction to Linguistics) or their equivalents. Please talk to me if you have not taken the prerequisites. We will touch on basic concepts rather quickly in the beginning of the semester.

**Course Materials**

1. Tallerman, Maggie. 1998/2005. *Understanding Syntax*, 1<sup>st</sup> or 2nd edition. London: Hodder Arnold.
2. Zagana, K. 2002. *The syntax of Spanish*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Highly suggested:

3. Carnie, A. 2002. *Syntax: a Generative Introduction*. MA, Blackwell Wiley

- A web-based tree drawing program is available at: [www.ironcreek.net/phpsyntaxtree/](http://www.ironcreek.net/phpsyntaxtree/).

To use it, replace the bracketed structure in the window with the one you want and press draw. Right click on the picture and save it somewhere. Then in Word, choose Insert > Picture > From file and locate your saved file. It might appear blank in your document if you don't have View in Word set to Print Layout. It might also be a little tricky using special characters with this program.

- An online syntax textbook by Beatrice Santorini and Anthony Kroch is available at [www.ling.upenn.edu/~beatrice/syntax-textbook/toc-long.html](http://www.ling.upenn.edu/~beatrice/syntax-textbook/toc-long.html). You might use this to supplement topics covered in class.

### **Requirements**

• homework	20%
• Annotated Bibliography	10%
• Squib/Presentation	20%
Chapter Presentation	20%
• Final exam	30%

*Homework assignments.* The primary vehicle for the first half of the course material is the homework assignments. Upon reading each chapter from the Tallerman text, you will do all the exercise at the end of each chapter. These are to be done BEFORE coming to class on the day for which the chapter should have been read (e.g. for next class, week 2, you will have read chapter 1 and come to class with the exercises completed). We will (try our best) to go over the homework in class. You will choose 4 of these homework assignments to turn in for a grade. The days you will be turning in the homework (4 of 7 times) for a grade, you should print two copies (one to turn in and the second for you to use to make corrections on in class). You may redo two assignments during the semester if the grade was below a B. The final grade on the homework will be the average of the two homeworks.

You may work on the homework in groups in the sense of discussion of ideas and solutions, however, you must turn in an individual copy for grading. You must write up the homework of your own accord. If you discuss the material with other members of the class, on your paper, indicate who you worked with.

Keep in mind that you are fully responsible for the material of all assignments, whether or not you hand in a particular. I recommend your doing all the homeworks in earnest so that you can get the most of class discussions. If you do not understand something, please come see me prior to class. That is, try to keep up with homework well in advance of their being due so you can see me in my office hours.

*Annotated Bibliography:* an annotated bibliography of 5 sources relevant for your squib project (see below) is due in class on week 7. You should pick a topic no later than week 4 and come to my office to discuss it. I will be very happy to point you in the right direction for relevant literature.

*Squib:* a squib is a “short article”, usually presenting a concise argument with data of a timely nature. For the purposes of this class, a squib will be a short paper (2500-3500 words) in which you present the literature and relevance of a debate in the syntactic literature either specifically within Spanish (and/or Portuguese) or a more general one for which the facts of Spanish (and/or Portuguese) offer tangible insights in your opinion. You will present your squib topic the final day of class, 15 minute presentation (5-10 minutes for questions)

Ideas include, but not limited to:

Where are subjects located in Spanish (and Portuguese): the Spec of TP/IP, CP or both?  
Are object clitics base-generated or is there clitic climbing?

How can we account syntactically for infinitives with lexical subjects in some dialects of Spanish. e.g. Caribbean Spanish?

What does dialectal variation mean in syntactic terms for properties such as Overt/Null subject distribution, differential object marking, word order differences, etc.

In what ways and for what properties can acquisition data help us determine between competing syntactic analyses for a given property.

What is the connection between syntactic representations and processing strategies/preference, how can you show this?

*Presentations:* Starting on week 10, we will switch to the Zagona book *The Syntax of Spanish*. Each person is responsible for presenting 2 of these chapters, with a partner (and as the case maybe 2 others depending on the final size of the class). You SHOULD acquire the background knowledge to handle the Zagona chapters with relative ease from the first eight weeks in the Tallerman book, however, I am of course available to you to help guide you in this process. Your job is to redact the chapter into notes for your classmates, who will have also read the chapters and come prepared, as well as provide the class with discussion questions and practice with the topics in the form of activities. You have three hours each class. Roughly half should be used to cover the material, with particular interest towards the main macro topics. The remainder should be used to practice the material covered in terms of analysis. We will assign chapters the first week of class, there is NO reason you cannot start to do your presentation well before the week it is to take place.

*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 result in lowering your grade, as much as a full grade (e.g. A-B). You are entitled to miss two classes without any documentation. After this, you must provide documentation of a legitimate excuse. Missing more than 5 classes will result in automatic failure. Travel for conferences or to otherwise representing the university are always excused. As a reminder, even if you do not turn in an assignment, you are responsible for the related material and for working through the homework. This will allow you to more fully follow and participate in the class discussion

**Grading**

Homeworks will be graded using the letter scale below. The corresponding numerical score on a one hundred point scale is given. The Style Sheet discusses some of the evaluation criteria.

A+	100	C	75
A	95	C-	72
A-	92	D+	68
B+	88	D	65
B	85	D-	62
B-	82	E	50
C+	78		

The course grading scale is as follows:

A	93.3 - 100	B-	80 – 83.2	D+	66.7 – 69.9
A-	90 – 93.2	C+	76.7 – 79.9	D	63.3 – 66.6
B+	86.7 – 89.9	C	73.3 – 76.6	D-	60 – 63.2
B	83.3 – 86.6	C-	70 – 73.2	E	< 60

Further information about UF's grading policies and the calculation of grade point averages is at <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>.

**Miscellaneous**

*Academic honesty.* Academic misconduct, including but not limited to cheating and plagiarism, will not be tolerated. It may result in disciplinary action and an E for the course. The University has an Honor Code, which reads as follows: "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity". You can read all about it at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>. The bottom line is "On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

Copying or sharing any part of your homework assignments in any way, shape, or form is strictly prohibited. For computer work, this includes, but is not limited to, using the same file/document as someone else, using a modified file/document, or copying information between files/documents. No written work may be a joint effort in any way unless explicitly permitted and stated.

*Accommodations for students with disabilities.* Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc>. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

**Schedule**

The following schedule is a rough estimate of the course's progress. You can use it to plan when homeworks will be due. Bear in mind that it is subject to change.

WEEK	DATES	CORE TOPICS	WORK DUE
1	August 20	No class	
2	27 Introduction	General Introduction to the course, start reviewing what syntax is, syntactic analysis	
3	September 3	No class	
4	10	The basics of syntax Tallerman, chapter 1	Exercises Taller chapter 1
5	17	Word classes, Tallerman Chapter 2	Exercises Taller chapter 2
6	24	Phrasal components/structure of clauses, Tallerman chapter 3	Exercises Taller chapter 3
7	October 1	Heads (word and phrases), Tallerman chapter 4	Exercises Taller chapter 4; ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE
8	8	Constituents, Tallerman chapter 5	Exercises Taller chapter 5
9	15	Clausal relationships, Tallerman chapter 6	Exercises Taller chapter 6
10	22	Syntactic processes, Tallerman chapter 7	Exercises Taller chapter 7
11	29	Zagona chapter 1	Presented by _____ _____ _____
12	November 5	Zagona chapter 2	Presented by _____ _____ _____
13	12	Zagona chapter 3	Presented by _____ _____ _____
14	19	Zagona chapter 4	Presented by _____ _____ _____
15	26	Zagona chapter 5	Presented by _____ _____ _____

16	December 3 Squibs due	Presentations	
	Take home final exams, due by noon Dec 7		