Syntax and Semantics: The Structure and Meaning of Utterances
Unique # 41185 – LIN 372L – MWF 1:00–2:00 p.m. – PAR 105

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Description. In this course we study the syntax and semantics of human language. Syntax is concerned with how words are combined to form sentences. Semantics is concerned with what those sentences mean, and how the meaning of a sentence is constructed from the meanings of the component words. We will survey and analyze syntactic and semantic phenomena from a wide variety of the world’s languages. This will reveal interesting patterns lurking within human languages—despite their sometimes chaotic surface appearance. We will also discover surprising similarities across seemingly diverse languages.

Grading. 1. Class attendance and participation: 10%. 2. Homework: 30%. 3. Five in-class quizzes x 8% each = 40%. 4. Final exam: 20%.

Learning about syntax and semantics is not just a matter of acquiring facts. It also involves learning how to analyze language. Like swimming or calculus, linguistic analysis is a practice that you learn by doing, and not solely by reading books and listening to lectures. It is essential that you keep up with the homework, as this is the way to learn syntactic analysis. Class attendance is also essential. Material will be covered in class that does not appear in the textbook or other readings.

All written homework must be typed. Diagrams can be drawn by hand, but please be neat! Messy work will be returned without credit. Late homework will receive no credit.

Other materials will be available on the Blackboard web site (courses.utexas.edu)

Key dates
January 22: Last day to add or drop a class without approval from dept. chair and dean.
February 3: Last day to drop for possible refund.
February 15: Last day to drop without a possible academic penalty.

Honesty Policy
You can work together on homework. However, you must hand in your own work, and whenever you work together or give or receive help from other students, you must indicate the names of those students on the first page of the work that you hand in. Of course, the quizzes and final exam must reflect your own thinking, not that of your neighbors. For some of the quizzes, but not others, you can consult notes and/or books. I’ll let you know in advance for each quiz whether it is ‘open book/note’ or not.