

# ENGL 354-01 English Grammar and Syntax

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Class Room: Edwards 246  
Class Time: MWF 11:00p-11:50p  
Office Hours: MWF 12p-1p; T 10a-11a

## Catalogue Course Description

This course examines individual components of modern English grammar from a formal perspective in the formation of phrases, clauses, and sentences. Students will analyze the patterned, rule governed nature of language through a study of syntax in standard and nonstandard varieties of English, especially in examples of written texts, and will apply grammar concepts to their own writing.

## Required Materials

- Course text distributed in .pdf through Blackboard
- ENGL 101, 102, and ENGL 205

## Course Goals and Objectives

Although we use it every day, and although we all have strong opinions about its proper form and appropriate use, we rarely stop to think about the wonder of **Language**. One of the most interesting questions in the scientific study of Language is how we subconsciously get from sounds and words to meaning. You are reading this and understanding it, but you have no conscious knowledge of how you are doing this. For example:

**Question:** What is the problem with the following sentences?

- \*Sally's brother doesn't like herself.*
- \*It was expected Harry to leave early.*
- \*Who do you wonder what bought?*

**Question:** Why is *Wash your hands!* OK without having a word as the subject but *\*Ran to the store.* is bad?

**Question:** Why is *Colorless green ideas sleep furiously.* a fine sentence grammatically, yet you have no clue what it actually means?

You know that the sentences asked about above are *bad* in some way, yet you can't really express why (the "rules" Ms. Crabtree taught you in grade school don't seem to help you with any of these problems). The study of this mystery is the science of **Linguistics**. This class is about one aspect of how language works: how **sentences** are structured, what linguists call **Syntax**.

In this class we'll pull back the curtain and look at the black box that is Language to figure out what the rules actually are that govern sentence structure.

## Student Learning Objectives

This course is a scientific exploration of the structure of sentences. This course seeks to provide you with the tools to do syntactic analysis on a variety of sentence structures in English as well as in other languages. By the end of this course you should have gained a solid understanding of modern syntactic theory as well as the ability to apply this theory to a variety of novel sentence structures present in real world languages.

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## Course Requirements and Evaluation

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To foster and assess these objectives, you will complete a series of problem sets and exams which will ask you to apply linguistic analysis to real world data. You will show your mastery of the course material through 9 Problem Sets, 5 Quizzes, and 4 Exams.

### Course Grade Determination

The course will be graded out of 100% as outlined below. Final grades will be converted to a letter scale.

• Exams	60%	90-100	A	70-74	C
• Problem Sets	30%	85-89	B+	65-69	D+
• Quizzes	10%	80-84	B	60-64	D
• TOTAL	100%	75-79	C+	00-59	F

### Exams

There will be 4 exams each worth 15% for a total of 60% of the final grade. The exams are not cumulative (the final exam will only cover the material since the 3<sup>rd</sup> exam). The exams will present you with real-world linguistic data and ask you to apply classroom concepts covered in lecture notes and the readings to analyze the data.

### Quizzes

There will be 5 quizzes worth 2% each for a total of 10% of the final grade. Quizzes will be completed in class and will not take the entire period. The quizzes are meant to help you understand which concepts you understand well and which you need more help with before the exam. Unlike the exams, the quizzes will be multiple choice.

### Problem Sets

There will be 9 Problem Sets (PSets). I will drop the lowest grade and take the average score of the remaining 8 PSets for a total of 30% of the final grade. The PSets will give you a chance to apply classroom concepts to real-world language data, and they are meant to prepare you for the exams. The PSets will be completed outside of class time and turned in at the beginning of class on the days they are due.

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## **Policies and Procedures**

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### **Attendance**

To do well in this class, it is essential that you be in class each meeting. Especially since the course text will only be a written version of my lecture notes, which will be out of context without having been in class. Excessive absences will negatively impact your final grade.

If you are unable to attend a class for any reason, you are responsible for contacting me to receive any materials distributed on that day and to turn in any assignments. You will be held responsible for anything missed during an absence.

### **Late Work**

All work must be turned in at the beginning of class on the date it is due. Late work will not be accepted. (Extenuating circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis)

### **Academic Integrity**

Cheating in any form will not be tolerated. See the university's policy on academic integrity.

### **Classroom Etiquette**

You are expected to conduct yourself in a professional manner regarding your interaction with the professor as well as with your fellow classmates. Lively discussion and multiple viewpoints are encouraged in this class; however, you are always expected to respond in a professional manner towards the ideas and opinions of your classmates. Professionalism and respect are also expected regarding cell phones.

This schedule is tentative and subject to change as necessary.

Week	Date	Description	Due
1	13-Jan	What is linguistics; Rules, Prescriptive vs Descriptive	
	15-Jan	No Class	
	17-Jan	Where do the rules come from? Language acquisition	
2	20-Jan	MLK no class	
	22-Jan	Syntactic Category	
	24-Jan	Syntactic structure Basics	<b>Pset 1</b>
3	27-Jan	No Class	
	29-Jan	Phrase structure rules; subcategorization and C-selection	
	31-Jan	Sentence Structure (SVO)	
4	3-Feb	SVO Languages vs other combinations	
	5-Feb	Empty elements and Modification	
	7-Feb	Modification practice	<b>Pset 2</b>
5	10-Feb	<b>Exam 1</b>	
	12-Feb	Argument vs Adjunct (of prepositions)	
	14-Feb	Constituent Tests (DPs and NPs)	
6	17-Feb	Constituent Tests (VPs)	
	19-Feb	Complex Tree structures (embedded clauses)	
	21-Feb	Infinitives and PRO	
7	24-Feb	Complex Tree structure practice	<b>Pset 3</b>
	26-Feb	<b>Exam 2</b>	
	28-Feb	Binding Theory	
8	3-Mar	C-command and Locality	
	5-Mar	Pronouns and R-expressions	
	7-Mar	Theta Theory	<b>Pset 4</b>
	10-Mar	Spring Break	
	12-Mar	Spring Break	
	14-Mar	Spring Break	
	17-Mar	DP subject movement	
9	19-Mar	EPP and Expletives	
	21-Mar	Indirect Objects	
	24-Mar	Case Theory	<b>Pset 5</b>
	26-Mar	<b>Exam 3</b>	
	28-Mar	No Class (Southeastern Conference on Linguistics)	
	31-Mar	Active and Passive voice	
	2-Apr	Tense, Aspect, Mood	
	4-Apr	<i>BE</i> verbs	<b>Pset 6</b>
	7-Apr	Questions (yes/no)	
12	9-Apr	Questions	
	11-Apr	WH questions	
	14-Apr	WH questions and negation	<b>Pset 7</b>
	16-Apr	Embedded clause Questions	

	18-Apr	Student Holiday	
14	21-Apr	Subject questions	
	23-Apr	Relative Clauses	<b>Pset 8</b>
	25-Apr	Strength of heads	
15	28-Apr	Cross linguistic Strength of heads	
	30-Apr	Review	<b>Pset 9</b>
Final	2-May	<b>Exam 4</b>	