

The University of Western Ontario
Department of Modern Languages and Literatures
Principles of Syntax
SPANISH - SP 9700B
LINGUISTICS – LING 9601
Preliminary syllabus

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Course Description and Objectives

How do you put words together to form sentences? How does the way we build our sentences contribute towards interpretation? Why are some sentences ambiguous? Does the concept of grammaticality exist in the mind, or is it a social construct?

This course aims at understanding ways in which these questions and others may be approached, and how they contribute to our understanding of the human mind. More than focusing on ready-made answers, we hope to learn to think about language, that is, we will try to analyze sentences in different ways, making different hypotheses about them. Then we will try to weigh the evidence that supports each of these hypotheses.

The course is taught once a week (3:00 hours) in English.

Methodology

The methodology is one of discovery. Classes will be divided in the following way: about an hour and a half will be dedicated to theories and the evidence needed to back them up, an about half will be dedicated to putting the theory in practice. In every class the students will receive a list of sentences that we will discuss and try to understand from a linguistic point of view.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Understand the relevance of all types of linguistic data to linguistic analysis, with a focus on English/Spanish (we will also see other languages).
- Form hypotheses about the structure of sentences based on data.
- Produce arguments in support of certain analyses.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a major academic offense (see Scholastic Offense