Course Description: This course is an introduction to the formal theory of syntax. We will examine the syntactic structure of Language within the Generative framework. From this point of view, sentences are considered to be generated by a formal mathematical system of rules and constraints that are part of the linguistic knowledge of the speaker. In this class, the theory of Principles and Parameters (P&P) approach to syntax will be introduced. This approach, known also as Government and Binding Theory (GB), had a rich empirical foundation. We will see how various modules of syntactic systems interact to generate sentences, and how specific universal constraints control this generation. Topics include the lexicon, phrase structure, Case and Theta theories, binding theory, empty categories, overt movement, (non)-configurationality, scrambling, etc. Data from a number of genetically related and unrelated languages will be examined and discussed. While the course is primarily designed to discuss syntactic concepts within the framework of P&P, we will also refer to the more recent Minimalist Program (MP) framework (Chomsky 1995 and work thereafter).

Goal: One of the essential goals of this course is to develop a deep understanding of the syntactic structure of Language through readings, class discussions and problem solving. In this regard, homework assignments prove to be very crucial.

Note: this course requires intensive reading. Please put aside several hours a week for the reading and homework assignments.

Prerequisites
- Undergraduate students are required to have successfully passed LING 300, with a B or higher grade.
- Graduate students are not required to have any background in formal syntax. However, they are expected to learn theoretical materials quickly and systematically. Students whose home department is not Linguistics should either have a general background in Linguistics.

Special Note for Undergraduates: Undergraduates should note that in terms of areas of content there is some overlap between LING300 and LING403. The difference between the two is in the depth that we go into each topic. We are also more skeptical about the theoretical mechanisms in LING403. This means that you’ll have to do all the enrichment activities and do more than the minimum to learn more. If you just do the minimum this class won’t be very valuable to you.
Readings
Required:
- PDFs of readings on the D2L site. (see the calendar)
- Carnie, Andrew 2013. *Syntax: A Generative Introduction*. Third Edition. Wiley-Blackwell Publishing. (Note that on the website there are also extensive selections from Carnie 2010 – these are from a different book!).

Highly recommended (will also be on D2L)

Requirements
- Attendance & Participation 16%
- 14 homework assignments 84% (6 each)

Homework Assignments
Homework assignments will be available on D2L on Monday, due on the following Monday, discussed on Thursday of the same week.

Important Note
- The homework assignments will be based on readings and lecture materials. You will have one week to complete each of them. The assignments may all involve data from languages that we have not analyzed in class. Note that the main portion of your grade is determined by your performance on these assignments.

- Each student is encouraged to be a member of a discussion group to discuss the course material as well as the homework assignments. These discussions will help you grasp the complicated issues better and faster.

NOTE
- you MUST hand in your own answers, and
- you MUST write the names of the people you worked with on the first page.

- Doing the reading assignments is **extremely** important. If you don't read and understand the basic material, you won't be able to comprehend advanced issues. Here is a suggestion as to how to prepare for class:
  - before coming to class, read the material assigned for that specific date, and familiarize yourself with the topic(s).
  - after the lecture, read the handout, and go through the readings again.
  - make a list of your questions and comments.
  - discuss them with your group members.
  - bring the puzzling ones to class.

- I strongly encourage you to ask questions in class since they will be helpful to clarify the issues for you and other participants.
Policy of attendance:
Please don't miss the class unless you have a real personal problem. Missing one class means not understanding a good portion of the next class, and soon you will find yourself completely lost. If you HAVE to miss a class, get the handout, and discuss the material with members of your discussion group and other classmates.

Grading
90-100   A
80-89     B
70-79     C
60-69     D
59 and below  E

HAVE A GREAT SEMESTER