City University of Hong Kong
Course Syllabus

Offered by Department of Linguistics and Translation
with effect from Semester A 2017/18

Part I  Course Overview

Course Title:  Functional Approaches to Syntax

Course Code:  LT5431

Course Duration:  One Semester

Credit Units:  3

Level:  P5

Medium of Instruction:  English

Medium of Assessment:  English

Prerequisites:
(Course Code and Title)  Nil

Precursors:
(Course Code and Title)  Nil

Equivalent Courses:
(Course Code and Title)  Nil

Exclusive Courses:
(Course Code and Title)  Nil
Part II  

Course Details

1. Abstract

This course is designed to give a general survey of current syntactic theories, with a special emphasis on functional approaches to syntax. It aims to explore the differences between ‘formal’ and ‘functional’ paradigms for syntactic analysis, with a thorough discussion of their 1) theoretical premises, 2) research concerns, 3) data collection 4) analytical methodology, and 5) explanatory principles. The class will gradually prepare students to master the functional theories from more assessable to more challenging approaches. The class will first lay a foundation by focusing on the form-function associations manifested in the English grammar and then progress to introduce a variety of functional explanatory mechanisms with illustrations from a wide range of languages. The ultimate goal of this class is to familiarize students with a wide spectrum of contemporary syntactic theories that take grammar as coding devices for coherent communication. “Syntax codes what people do the most.” – T. Givon.

2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)
(CILOs state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>CILOs</th>
<th>Weighting (if applicable)</th>
<th>Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick where appropriate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Show enthusiastic and proactive participation in class discussion and weekly reading assignment</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Demonstrate critical thinking, clear organization and oral skills in group presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 3   | Demonstrate a clear grasp of the theoretical constructs in participating in a debate on formal vs. functional approaches:  
- Functional vs. formal premises  
- Form-function mapping principles  
- Discourse motivations  
- Cognitive motivations | 20%                       | ✓  | ✓  | ✓  |
| 4   | Demonstrate a clear understanding of the form-meaning mapping relations in writing up a Wikipedia article on one of the following issues:  
- Nouns and Verbs  
- Topic vs. Subject  
- Information status  
- Preference and definiteness  
- Passive construction  
- Transitivity | 20%                       | ✓  | ✓  | ✓  |
5. Demonstrate the ability of understanding and applying one of the approaches discussed in class to the analysis of a set of chosen data (final project):
  ➢ Givónian Semantics
  ➢ Discourse and grammar
  ➢ Cognitive semantics
  ➢ Construction grammar
  ➢ Corpus-based approach
  ➢ Emergent Grammar
  ➢ Grammaticalization/constructionalization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CILO No.</th>
<th>Hours/week (if applicable)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A1: Attitude
Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability
Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to self-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments
Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing/constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

3. Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)
(TLAs designed to facilitate students’ achievement of the CILOs.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TLA</th>
<th>Brief Description</th>
<th>CILO No.</th>
<th>Hours/week (if applicable)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly adventure</td>
<td>Assigned reading materials for group discussion</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>2-3 hours/wk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group production</td>
<td>In-class oral presentation made by individual groups</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>1-2 hours/sem</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debate</td>
<td>Students will be divided into groups for debating about the different approaches to the same issue (the passive voice)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>2-4 hours/sem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term innovation review</td>
<td>Open-book and open-notes review and writing up of interested issues as Wikipedia entries</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>3-5 hours/sem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discovery project</td>
<td>Students will apply what is learned in class to a hands-on project on analysing a set of data they collected</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>10-20 hours/sem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. **Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)**
   
   (ATs are designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Tasks/Activities</th>
<th>CILO No.</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continuous Assessment: 100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly adventure (20%)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group creative production and presentation (20%)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debate: let the theory speak! (20%)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term innovative review (20%)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final discovery project (20%)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examination: ____% (duration: , if applicable)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Assessment Rubrics

(Grading of student achievements is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities with the following rubrics.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Task</th>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Excellent (A+, A, A-)</th>
<th>Good (B+, B, B-)</th>
<th>Fair (C+, C, C-)</th>
<th>Marginal (D)</th>
<th>Failure (F)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly readings (20%)</td>
<td>Clear and critical understanding of the reading</td>
<td>Excellent ability in demonstrating the said criteria</td>
<td>Good ability in demonstrating the said criteria</td>
<td>Satisfactory ability in demonstrating the said criteria</td>
<td>Barely adequate evidence in demonstrating the said criteria</td>
<td>Little or no evidence of the said ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group production and presentation (20%)</td>
<td>Clear, interesting, and well-organized oral presentation</td>
<td>Excellent ability in demonstrating the said criteria</td>
<td>Good ability in demonstrating the said criteria</td>
<td>Satisfactory ability in demonstrating the said criteria</td>
<td>Barely adequate evidence in demonstrating the said criteria</td>
<td>Little or no evidence in demonstrating the said criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debate (20%)</td>
<td>Clear, interesting and well-delivered arguments for the chosen approach</td>
<td>Excellent ability in demonstrative the said criteria</td>
<td>Good ability in demonstrating the said criteria</td>
<td>Satisfactory ability in demonstrating the said criteria</td>
<td>Barely adequate evidence in demonstrating the said criteria</td>
<td>Little or no evidence in demonstrating the said criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term review (20%)</td>
<td>Clear, accurate and well-presented written text of the assigned topics</td>
<td>Excellent ability in demonstrating the said criteria</td>
<td>Good ability in demonstrating the said criteria</td>
<td>Satisfactory ability in demonstrating the said criteria</td>
<td>Barely adequate evidence in demonstrating the said criteria</td>
<td>Little or no evidence in demonstrating the said criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discovery Project (20%)</td>
<td>Clear, interesting and well-argued analysis of a set of chosen data with an abstract for conference presentation</td>
<td>Excellent ability in demonstrating the said criteria</td>
<td>Good ability in demonstrating the said criteria</td>
<td>Satisfactory ability in demonstrating the said criteria</td>
<td>Barely adequate evidence in demonstrating the said criteria</td>
<td>Little or no evidence in demonstrating the said criteria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part III Other Information (more details can be provided separately in the teaching plan)

1. **Keyword Syllabus**
Topics to be covered in class discussion include:
- Formal vs. Functional approaches to syntax
- Theoretical framework: Grammar as form-function association
- Definitions of ‘function’
- Explanatory Principles
- Discourse basis for syntactic categories
- Discourse and cognition
- Argument structure and information status
- Language universal
- Ergative case marking
- Transitivity
- Construction grammar
- Emergent Grammar
- Corpus-based approach
- Grammaticalization and lexicalization

2. **Reading List**

2.1 **Compulsory Readings**
(Compulsory readings can include books, book chapters, or journal/magazine articles. There are also collections of e-books, e-journals available from the CityU Library.)

10 core readings for MA students (A packet of required readings will be available for use):

Four more challenging readings for doctoral students:

2.2 Additional Readings
(Additional references for students to learn to expand their knowledge about the subject.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title (Year)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>