

English Linguistics: Generative Grammar (A006742)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 5.0 **Study time 150 h**

Course offerings in academic year 2026-2027

A (semester 1) English Gent

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Stott, Paul	LW06	staff member
Liang, Yiming	LW06	lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

	crdts	offering
Master of Science in Teaching in Languages(main subject Linguistics and Literature)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - English)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - German)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Greek)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Italian)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Latin)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Scandinavian Studies)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Spanish)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - English)	5	A
Exchange Programme Linguistics and Literature	5	A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

language, linguistics, English, generative grammar, argumentation in syntax, formal syntax, formal semantics

Position of the course

This advanced seminar presents the generative approach to syntax and semantics, with special attention to methodological issues and to the application to English data. The seminar will provide the students with the tools for analyzing sentences from a generative perspective.

This course stimulates English proficiency by developing argumentation skills and the concomitant use of organisational patterns and connectives typical of scientific structured discourse (C1).

Contents

Presentation of the generative approach to the grammar of English. The paradigm studied is a combination of the generative grammar developed by Noam Chomsky and formal semantics originating in the works of Richard Montague. This approach focuses on defining the primitive building blocks of the sentence and on the relation between syntactic structure and interpretation. After a general introduction to the methodology of this approach, the focus will be on working out syntactic and semantic analyses of English data. It will also be demonstrated how the generative approach can be used to understand language variation and language change. Throughout the course attention will be paid to the interaction between empirical data and theoretical analysis.

Initial competences

Students must have taken at least two English Linguistics courses from Ba2 or Ba3 or have acquired equivalent competences.

Final competences

- 1 Development of theoretical argumentation using the generative concepts and formal logic.
- 2 Representing clause structure by means of tree diagram with argumentation for structure
- 3 Using formal logic and set theory to represent language meaning in a compositional way.
- 4 Analysing empirical data using the generative framework.
- 5 Illustrating theoretical hypotheses on the basis of empirical material from contemporary English.
- 6 Testing theoretical hypotheses on empirical material from contemporary English.
- 7 Evaluating theoretical assumptions on the basis of constructed or attested empirical data.
- 8 Discussing of theoretical and/or empirical problems in idiomatic English

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Seminar, Lecture

Extra information on the teaching methods

Lectures, reading, supervised in-class exercises.

Study material

Type: Slides

Name: Slides for all lectures.

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Language : English

Available on Ufora : Yes

Type: Reader

Name: A reader.

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Language : English

Available on Ufora : Yes

References

- Haegeman, L. 2006. *Thinking Syntactically: A Guide to Argumentation and Analysis* (Blackwell Textbooks in Linguistics)
- Beck, S. & Gergel, R. 2014. *Contrasting English and German Grammar – An Introduction to Syntax and Semantics*, De Gruyter Mouton.
- Partee, B., ter Meulen A., & Wall, R. 1990. *Mathematical Methods in Linguistics*, Springer.

Course content-related study coaching

In class feedback.

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Written assessment open-book

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Written assessment open-book

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Participation, Written assessment open-book

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible in modified form

Extra information on the examination methods

Continuous assessment

- 2 homework assignments. The questions will concern the application of the theory to authentic or constructed sentences, and the evaluation of theoretical points in view of the empirical data.
- Participation

End-of-term assessment

- Written open-book exam. The questions will concern the application of the theory to authentic or constructed sentences, and the evaluation of theoretical points in view of the empirical data. The focus will be on argumentation using formal concepts.

Calculation of the examination mark

Continuous evaluation (50%) + exam (50%)

Facilities for Working Students

Facilities:

- 1 Student attendance during educational activities is required
- 2 Possible rescheduling of a written examination to a different time in the same academic year
- 3 Feedback can be given during an appointment during office hours

For more information contact the monitoring service of the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy: <https://www.ugent.be/lw/nl/student/studiestudentenbegeleiding/trajectbegeleiding.htm>