



PLIN Modules – Module Information Sheet (2020/21)

1. General Information

- **Module Code:** PLIN0063
- **Title:** Readings in Syntax
- **Credits:** 15
- **Module Tutor:** Vieri Samek-Lodovici **Contact:** ucljvsl@ucl.ac.uk
- **Other Tutor(s):** X X; **Contact:** x.x@ucl.ac.uk
- **Module Available at the following levels:**
 - Level 6 UG
 - Level 7 UG
 - Level 7 PG
- **Module Description:**

This course is an advanced exploration of one or more issues in syntactic theory. We will discuss seminal papers on and current approaches to some issue or issues of current interest in generative grammar.

The 2020-21 edition of the course focuses on information structure, which concerns the syntactic encoding of discourse-related relations such as givenness, focalization, contrast, and topichood. We will investigate the following issues, with the last few weeks looking at Italian as a case study.

- What are the most fundamental discourse relations?
- What syntactic and prosodic effects do they have on syntactic phrases?
- Can they interact with each other, and what syntactic effects ensue when they do?

- **Prerequisites:** Two years of undergraduate syntax
- **Timetable:** <https://timetable.ucl.ac.uk/tt/moduleTimet.do?firstReq=Y&moduleId=PLIN0063>
- **Summary:**

Introduction to the course and the definition of Givenness

Non-contrastive focus

The relation between focus and stress

Contrast

Topichood

Cartography

Destressing in situ and its interaction with focus in Italian
Right dislocation and its interaction with focus in Italian

- **Information for students on other programmes and Affiliate/intercollegiate students:**

If you want to take this module, you should select it on Portico as usual. Any general queries about taking the module can be addressed to pals.lingteachingoffice@ucl.ac.uk.

2. Teaching

- **Teaching methods and tutorial/lab arrangements:**

Due to the Covid crisis, this year most of the material will be made available online on Moodle. I am planning to use several different formats to convey content. These will include weekly videos about each week's topic, related weekly handouts, where possible weekly practical exercises, and weekly reading assignments.

There will also be an online 'Ask your question' forum where you can ask for clarifications at any time and, if wished, anonymously. In addition, we will have an online session each Thursday where we can meet and address any unresolved issues.

During the second half of term, students will begin working on their projects for their final paper. Students can work on a topic of their own, or in a small group sharing the same topic. Week 9 will be entirely dedicated to meeting all students online to discuss your projects. Week 10 will be dedicated to students' presentations about their projects, which this year will consist of 10min to 15min video presentations (in whatever format: a recorded Power Point presentation, or a film of your speaking, as you prefer). These presentations will provide the opportunity for further feedback. After the feedback has been provided, they will be deleted.

- **Communication:**

- You should use the moodle forum 'Ask a question' for general questions both regarding content and administrative matters. If you have a more personal concern that doesn't belong on the forum, please email me directly at v.samek-lodovici@ucl.ac.uk. I will try to reply to all communication within three business days.

- **Workload:**

| | |
|---------|------------------------------|
| 10x1.5h | lecture |
| 10x1.5h | seminar |
| 10x.1h | moodle |
| 10x3h | reading |
| 1x20h | preparation for presentation |

1x20h preparation for project outline

1x40h project and writing up

- **Core Texts:** n/a
- **Libraries and other resources:** n/a

Additional Information:

Assessment:

Please refer to the 'Assessment tab' on the module Moodle page for assessment submission dates. 100% of your grade will come from an essay between 2,700 and 3,300 words in length. The essay will deal with an issue connected to the content of the course which you will be able to choose yourself with guidance from the module lecturer. Both under length and over length submissions will be penalised according to UCL guidelines. Information on what is and what is not included in the word count can be found on the Moodle site of the course under the assessment tab.

Possible projects to consider include: The investigation of an information structure relation in a specific language using the conceptual tools developed in the course; investigating a data set more closely, for example, because it is reported in an incomplete way in the literature or because the reported data seem questionable; investigating a prediction from one or more of the theories discussed; contrasting predictions from two or more of the theories discussed.

You should submit your essay via moodle.

Citing of sources: Students are expected to have familiarised themselves with the plagiarism guidelines on the Moodle page for this module.

Late work and extenuating circumstances

- Any requests for extensions to deadlines, or for extenuating circumstances to be taken into consideration by examiners, should be made by completing the relevant form. Instructions are available on the Moodle page for this module, under the Assessment tab. No extensions or special consideration can be given outside of this process, and there is a grading penalty for late submission of coursework. Again, information about this policy can be found on the course Moodle page, under the 'Assessment' tab.
- **Recording:** n/a / Lectures for this module are recorded via the UCL Lecturecast system, and a link to recordings will be made available via the Moodle page for this module. Please note that recordings can fail for a number of reasons.

3. Assessment

- Level: 4/5/6 UG

| Mode of Assessment | Weight | Format |
|-----------------------------|--------|--------------------|
| Coursework | 100% | Essay, 3000 words. |
| | | |
| Level 7 postgraduate | | |
| Coursework | 100% | Essay, 3000 words |

Table 1. Assessment Formats and Weightings

4. Types of Feedback

Types of feedback students on this module can expect to receive.

4.1 Generic Tutor Feedback

| Type of Feedback | Provided |
|--|------------|
| Oral feedback is given to the whole class (e.g. this may be about coursework, an in-class or online task). | Yes |
| Electronic feedback to the whole group (e.g. see oral feedback above). | Yes |
| Printed feedback to the whole group (e.g. answers to an exercise done in class, feedback relating to general performance on coursework or a task etc). | Yes |
| Coverage of topics in class which have been raised by members of the class (e.g. in areas where students ask for clarification/elaboration, these topics are addressed in class). | Yes |
| Electronic responses to the whole group via the VLE or via email (eg sending replies to individual queries to the whole group). | Yes |

Table 2. Generic Tutor Feedback

4.2 Automated Feedback

| Type of Feedback | Provided |
|---|-----------|
| Tests / quizzes within Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). These are tests which do not count towards the module mark, but serve to inform students of how well they are understanding materials taught. | No |
| Personal Response Systems used within class (e.g. to test that students understand a concept, to survey which topics students would like elaborated). | No |

Table 3. Automated Feedback

4.3 Specific Targeted Tutor Feedback

| Type of Feedback | Provided |
|---|------------|
| Oral responses within class (e.g. demonstrators talking to students in lab, stats and computing classes). | Yes |
| Oral responses outside class (e.g. students are invited to telephone or meet with module staff with individual queries regarding topics taught). | Yes |
| Electronic responses to queries from individual students are provided (as above) | Yes |
| Summative comments on coursework (e.g. handwritten feedback at the end of a written assessment which counts towards the module mark). | Yes |
| On-script comments in the body of individual summative coursework | Yes |
| Indication of achievement against set marking criteria (e.g. for an individual essay or a lab report). | Yes |
| Feedback using a standard feedback form (e.g. essay feedback form or lab marking forms) | Yes |
| Oral feedback on coursework talking to individual students about their coursework on the phone or in person, this could be summative points or specific comments on parts of the essay / lab report / project. | Yes |
| Electronic feedback on coursework. This could be via email or within VLE (e.g. using Gradebook on Moodle). | Yes |

Table 4. Specific Targeted Tutor Feedback

4.4 Feedback From People Other Than Module Staff

| Type of Feedback | Provided |
|--|------------|
| Peer feedback: fellow students commenting on/marking each other's work, or working together on a task (e.g. group work providing students with feedback on their ideas/understanding). | Yes |
| Self-feedback (e.g. students evaluating their own coursework, worksheet answers, etc.) | No |
| Feedback from seminar tutors: Students may receive feedback on their understanding of topics/answers to queries/feedback on coursework from their tutor (e.g. poster, Research Project presentations etc) | No |

Table 5. Feedback from People other than Module Staff

4.5 Feedback related to examinations

| Type of Feedback | Provided |
|---|-----------|
| A mock examination is given to help students prepare for the final exam. | No |
| Marks for the previous year provided online , with a breakdown of marks for individual questions | No |
| Samples of real student work , such as coursework, exam essays, and projects from previous students on the module. | No |

Table 6. Feedback related to examinations

5. Specific Transferable Skills

Transferable skills students on this module can expect to develop, categorised into skill areas.

5.1 Academic

| Type of transferable skill | Provided |
|---|------------|
| Learning Actively – Able to approach learning as an active agent, taking responsibility for the process and outcomes. | Yes |
| Analysing Data – Able to filter and organise information to develop an argument and work toward a conclusion, applying numerical analysis where appropriate. | Yes |
| Thinking Critically – Able to consider claims made against the evidence available and to develop one's own view systematically | Yes |

| | |
|---|------------|
| Using Sources – Able to locate and use appropriate books, journals, websites and other sources to gather relevant data | Yes |
| Solving Problems – Able to use systematic approaches to overcome difficulties in producing a desired outcome | Yes |
| Managing Projects – Able to plan a coordinated set of tasks and enact over time to produce a substantial result | Yes |

Table 7. Academic transferable skills

5.2 Self-Management

| Type of transferable skill | Provided |
|--|------------|
| Reflecting on Learning – Able to review dispassionately one’s approaches to learning and the outcomes and progressively improve the process | Yes |
| Managing Time – Able to prioritise tasks and commitments to achieve optimum results in a designated timeframe | Yes |
| Being Creative/Innovative – Able to generate and apply original approaches to tasks and problems and produce improved outcomes | Yes |
| Assessing Oneself – Able to identify one’s own strengths, weaknesses, progress made and action needed to improve effectiveness | Yes |
| Being Independent – Able to work at own initiative with minimal supervision, taking responsibility for action and outcomes | No |
| Managing Resources – Able to allocate and conserve funds and other resources on a day to day basis and to support projects | No |

Table 8. Self-management transferable skills

5.3 Communication

| Type of transferable skill | Provided |
|---|------------|
| Writing – Able to communicate in textual forms (essay, reports, journal entries, web pages etc.) in an appropriate style with a clear narrative flow | Yes |
| Listening – Able to hear and appreciate the content, background and purpose of what someone else is communicating to you | Yes |
| Using Information Technology – Able to use digital technology for managing information and to mediate communication for learning and other purposes | Yes |
| Presenting – Able to speak to an audience, using visual aids as appropriate and respond to questions | Yes |

| | |
|--|------------|
| Communication globally – Able to understand and manage factors affecting communication across cultures, including means of monitoring progress | No |
| Planning and making decisions – Able to identify steps needed to work towards global and communicate them, including means of monitoring progress | Yes |

Table 9. Communication transferable skills

5.4 Working with others

| Type of transferable skill | Provided |
|--|-----------------|
| Working in teams – Able to co-operate with others, to contribute your strengths and learn from theirs with a common purpose | Yes |
| Negotiating – Able to respect the needs and interests of others when they differ from your own and to find common ground | No |
| Leading – Able to galvanise a team into cooperative action, to manage, guide or facilitate a group to maximise success | No |
| Understanding others – Able to recognise the variety of ways in which people can think and approach tasks, adjusting your own to suit | No |
| Assessing self and peers – Able to assess your own performance objectively and to give and receive constructive feedback with others | Yes |
| Managing change – Able to adapt to changing circumstance and maintain focus on the group's declared goals | Yes |

Table 10. Working with others transferable skills