PLIN Modules – Module Information Sheet (2022/23)

1. General Information

- **Module Code:** PLIN0063

- **Title:** Readings in Syntax

- **Credits:** 15

- **Module Tutor:** Prof. Vieri Samek-Lodovici;   **Contact:** v.samek-lodovici@ucl.ac.uk

- **Module Available at the following levels:**

    o **Level 6 UG:** Yes

    o **Level 7 UG:** Yes

    o **Level 7 PG:** Yes

- **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 2022-23 edition of the course focuses on *information structure*, which concerns the syntactic encoding of discourse-related relations such as focalization, contrast, topichood, and givenness.

    Our goal will be to understand these relations, recognize which syntactic constituents express which of these relations in a sentence, and examine theoretical claims about the syntactic positions where syntactic constituents with a specific discourse notion are realized.

    Teaching will be delivered as a mix of interactive lectures and, later in the term, student presentations.

- **Prerequisites:** Two years of undergraduate syntax

- **Timetable:**

    https://timetable.ucl.ac.uk/tt/moduleTimet.do?firstReq=Y&moduleId=PLIN0063&acadYearFl=N

- **Summary:**

    Lectures will include the following topics:

    1. The definition of Givenness

2. The definition of Focus (potentially including the relation between Focus and Intonation)
3. The definition of Contrast
4. The definition of Topichood
5. The Cartographic view of the Left-Periphery
6. Challenges to the Cartographic view (potentially including the discussion of Italian Right Dislocation)

- **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:**

The course follows the flip-classroom model. The weekly lecture will be delivered online in Moodle through a set of short videos which you can watch when it best suits your schedule. They will be accompanied by a written handout. You will also be invited to ask questions anonymously through the 'Ask a question' forum.
In addition, we will have a 2-hour-long face-to-face session each Monday where you will have the opportunity to apply what you learned to actual linguistic data.
During the second half of term, you will begin planning your final paper. You will be able to choose a linguistic topic and work on it alone or in a small group sharing the same topic. Week 9 will be dedicated to meeting all of you to discuss your projects. In week 10 you will do a 5-minutes-long presentation about your project. These presentations will provide the opportunity for further feedback.

- **Communication:**

Please use the Moodle forum 'Ask a question' for general questions both regarding content and administrative matters, so that my replies also inform the other students in the course. 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:**

   o 10 x 90 minutes hours attendance (face-to-face classes);

   o 10 x 2to 3 hours private reading, watching lecture video, and other preparation;

   o 4 to 6 hours for final paper planning and related presentation in weeks 9 and 10;

   o 40 hours complete final paper for assessment (including writing-up).

- **Core Texts:**

   o Weekly readings on Moodle

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

- **Additional Information:**

  Please refer to the 'Assessment tab' on the module Moodle page for assessment submission dates and information.

  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 will include (i) the investigation of the syntax of focus, or contrast, or topichood, or givenness, in a language of your choice using the conceptual tools developed in the course; (ii) investigating a data set proposed in the literature or in the course more closely, for example, because it is reported in an incomplete way or because other data appear to challenge current theoretical analyses; (iii) investigating a prediction from one or more of the theories discussed in the course; (iv) contrasting predictions from two or more of the theories discussed; (v) critically comparing two papers about the same discourse relation but reaching different conclusions.

- **Recording:** If possible, the Monday practical sessions will be 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 undergraduate		
Mode of assessment	Weight	Format
Exam (include duration)	100% (3000 words)	Essay

Level 7 postgraduate		
Mode of assessment	Weight	Format
Exam	100% (3000 words)	Essay

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).	**No**
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, or through the Ask a question forum).	**Yes**
Other generic tutor feedback (please give details or **delete table row**). Feedback on chosen final-paper topic project and presentations	**Yes**

Table 1. 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 2. 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 (week 9 only)**
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)	**No**
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.	**No**
Electronic feedback on coursework. This could be via email or within VLE (e.g. using Gradebook on Moodle).	**No**

Table 3. 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** (for groups sharing final presentation topics)
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)	**Yes**

Table 4. 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 5. 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	**Yes**
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	**No**

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, if working in a group on week 9/10**
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 thing 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	**No**
Managing change – Able to adapt to changing circumstance and maintain focus on the group's declared goals	**No**

Table 10. Working with others transferable skills

5.5 Other transferable skills developed in this module

- *Provide details or delete section*