



## PLIN0064: Introduction to Generative Grammar B

### 2019/20 Module information sheet

#### **Name of lecturer**

Hans van de Koot (h.v.d.koot@ucl.ac.uk)

#### **Name of backup tutor(s)**

1. Anna Grabovac
2. Youngjin Kim

#### **Module description**

We ask what sort of knowledge must be attributed to someone who "knows a language" and begin to answer that question by developing some of the essential building blocks of natural language grammars. The aims of the course are: to introduce students to the scientific study of the structure of sentences; to analyse data sets and formulate appropriate generalisations that characterise them; to discover how such generalisations can be captured by abstract linguistic principles. The course builds on PLIN0003 to provide students with an overview of the current research programme in generative syntax.

#### **Prerequisites**

PLIN0003 Introduction to Generative Grammar A or equivalent

**Timetable:** <to follow>

#### **Teaching methods and backup arrangements**

The course consists of two weekly plenary sessions of 60 min and 120 min and one weekly section of 90 min in a smaller group.

Consistent participation in the plenary sessions and the assigned section is obligatory.

There is no textbook. The course is based on a sequence of homework problems, which will be given out at the end of each plenary session and due at the following one. These problems constitute the main work of the course and performance on these problems is the main basis for the grade. There will also be one final take-home exam.

There are no in-class exams.

You will work on the problem sets, except for the final take-home exam, in groups. Some of the problems are very hard and designed to be too difficult to be solved by one person alone.

Each group must hand in one jointly agreed solution to each problem set. The solution must state clearly on the first page who the members of the group are and who your section tutor is. It must also state which member of your group wrote out the solution that you hand in. In addition to the formal plenary and the sections, you will have to arrange meetings with your small group. You will also have an opportunity to ask and discuss questions via the online learning platform moodle.

Homeworks will generally be somewhat open-ended. There will not always be a particular right answer, and the important thing will be how well you present and support the proposal you come up with. So two equally good papers might have different and indeed incompatible solutions.

### **Communication**

Your main tool for communicating with me should be the Moodle forum. This will enable everybody to see both your question and my answer and to join in the conversation. If your question is of a private nature or otherwise inappropriate for the Moodle forum, please send me an email: [h.v.d.koot@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:h.v.d.koot@ucl.ac.uk)

### **Workload**

- 1 hour x 30 plenary sessions
- 1 hour x 10 sections
- 3 hours x 16 solving homework problems in group and writing up a solution
- 8 hours reviewing for final
- 16 hours solving and writing up the final assessment individually

### **Online resources**

Moodle page available at: TBC

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.

**Basic texts:** There is no textbook for this course.

### **I do recommend the following book as optional reading**

Haegeman, L. 1994. Introduction to Government and Binding Theory. Blackwell.

The following readings may also serve you well:

General: R. Huddleston and G. K. Pullum. A student's introduction to English grammar. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 2005.  
This is a good introductory descriptive grammar of English.

General: S. Pinker. The Language Instinct. 1994.  
An entertaining and polemical defense of the Chomskyan position regarding language that we will be following here.

General: B. Carey. How we learn: The surprising truth about when, where, and why it happens. Random House, New York, 2014.

This is not a linguistics text, but might help you to make the most of your study time in an unusual but evidence based way.

## Assessment

Please refer to the 'Assessment tab' on the module Moodle page for assessments submission dates.

You will be assessed on the basis of a portfolio of your group's solutions to the problem sets given (50% of the grade), and a final coursework (50% of the grade).

For the problem sets that go into your portfolio, you are expected to work in groups of five students, which we will assign you to and reshuffle after reading week. You will co-operate and be graded on all 16 problem sets given out during the term and you will be the lead in writing up four of them. Your grade for the portfolio will be the average of two averages:

1. the average of the best 14 of your group's submissions (graded on an A=75, B=65, C=55, D=45, F=20 scale). Exceptionally insightful answers may earn an A+=85 or even an A++=95.
2. the average of the best 3 of the submissions for which you were lead author (graded on an A, B, C, D, F scale)
3. You can gain extra credit by providing concrete evidence that you read and gave feedback on a weak draft solution of one of your group members and that your input substantially improved the finally submitted version. Such extra credit will be given for up to five drafts that you helped improve and it will boost your overall portfolio grade by one fifth of a grade for each draft. Altogether you can improve your portfolio grade through extra credit by one full grade (C to B, B to A, etc.).

Late submissions of homework problems will not be accepted under any circumstances and missed assignments will earn you and your group a grade of 0. *Answers should be submitted in typed up format.*

For the final take-home test you have to work on and formulate the solution by yourself and are not permitted to co-operate in any way.

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

Form: Submit a word processed file. Leave at least one inch margins so that we will have some space to write comments. Write the names of the group members at the top of the submission.

To do well in this course, here are the things you need to do:

ATTEND CLASS  
ATTEND SECTIONS  
TURN IN ALL ASSIGNMENTS  
DO THE ASSIGNMENTS CAREFULLY AND WELL

Here are the things we look for in written work: a written assignment should be

NEAT  
CLEAR  
CAREFUL

## THOROUGH

Neatness should be self-explanatory; clarity is mainly about the quality of your writing, but in this course will also concern the relation between what you write and certain formal representations which we will adopt, as well as argument and reasoning; in the next few weeks we will point out things that you need to be careful and thorough about.

### **Some course policies**

Attendance is expected. Absences will have a negative effect on the grade.

Sections are mandatory. You are signed up for and must regularly attend a section. New material will be introduced in sections, and you will be responsible for it.

All assignments must be turned in by your group or, in the case of the final by you. Failure to turn in an assignment results in a zero in the record, and (since the assignments form the basis of the course) just a few zeroes will result in you failing the course. There will be no way to make this up.

We realize that in most courses the syllabus gives you an outline of the course, with topics and reading assignments and all that. But in this course there are no reading assignments, and the topics are mostly a surprise, so you won't get that here. What you get is a promise that at the end of the course you will know a lot about the syntax of English, a bit about the nature of language in general, and something about how to investigate and argue in an area that is very human, very formal, and at the same time very empirical. This can be a lot of work, but it can also be a lot of fun.

### **Late work and extenuating circumstances**

There are no extensions for homework problems. Any requests for extensions to deadlines for your assignments, 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.

### **Feedback**

See below for information on how feedback will be provided.

### **Transferable skills**

See below for information on the transferable skills you can acquire by studying this module.

## Feedback Mechanisms

<b>Types of Feedback (categorised into feedback areas)</b>  For those responses you tick, further details may be provided in the relevant box below (optional)	This type of feedback is provided for this module (✓ all that apply)
<b>GENERIC TUTOR FEEDBACK</b>	
<b>Oral feedback</b> is given to the whole class (e.g. this will be about problem sets). <u>Further details:</u> Oral feedback will be provided in the plenary sessions and targeted feedback in the backups.	<u>x</u>
<b>Electronic feedback to the whole group</b> <u>Further details:</u> Electronic feedback to the whole group will be provided when an if necessary via the moodle forum and in response to questions posted on the moodle forum.	<u>x</u>
<b>Printed feedback</b> to the whole group (e.g. answers to an exercise done in class, feedback relating to general performance on coursework or a task etc.) will not be provided. <u>Further details:</u>	<u>x</u>
<b>Coverage of topics in class</b> 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) <u>Further details:</u> <b>Classes are intended to be interactive. Content will be moved forward on the basis of the provided solutions to problem sets.</b>	<u>x</u>
<b>Electronic responses</b> to the whole group via the VLE or via email (e.g. sending replies to individual queries to the whole group) <u>Further details:</u> The preferred method of communication for this class is the moodle forum. All discussion that, for one reason or another, did not or could not happen in the lecture or the backups will be continued here.	<u>x</u>
<b>Other generic tutor feedback</b> (please give details) <u>Further details:</u>	
<b>AUTOMATED FEEDBACK</b>	
<b>Tests / quizzes within VLE</b> These are tests which do not count towards the module mark, but serve to inform students of how well they are understanding materials taught. <u>Further details:</u>	
<b>Personal Response Systems (“clickers”)</b> used within class (e.g. to test that students understand a concept, to survey which topics students would like elaborated) <u>Further details:</u>	

<p><b>Other automated feedback</b> (please give details)</p> <p><u>Further details:</u> Mock exam to serve as revision for real exam after the end of term 1.</p>	<u>x</u>
<b>SPECIFIC, TARGETED TUTOR/DEMONSTRATOR FEEDBACK</b>	
<p><b>Oral responses within class</b> (e.g. demonstrators talking to students in lab, stats and computing classes).</p> <p><u>Further details:</u> <b>Two backup tutors will be present at each of the two group backup sessions.</b></p>	<u>x</u>
<p><b>Oral responses outside class</b> (e.g. students are invited to telephone or come to see the module convenor/demonstrators/members of staff teaching on the module with individual queries regarding topics taught)</p> <p><u>Further details:</u> (e.g. contact details/office hours may be specified here) I operate an open door policy. When my office door (115b) is open, please walk in. I am also happy to arrange a meeting by email: k.labels@ucl.ac.uk.</p>	<u>x</u>
<p><b>Electronic responses</b> to queries from individual students are provided (as above)</p> <p><u>Further details:</u></p>	<u>x</u>
<p><b>Summative comments on coursework</b> (e.g. handwritten feedback at the end of a written assessment which counts towards the module mark)</p> <p><u>Further details:</u> There will be summative feedback on group submissions.</p>	<u>x</u>
<p><b>On-script comments</b> in the body of individual summative coursework</p> <p><u>Further details:</u> Individual comments will be provided on the submitted .pdf-file via moodle. Detailed comments on common problems will also be contained in the sample solution.</p>	<u>x</u>
<p><b>Indication of achievement against set marking criteria</b> (e.g. for an individual essay or a lab report)</p> <p><u>Further details:</u> Coursework will be graded.</p>	<u>x</u>
<p><b>Feedback using a standard feedback form</b> (e.g. essay feedback form or lab marking forms)</p> <p><u>Further details:</u></p>	
<p><b>Oral feedback on coursework</b> 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.</p> <p><u>Further details:</u></p>	
<p><b>Electronic feedback on coursework</b> This could be via email or on a VLE (e.g. using Gradebook on Moodle)</p> <p><u>Further details:</u> Some feedback will be provided through Moodle, as appropriate.</p>	<u>x</u>
<p><b>Other specific, targeted tutor feedback</b> (please give details)</p> <p><u>Further details:</u></p>	

<b>FEEDBACK FROM PEOPLE OTHER THAN MODULE STAFF</b>	
<p><b>Peer feedback</b> 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)</p> <p><u>Further details:</u> Problem sets are to be solved by groups. Group members can have input and get extra credit for improving their peer's drafts.</p>	<u>x</u>
<p><b>Self-feedback</b> (e.g. students evaluating their own coursework, worksheet answers, etc.)</p> <p><u>Further details:</u></p>	
<p><b>Feedback from seminar/year tutors</b> Students may receive feedback on their understanding of topics/answers to queries/feedback on coursework from their tutor (e.g. 1105 poster, Research Project presentations etc.)</p> <p><u>Further details:</u></p>	
<p><b>Other feedback from those not teaching module</b> (please give details)</p> <p><u>Further details:</u></p>	
<b>FEEDBACK RELATED TO EXAMINATIONS</b>	
<p><b>A mock examination</b> is given to help students prepare for the final exam</p> <p><u>Further details:</u></p>	
<p><b>Marks for the previous year provided</b> online, with a breakdown of marks for individual questions (where relevant). NB Marks will be anonymous.</p> <p><u>Further details:</u></p>	
<p><b>Samples of real student work provided</b>, such as coursework, exam essays, and projects from previous students on the module. NB for exam essays these will be anonymous, for coursework and projects they may be cited with the students' consent.</p> <p><u>Further details:</u></p>	
<p><b>Other exam-related feedback</b> (please give details)</p> <p><u>Further details:</u></p>	

Please note that the categories of feedback and specific examples within categories were adapted from ideas on the HE Academy website at: <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/new-to-teaching/HEA-Feedback-Toolkit/what-are-the-various-forms-that-feedback-can-take> (July 2013).

## UCL Personal and Professional Development Framework: Transferable Skills

Specific transferable skills (categorised into skill areas)	Skill developed in module? (✓ all that apply)
<b>ACADEMIC</b>	
<b>Learning Actively</b> - Able to approach learning as an active agent, taking responsibility for the process and outcomes	<u>x</u>
<b>Analysing Data</b> - Able to filter and organise information to develop an argument and work toward a conclusion, applying numerical analysis where appropriate	<u>x</u>
<b>Thinking Critically</b> - Able to consider claims made against the evidence available and to develop one's own view systematically	<u>x</u>
<b>Using Sources</b> - Able to locate and use appropriate books, journals, websites and other sources to gather relevant data	
<b>Solving Problems</b> - Able to use systematic approaches to overcome difficulties in producing a desired outcome	<u>x</u>
<b>Managing Projects</b> - Able to plan a coordinated set of tasks and enact over time to produce a substantial result	<u>x</u>
<b>SELF-MANAGEMENT</b>	
<b>Reflecting on Learning</b> - Able to review dispassionately one's approaches to learning and the outcomes and progressively improve the process.	<u>x</u>
<b>Managing Time</b> - Able to prioritise tasks and commitments to achieve optimum results in a designated timeframe	<u>x</u>
<b>Being Creative / Innovative</b> - Able to generate and apply original approaches to tasks and problems and produce improved outcomes	<u>x</u>
<b>Assessing Oneself</b> - Able to identify one's own strengths, weaknesses, progress made and action needed to improve effectiveness	<u>x</u>
<b>Being Independent</b> - Able to work at own initiative with minimal supervision, taking responsibility for action and outcomes	<u>x</u>
<b>Managing Resources</b> - Able to allocate and conserve funds and other resources on a day to day basis and to support projects	
<b>COMMUNICATING</b>	
<b>Writing</b> - Able to communicate in textual forms (essays, reports, journal entries, web pages etc.) in an appropriate style with a clear narrative flow	<u>x</u>
<b>Listening</b> - Able to hear and appreciate the content, background and purpose of what someone else is communicating to you	<u>x</u>
<b>Using Information Technology</b> - Able to use digital technology for managing information and to mediate communication for learning and other purposes	<u>x</u>
<b>Presenting</b> - Able to speak to an audience, using visual aids as appropriate and respond to questions	
<b>Communicating globally</b> - Able to understand and manage factors affecting	

communication across cultures, including learning other languages	
<b>Planning and making decisions</b> - Able to identify steps needed to work towards goals and communicate them, including means of monitoring progress	<u>x</u>
<b>WORKING WITH OTHERS</b>	
<b>Working in teams</b> - Able to co-operate with others, to contribute your strengths and learn from theirs with a common purpose	<u>x</u>
<b>Negotiating</b> - Able to respect the needs and interests of others when they differ from your own and to find common ground	<u>x</u>
<b>Leading</b> - Able to galvanise a team into cooperative action, to manage, guide or facilitate a group to maximise success	
<b>Understanding others</b> - Able to recognise the variety of ways in which people can think and approach tasks, adjusting your own to suit	<u>x</u>
<b>Assessing self and peers</b> - Able to assess your own performance objectively and to give and receive constructive feedback with others	<u>x</u>
<b>Managing change</b> - Able to adapt to changing circumstances and maintain focus on the group's declared goals	
<b>OTHER TRANSFERABLE SKILLS DEVELOPED BY THIS MODULE (please give details)</b>	

Please note that the categories and skills listed here were taken from the *Personal and Professional Development Framework* provided online by the UCL Centre for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ppd/resources/framework> (July 2013).