

# EL5101 Grammatical Analysis

National University of Singapore

2025–2026 Semester 1

Meetings: Fridays at 6pm, AS6 02-14

## Instructor

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Office: AS5 06-09

Office hours: Thursdays noon – 2pm

Also join us for the <b>syntax/semantics reading group</b> (completely optional) Thursdays at 4pm in the graduate reading room (AS5 05-09) and over Zoom Ask to join the mailing list
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## Description

“A logical theory may be tested by its capacity for dealing with puzzles, and it is a wholesome plan, in thinking about logic, to stock the mind with as many puzzles as possible, since these serve much the same purpose as is served by experiments in physical science.”

Russell 1905: 484–485

This course is a graduate-level introduction to modern syntactic theory. Emphasis will be placed on the the process of analysis and argumentation. Empirically, the course will cover a range of grammatical phenomena in English and other languages, to “stock the mind with as many puzzles as possible,” and to motivate and evaluate hypotheses under discussion. Students will complete the class with both the technical expertise and theoretical foundation to comfortably approach a range of work in contemporary syntactic literature.

## Canvas

All course materials will be on Canvas. Please make sure you have access to the course.

## Textbook

Adger, David. 2003. *Core Syntax: A Minimalist Approach*. Oxford. We will use almost all of this book, so buying a copy is recommended. Additional readings will be on Canvas.

## Format and schedule

This course is organized in a flipped classroom format, combining individual learning activities throughout the week, which we then review, synthesize, and practice together in person. Each week has two parts:

### 1. **At-home activities:** (throughout the week)

- Lecture video (or two) and handout: Canvas  
My advice: Have your own copy of the handout open or printed, so you can take notes.
- Readings: Canvas > Files > Readings
- Practice problems: Canvas  
Practice problems are an opportunity to apply techniques developed in class and in the readings to original data.
- (Ongoing work on language report — see below.)

### 2. **In-person class meeting:** (Friday evening)

- Five minute mini-quiz:  
Weekly mini-quizzes test comprehension of the video lectures and readings.
- Presentation of practice problems:  
Each week, one group presents the practice problems and their answers, emphasizing their thinking process and the unit's key ideas.
- Additional practice problems and activities

## Requirements

Your grade will be determined by your performance on the following:

1. **Attendance and participation (15%):** You will receive a grade based on a combination of your attendance and participation in in-person meetings (in discussions, group exercises, etc.). Participation in Canvas Discussions will also be considered.
2. **Mini-quizzes (10%)**
3. **Group presentation (20% total):**

Every week, one group will present the practice problems related to that week's lecture.

- Assessment of the oral presentation will emphasize effective communication of the thought process, as well as the validity of answers. (15%)

- The presenting group also submits a document covering the practice problems, revised if necessary, to be shared. Due Monday (3 days after presenting). (5%)
4. **Test (30%):** One final test, in-class on Week 13, will assess knowledge of the empirical phenomena covered in the class, as well as the application of techniques and theories to new data and puzzles.
5. **Language report (25% total):**
- Throughout the semester, students will study one aspect of an unfamiliar language through elicitation with a native speaker, and then record a short talk presenting the results.
- The language must be a language that (a) you are not a native speaker of and (b) cannot be English, Singlish, Mandarin Chinese, or Singapore Malay.
- Recorded talk video (10–15 min) presenting key findings (15%)
  - Data appendix (5%)
  - One-on-one meetings to discuss findings (5%)
- Talk videos and appendices are due Week 12 and meetings take place Week 13. Guidelines on possible topics, other requirements, and a sample submission will be given later.
- **Rare language bonus:** The three students whose language reports investigate the three languages with the fewest speakers will receive bonus points of 3%, 2%, and 1%.

## Notes

- **Cooperation:** All graded components (except the group presentation) are individual assessments. However, I strongly encourage you to work together to study for this module!
- **Integrity:** The use of others' ideas or expressions without citation is plagiarism. You must declare all sources in submitted work. Citations don't need to be in any particular format, but they have to be there.
- **Late submissions:** Late submissions are not accepted except with prior permission.
- **Talk to me:** I want you to succeed in this class. If any material or requirement is unclear, let me know. In extreme cases, alternative arrangements can be made for some of the course requirements, but only by talking to me first.

## References

Adger, David. 2003. *Core syntax: A minimalist approach*. Oxford University Press.

Russell, Bertrand. 1905. On denoting. *Mind* 14:479–493.