

**COURSE DATA****DATA SUBJECT**

Code: 35347
Name: English syntax
Cycle: Undergraduate Studies
ECTS Credits: 6
Academic year: 2025-26

STUDY (S)

Degree	Center	Acad. year	Period
1000 - Degree in English Studies	Facultat de Filologia, Traducció i Comunicació	3	First quarter

SUBJECT-MATTER

Degree	Subject-matter	Character
1000 - Degree in English Studies	Linguistics of the English language	COMPULSORY

COORDINATION

GREGORI SIGNES CARMEN

SUMMARY

The course has two main objectives: on the one hand, to address fundamental theoretical issues related to grammar; on the other, to provide an overview of English syntax. Special emphasis will be placed on the appropriate use of contemporary English grammar, while also introducing students to current methodologies applied to syntactic research.

The course offers a systematic introduction to the syntax of standard English, with a detailed analysis at the phrase and sentence levels. This study will be approached mainly from a functional perspective, acknowledging that syntactic patterns cannot be fully understood without considering their communicative dimension, the context in which they occur, and the co-text in which they are embedded.

Although the initial focus will be on simple sentences, the course will also include a wide range of contextualized examples of real English, both written and spoken. This will help students understand that grammar goes beyond basic sentence structure and responds to specific communicative needs.

The course combines morphological and syntactic concepts in order to enable students to identify, analyze, and produce different types of texts and discourse genres (such as novels, newspaper articles, essays, news reports, feature stories, informal conversations, TV series, films, among others). Texts will be used not only to illustrate grammatical phenomena but also as tools to understand the linguistic choices



speakers make and the reasons behind those choices in real communicative situations.

PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER SUBJECTS OF THE SAME DEGREE

There are no specified enrollment restrictions with other subjects of the curriculum.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to have attained, or be enrolled in courses leading to, at least a C1 level of English proficiency, as the study of syntax requires the ability to analyse complex grammatical structures, identify syntactic patterns, and use accurately a range of sentence constructions in English.

COMPETENCES / LEARNING OUTCOMES

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Apply ICT and computer programs, either locally or through a network, in the field of English Studies.

Demonstrate communicative and social competence in the English language (oral and written comprehension and expression, communicative interaction and mediation that includes correct grammar and style).

Describe and explain theoretical and practical aspects of English phonology, lexis, morphology, syntax, text and discourse.

Students must be able to apply their knowledge to their work or vocation in a professional manner and have acquired the competences required for the preparation and defence of arguments and for problem solving in their field of study.

Students must be able to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both expert and lay audiences.

Students must have acquired knowledge and understanding in a specific field of study, on the basis of general secondary education and at a level that includes mainly knowledge drawn from advanced textbooks, but also some cutting-edge knowledge in their field of study.

Work and learn autonomously, and plan and manage ones workload.

DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS

1. Discourse, Grammar and Syntax: Basic Concepts



This unit introduces the core concepts of grammar and syntax, and their connection to discourse. Syntax is presented as a tool for analyzing how sentences are structured and how they reflect communicative intentions. Linguistic levels of analysis (phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics) are outlined, with syntax situated within this broader framework. The concept of functional grammar is also introduced, along with the relationship between formal structure and meaning. The approach is grounded in the analysis of real language use, both written and spoken, to understand how syntax operates in authentic communicative contexts. This foundation prepares students for the detailed study of sentence constituents in later units.

2. Nouns and noun phrases

This unit focuses on the structure and behaviour of noun phrases in English. It defines core components (head noun, determiners, modifiers) and analyses how they combine to form coherent grammatical units. Nouns are classified according to semantic and grammatical criteria, and their roles as subjects, objects, and complements are explored. Compound nouns and the internal word order of noun phrases are also examined. Contextualized examples highlight the flexibility and functional importance of nouns in English syntax.

3. Determiners and pronouns

This unit explores determiners and pronouns as key elements in meaning construction within noun phrases and clauses. They are classified by function (possessive, demonstrative, quantifying, indefinite, interrogative, relative, etc.). Their syntactic position, agreement patterns, and usage constraints are analyzed. Particular attention is given to distinctions between determiners and pronouns with identical forms. Contextualized examples and practice tasks support the understanding of their structural and discourse-related roles.

4. Verbs and verb phrases

This unit analyzes the verb as the core of the predicate and its syntactic functions. It reviews the types of verbs (transitive, intransitive, copulative, auxiliary, and modal) and how they combine with complements. The formation of the verb phrase is also studied, including tense, aspect, and voice. The concept of verbal valency is addressed (i.e., the number and type of complements a verb requires or admits to form a grammatically correct sentence). Verbal patterns in real texts are analysed, as well as the role of the verb in meaning construction.



5. Prepositions and prepositional phrases

This unit examines prepositions as elements that introduce complements within the sentence. It analyzes the structure of prepositional phrases and their syntactic role, distinguishing between simple and compound prepositions and reviewing their position in the sentence. Cases of ambiguity and common errors in the use of prepositions are addressed, and the relationship between prepositions and other categories such as verbs or nouns is explored. Finally, real examples are analyzed, and criteria for their correct usage are introduced.

6. Adjectives and adjective phrases

This unit analyzes adjectives as modifiers within noun phrases and as attributes in copular sentences. It reviews the internal structure of adjective phrases and the elements that may accompany them. The various possible positions of adjectives in the sentence are examined, along with their semantic implications. Different subclasses of adjective are distinguished, and gradation is studied, including comparative and superlative forms. Real examples are used to observe their syntactic behavior and consolidate understanding. The aim is to understand the function and flexibility of adjectives in meaning construction.

7. Adverbs and adverb phrases

This unit focuses on the study of adverbs and adverb phrases as modifiers of verbs, adjectives, other adverbs, and entire clauses. They are classified according to their semantic function (time, place, manner, quantity, etc.), and their position within the sentence is reviewed, taking into account syntactic constraints and variation. The unit also explores the difference between simple adverbs and more complex forms or adverbial phrases. Gradation and the use of adverbs in discourse contexts are also covered. Through real examples, students practice identifying and analyzing adverbs in both spoken and written texts. The goal is to understand the role of adverbs in modifying and enriching meaning.

8. Conjunctions, interjections and other minor word classes

This unit focuses on the study of conjunctions, interjections, and other minor word classes such



as particles, discourse markers, and quantifiers. It describes their syntactic and discourse-related functions, especially in connecting elements within or between sentences and expressing attitudes or emotions. The distinction between coordinating and subordinating conjunctions is examined, along with their formal behavior. Interjections are explored as extragrammatical elements with pragmatic implications. The unit also includes analysis of expressive or emphatic forms that are often overlooked. Through real examples, students will observe the importance of these forms in achieving cohesion and fluency in discourse.

9. Syntactic functions of clause elements

This unit focuses on identifying and analyzing the basic syntactic functions of sentence constituents, such as subject, predicate, direct object, indirect object, complement, predicative, and adverbials. It emphasizes the distinction between syntactic function and grammatical category, and the criteria used to recognize each function in various structures. Marked constructions and flexible word order are also examined, with comparisons to other languages to highlight features specific to English. The unit includes real examples and exercises in both formal and functional analysis. The goal is for students to be able to break down a sentence into its functional components and understand their hierarchical relationships.

10. Sentence and clause structure

This unit addresses the hierarchical organization of sentences and clauses in English. It distinguishes between the main sentence types: simple, compound (coordinated), and complex (subordinated), and analyzes their structural and functional properties. The unit also explores how clauses can be embedded within one another, as well as the different types of subordination (complement, relative, adverbial clauses). The distinction between finite and non-finite clauses is examined, along with their role in discourse cohesion. The analysis is supported by diagrams and real examples to understand how complex sentences are constructed and interpreted. The goal is to provide a comprehensive view of the syntactic structure underlying complex idea expression in English.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

RA1 - Identify and classify grammatical categories and syntactic functions present in different types of English sentences, detecting grammatical structures that may support inclusive language use.



RA2 - Analyse the internal structure of complex English phrases and sentences using appropriate syntactic terminology.

RA3 - Explain in English the main concepts, theories, and models related to contemporary English syntax from a critical perspective on language as a vehicle of social equality or exclusion.

RA4 - Distinguish between different types of sentence constructions (declarative, interrogative, passive, etc.) and explain their communicative function in various contexts, including how they may contribute to challenging established social norms in communication.

RA5 - Apply syntactic knowledge to the analysis of real texts, both written and spoken, recognizing structural variation according to discursive genre and gender identity.

RA6 - Evaluate the role of syntax in the interpretation of sentence and textual meaning as a tool for inclusion or discrimination.

RA7 - Use tree diagrams or syntactic schemes (such as box diagrams) to represent the hierarchical structure of English sentences.

RA8 - Use linguistic corpora and digital tools to investigate syntactic patterns in contemporary English.

RA9 - Argue coherently and critically about complex syntactic phenomena and their implications for English grammar, promoting a reflective approach to language and its influence on the construction of social identities, power and inclusive communication.

RA10 - Correct syntactic errors in spoken and written English, justifying corrections based on grammatical principles.

RA11 - Compare syntactic constructions in English with equivalent structures in the student's native language to identify relevant similarities and differences.

WORKLOAD

PRESENCIAL ACTIVITIES

Activity	Hours
Theory	60,00
Total hours	60,00

NON PRESENCIAL ACTIVITIES

Activity	Hours
Attendance at other activities	0,00
Individual or group project	0,00
Independent study and work	65,00
Preparation of lessons	20,00
Preparation for assessment activities	5,00
Resolution of case studies	0,00
Total hours	90,00

TEACHING METHODOLOGY



This course combines practical in-class activities with autonomous and collaborative learning. During face-to-face sessions, students will engage in a variety of tasks and exercises, working individually, in pairs, or in groups.

The course follows a blended methodology that integrates theoretical content with practical, problem-solving activities, based on a combination of authentic and contrived language data. These materials are used to illustrate key syntactic phenomena and to develop analytical skills in both real and controlled contexts.

Weekly sessions consist of 4 contact hours (2h + 2h) over a 16-week period, alternating between the explicit presentation of theoretical concepts such as syntactic categories, functions, and hierarchical structures, and their practical applications through the analysis of texts (both written and spoken), the use of syntactic diagrams and tree structures to analyze sentence structure and functional relationships, and the discussion of syntactic patterns in actual language use, among others.

Outside the classroom, students are expected to complete assigned readings, prepare practical exercises, participate in group work, and attend individual tutorials as needed.

The course *English Syntax* integrates various Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) transversally, in line with international educational guidelines and the university's commitment to critical, inclusive, and context-based learning.

The most directly related SDGs include:

- **SDG 4: Quality Education** - The course promotes the development of advanced analytical skills in grammar and syntax, the use of digital tools and real language corpora, and the ability to interpret syntactic structures across different genres and registers.
- **SDG 5: Gender Equality** - A critical approach to language use is encouraged, with a focus on gender. Through the syntactic analysis of both real and constructed sentences, students examine grammatical patterns that reinforce or challenge gender roles, while promoting inclusive and non-sexist linguistic production and revision.
- **SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities** - The course addresses syntactic and discursive variation in relation to linguistic and sociocultural diversity, encouraging a comparative perspective between English and the students' native languages.
- **SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions** - Language is treated as a tool for social representation, inclusion or exclusion. Students are encouraged to reflect critically on how syntactic structures may shape identities and power relations.

These goals are addressed through the analysis of **texts, exercises, and activities** using both **authentic language data** (drawn from corpora, the press, literature, audiovisual materials, etc.) and **contrived materials** from textbooks and pedagogical resources. All materials will be critically examined in relation to the selected SDGs, enabling students to identify, discuss, and reflect on the role of syntax in building more equitable, conscious, and effective communication.

EVALUATION

The general grading system will follow the regulations of the Universitat de València on assessment and grading, approved by the Governing Council on May 30, 2017 (ACGUV 108/2017).



The assessment of the course is based on a final written exam and coursework activities, in line with the guidelines set out in the degree's VERIFICA report.

- **Final exam:** 80%
- **Coursework activities** (online tasks, questionnaires individual or group tasks): 20%

The coursework activities are **not subject to resit in the second call**, as they require continuous participation throughout the semester.

However, **to ensure that students can obtain up to 100% of the final grade in the second call**, the final exam will include additional content and competences covered through those activities, thus extending its scope to allow full assessment of the course.

In both calls, a **minimum score of 5 out of 10 in the final exam** is required for the coursework mark to be considered.

Intellectual honesty is a core value in academic communities and essential for the fair assessment of students' work. All assignments submitted for this course must be of **original authorship**. Submissions that involve **fraudulent collaboration** or the use of **generative artificial intelligence** (such as ChatGPT or similar tools) will not be accepted, **unless their use is explicitly authorised by the teaching staff and forms part of the course content**.

REFERENCES

Basic References

Reference b1:	Downing, A., & Locke, P. (2006). <i>A university course in English grammar</i> (3rd ed.). London & New York: Routledge.
Reference b2:	Carter, R., & McCarthy, M. (2006). <i>Cambridge grammar of English: A comprehensive guide</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Reference b3:	Huddleston, R. D., & Pullum, G. K. (2002). <i>The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language</i> . Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
Reference b4:	Jones, C., & Waller, D. (2015). <i>Corpus linguistics for grammar: A guide for research</i> . London & New York: Routledge.



Reference b5:	Biber, D., Johansson, S., Leech, G., Conrad, S., & Finegan, E. (1999). <i>Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English</i> . Harlow, England: Longman.
Reference b6:	Halliday, M. A. K. (1985). <i>An Introduction to Functional Grammar</i> . London: Edward Arnold.
Reference b7:	Huddleston, R. (1984). <i>Introduction to the Grammar of English</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Complementary References

Reference c1:	Carter, R., Hughes, R., & McCarthy, M. (2000). <i>Exploring Grammar in Context: Upper-Intermediate and Advanced</i> . Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press
Reference c2:	Carter, R., McCarthy, M., Mark, G., & O'Keefe, A. (2016). <i>English Grammar Today: An A-Z of Spoken and Written Grammar</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Reference c3:	Halliday, M. A. K., & Hasan, R. (1976). <i>Cohesion in English</i> . London: Longman.
Reference c4:	Mackenzie, J. L., & Martínez Caro, E. (2012). <i>Compare and contrast: An English grammar for speakers of Spanish</i> . Granada: Comares.
Reference c5:	Lavid, J., Arús Hita, J., & Zamorano, J. R. (2010). <i>Systemic Functional Grammar of Spanish: A contrastive study with English</i> . London & New York: Continuum.
Reference c6:	Hewings, M. (2005). <i>Advanced Grammar in Use: A self-study reference and practice book for advanced learners of English (with answers)</i> (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Reference c7	Aarts, F., & Aarts, J. (1982). <i>English syntactic structures</i> . Oxford: Pergamon.



The teacher reserves the right to update or change the list of references.