

English 209
The Craft of the Sentence
Winter term 2021

Remote instruction
Tue/Thur 14:15 – 15:45
CRN 22048

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Office hours: Wed. 10-12; Thur. 1 – 2 pm

Description:

The primary goal of this course is to learn about the structure, or syntax, of English sentences. Our method will be sentence diagramming, a technique for representing in a graphic arrangement all the structural elements of a sentence—such as the subject, object, verb, prepositions, phrases and clauses. We will occasionally be concerned with English usage (choosing the appropriate word on the basis of signification or register), and rarely with punctuation and capitalization.

The course is intended to be a writing course as well as a grammar course. To many people, “grammar” refers to a series of rules that classify a given word or sentence as correct or incorrect. English teachers are often portrayed as sticklers or pedants who attempt to enforce grammar rules upon students and the public. Grammar is more accurately understood, however, as a dynamic set of cognitive structures that are shared by all native speakers of a language, and acquired by second-language learners. There are many theories about how best to explain these cognitive structures, but this is not a linguistics course and we will not explore that topic. Rest assured that diagramming sentences only scratches the surface of grammar’s complexity.

A secondary goal of the course is for students to improve their writing by learning how to construct better sentences. Rather than simply respond to the admonitions of writing teachers who complain about awkward writing and mark up grammar and punctuation errors, students can learn what lies behind their instructors' comments, see how clarity and simplicity can be achieved in a sentence, and then craft strong paragraphs and arguments.

Textbooks available at the Duck Store:

Grammar by Diagram, 2nd edition, by Cindy L. Vitto (Broadview Press, 2006)

Grammar by Diagram Workbook, by Cindy L. Vitto (Broadview Press, 2009) the two sold together for \$69

Please have the *Grammar by Diagram* textbook available during every class meeting, as we will work together on exercises in that book. Please acquire a sketchbook and thick marking pen, or a small erasable whiteboard and marker, so that you can draw diagrams and show them to your classmates on zoom. The workbook is the basis for homework assignments to be completed after class. Both books include solutions to all the exercises in an answer key at the end. The homework will not be graded. Quizzes and worksheets are the basis for most of the graded work, and should be turned in as photographs or scans.

Our virtual class meetings may resemble a math or second-language course more than a literature course. We will examine exercises from the textbook, review possible solutions, and evaluate why a possible solution is correct or incorrect. Students should be prepared to work in small groups and to share their answers. When the class met in person, students often drew diagrams in front of class on the whiteboards. We will spend much of the time working through exercises in our textbooks, as a class or in small groups. I plan to stay on the zoom meeting until 4 pm each class day, and the final fifteen minutes will be available for students to ask questions and get help with the exercises, or the homework. There will five parts to our routine for each class meeting:

Part 1 – Prof. Sayre will introduce key concepts from the chapters of *Grammar by Diagram*. Students are required to read these pages ahead of class meetings, and work through at least some of the exercises in the chapters, so as to be prepared to solve the exercise problems in class.

Part 2 – After we review the concepts, students will work in small groups on the exercises. Students should be prepared to share their diagrams using their whiteboards or sketchpads.

Part 3 – On some days we will take a break from the textbook for activities and applications of grammatical concepts in literature, spoken language, or stylistics.

Part 4 – Homework is assigned for the next class period, from the *Grammar by Diagram Workbook* (with the orange photo on the cover).

Part 5 – Stay on-line until 4 pm if you have questions about the homework or textbook exercises. You will not be required to turn in the homework, but you will need to do it in order to prepare for the quizzes, which will consist, for the most part, of exercises copied from or modeled upon those in the homework.

Learning Goals or Outcomes

- to identify the parts of speech and parts of an English sentence
- to understand the tense, mood, aspect, voice, and conjugations of English verbs
- to diagram basic sentences by the basic structures of subject and predicate, clauses and phrases
- to be able to revise and restructure sentences to avoid usage and grammar errors and improve fluency

Assignments and Grades

Six quizzes or worksheets: 45 points

Writing self-analysis and peer review due February 16: 15 points

Bi-weekly "sentences in the wild" worksheets and contributions to discussion board: 20 points

Attendance and participation: 10 points (half point for each of the 20 meetings)

Final exam/project : 10 points

Extra Credit opportunities: poetic syntax and word order; transcribing Renaissance English

Extra credit of 2-4 points is available for the assignment on revising word order from poetry to prose (see Oct. 31)

Grading Scale

F <58.9	C- 69.0-72.9	B- 79.0-83.5	A- 89.0-93.5
D- 59.0-63.5	C 73.0-77.5	B 83.6-87.5	A 93.6-97.5
D 63.6-67.5	C+ 77.6-78.9	B+ 87.6-88.9	A+ 97.6-100+
D+ 67.6-68.9			

Inclusion and Accessibility Accommodations:

If you have a documented need that necessitates accommodations in this course, please arrange to meet with me as soon as possible and request that a counselor at the Accessible Education Center send a letter verifying your requests and outlining an accommodation plan.

Title IX Policy and Reporting Responsibilities:

The University of Oregon is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of prohibited discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and gender-based harassment, bullying, and stalking. If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, know that help and support are available. UO has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

Please be aware that all UO employees are required to report to appropriate authorities (supervisor or Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity) when they have reasonable cause to believe that discrimination, harassment, or abuse of any kind has taken, or is taking, place. Employees are NOT required to reveal the names of survivors, however. We are also required to report instances of child abuse or endangerment.

If you wish to speak to someone confidentially—i.e. those not required to report—you can call 541- 346-SAFE, UO's 24-hour hotline to be connected to a confidential counselor to discuss your options, as confidential counselors are not required reporters. You can also visit the SAFE website at <https://safe.uoregon.edu/services> for more information. Each resource is clearly labeled as either "required reporter," "confidential UO employee," or "off-campus," to allow you to select your desired level of confidentiality.

Schedule of assignments and activities:

1st Module: Parts of Speech

Jan. 5th Introduction: prescriptive and descriptive grammar, dialects and slang, grammar and writing skills.
Introduce parts of speech; **Diagnostic quiz** (due by 6 pm)

Jan. 7th Parts of Speech I: Noun, Pronoun, Verb

Read before class: G by D pp. 9-13, 17-30

Work on in class: G by D exercises 1.1 – 1.4

Homework review: G by D workbook 1.1 – 1.9 (pp. 9-19).

Jan. 12th Parts of Speech: Adjective, Adverb, Preposition, Conjunction

Read before class: G by D pp. 31-41

Work on in class: exercise 1.5 – 1.7, 1.9 & chapter 1 exercise

Activity: Noah Webster and early grammar textbooks in America

Homework review: G by D workbook 1.10 – 1.17 (pp. 16-23).

Sentences in the Wild #1 due Jan. 13th 6 pm

2nd Module: Basic Sentence Patterns

Jan. 14th Basic Sentence Patterns: “be” verbs

Read before class: G by D pp. 45-54

Work on in class: G by D 2.1 – 2.3

Homework review: G by D workbook 2.1 – 2.3 (pp. 27-30)

Quiz #1 on Canvas due Jan. 14th at 6 pm

Jan. 19th Special Day: Pronouns and Gender in English and other languages

Read before class: Anne Fadiman, “All My Pronouns” *Harper’s Magazine* August 2020

Jan. 21st Basic Sentence Patterns: Linking Verbs, Intransitive Verbs

Read before class: G by D pp. 55-64

Work on in class: G by D chapter 2 exercise

Homework review: G by D workbook 2.5 -2.6 (pp. 31-40)

Quiz/Worksheet #2 due Jan. 21st 6 pm

Jan. 26th Basic Sentence Patterns: Transitive Verbs

Read before class: G by D pp. 64-77, Appendix 5 pp. 355-360

Work on in class: G by D 3.1 – 3.3

Homework review: G by D workbook 3.1, 3.2 (pp. 41-48)

Sentences in the Wild #2 due Jan. 27th by 6 pm

3rd Module: Verbs

Jan. 28th Verbs: Form, Tense, and Aspect

Read before class: G by D pp. 201-206

Work on in class: G by D exercises 9.1, 9.2, chapter 9 exercise

Activity: conjugating verbs in English and in other languages

Homework review: G by D Workbook 9.1 (pp. 139-142)

Feb. 2nd Verbs: Subjunctive Mood, Passive and Active Voice

Read before class: G by D pp. 206 – 217, 255 – 258

Work on in class: G by D exercise 9.3, 9.5, 11.1, 11.2, 13.3 (pp. 209-211, 258, 323-324)

Activity: When to use passive voice, from Joseph M. Williams’ *Style* pp. 78-86

Homework Review: G by D workbook 9.10, 9.11, 11.2 (pp. 143-150, 183-185)

Sentences in the Wild #3 due Feb. 3rd by 6 pm

Feb. 4th Prepositional and Verbal Phrases
Read before class: G by D pp. 219 – 228
Work on in class: G by D exercises 10.1 – 10.4 (pp. 151-160)
Homework: G by D workbook 11.2
Quiz #3 on Canvas: due Feb. 5th at 6 pm

4th Module: Compound Sentences and Complicated Syntax

Feb. 9th Special Sentence Patterns
Read before class: G by D pp. 77-91
Work on in class: G by D exercises 3.4 – 3.8
Homework: G by D workbook 3.3 (pp. 49-56)

Feb. 11th Compound Sentences: Combining and Expanding with Conjunctions
Read before class: G by D pp. 117 – 130
Work on in class: G by D exercise 5.2, chapter 5 exercise
Activity: Watch Grammar Rock videos
Homework: G by D workbook 5.1 -5.3 (73-79)

Feb. 16th
Special Day: workshopping our writing self-analysis
Writing self-analysis due, with peer review, by 6 pm

5th Module: Clauses — Relative, Adverb and Adjective

Feb. 18th Compound sentences and Noun Clauses
Read before class: G by D pp. 131-144
Work on in class: G by D exercises 6.1, 6.2, chapter 6 exercise
Homework Review: G by D workbook 6.1 – 6.3 (pp. 81-88)

Feb. 23rd Complex Sentences with Adverb and Relative Clauses, pt. 1
Read before class: G by D pp. 145 – 155
Work on in class: G by D exercises 7.1 – 7.2
Homework Review: G by D workbook chapter 7 part 1 (pp. 89-94)
Sentences in the Wild #4 due Feb. 24th by 6 pm

Feb. 25th Complex Sentences with Adverb, Adjective and Relative Clauses, pt. 2
Read before class: G by D pp. 156 – 169
Work on in class: G by D exercises 7.3 – 7.6
Homework review: G by D workbook Chapter 7 parts 2 & 3 (pp. 94 – 109)
Quiz #4 due Feb. 26th by 6 pm

6th Module: Verbals, and applying what we've learned

Mar. 2nd Special Day: Regional English in the United States, Poetic Language and Word Order

Mar. 4th Case, Agreement, and Consistency
Read before class: G by D pp. 179 – 199
Work on in class: G by D exercises 8.1 – 8.4
Homework Review: G by D workbook 8.1 – 8.6 (pp. 125 – 135)

Mar. 9th Verbals: Infinitives and Gerunds
Read before class: G by D pp. 228 – 237; Transitive Vampire 132 - 139
Work on in class: G by D exercises 10.5 – 10.9

Homework review: G by D workbook pp. 161-172
Sentences in the Wild #5 due March 10th by 6 pm.

Mar. 11th Verbals: Participles and Participial Phrases

Read before class: G by D pp. 238-247

Work on in class: G by D exercises 10.10, 10.11

Homework review: G by D workbook pp. 172-181

Writing Self-Analysis due and workshop in class

Quiz #5 on Canvas due March 12th by 6 pm

Final Exam/Project due March 18th by 6 pm