

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT  
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES  
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

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**English 231 (3cr): English Grammar**

**Spring 2016**

MWF 9:00 -9:50 am (Nicely 320)

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***Instructor:* Dr. Lina Choueiri**

***Office:* Fisk Hall Room 311**

***AUB Extension:* 4114**

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***Office Hours:* MW 10-11am or by appointment**

**Course Description**

This course is an investigation of English Grammar from the perspective of current syntactic theory. It provides students with tools to understand and analyze the structure of (Standard) English. Principles and patterns that govern the organization of English words and sentences will be the primary focus of class discussions. The course also aims at developing the ability to think critically about grammatical notions such as 'verb', 'noun', 'subject', or 'object', and about rules, and at applying this knowledge to explain aspects of language usage and language acquisition.

**Course Assessment**

The grade distribution in this course will be based on the following forms of assessment:

Midterm Exam (30%)

Final Exam (30%)

Research Report (15%)

Class Presentation (15%)

Participation (10%).

The *final exam* in this class is not cumulative. Both the *midterm* and the *final* are open book, open notes. There will be one (group) research project that will result in a *research report* and a *class presentation*. Groups will choose, early on in the semester and in consultation with me, a topic for a research project. Possible topics are listed at the end of the syllabus: they concern aspects of the grammar of English which are subjects of ongoing debates (in certain circles). You are free to suggest a topic of your own! More details about the project description will be shared in class and on Moodle.

The *participation* portion of the grade will be based on your readiness to participate in class and in pop-quizzes, and to do the assigned exercises.

### **Required Readings**

While there is no single textbook used for this class, much of the class presentation relies on *Discovering Grammar: An Introduction to English Sentence Structure*, by Anne Lobeck (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). All required readings will be posted on Moodle. For more details, see the schedule of activities below.

### **Other Resources**

#### The Writing Center:

The Writing Center is a free resource for AUB students that I encourage you to explore. It offers one-hour consultations with tutors trained to listen and to ask questions about your writing. To make an appointment, call 4077 or email [aubwrites@gmail.com](mailto:aubwrites@gmail.com)

#### Library Information Services:

Reference librarians in all of the AUB libraries are always there to help. Jafet Library information specialists can consult with you individually on your research. Their office is in the lobby, directly across from the circulation desk. Check out the undergraduate student brochure on Moodle for more information on AUB libraries.

#### The Counseling Center:

The Office of Student Affairs offers professional, individual care for members of the AUB community facing emotional challenges. The Center is in West Hall, second floor. For more information, see the FAQ at <http://www.aub.edu.lb/sao/counseling/Pages/faq.aspx> To make an appointment, you can call Dr. Antoine Khabbaz at ext. 3178 or the counseling assistant and 3196.

#### Students with Special Needs:

If you have documented special needs and anticipate difficulties with the content or format of the course due to a physical or learning disability, please contact me and/or your academic advisor, as well as the Counseling Center, as soon as possible to discuss alternative arrangements in advance. Those seeking adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability must submit the Special Needs Support Request Form, found at <http://www.aub.edu.lb/sao/Documents/Special%20Needs%20Support%20Request%20Form.pdf> along with the required documentation.

### **Course Policies:** Classroom community

Attendance: I expect you to show up in this class, which means both being here in the room on time as well as being present mentally. Your absences will weaken the success of the class as a whole. Official FAS policy mandates that you be withdrawn from the course if you are absent more than 1/5 of the class meetings in the first 10 weeks of class.

Academic Integrity: Learning how to refer to the work of others appropriately is an important aspect of academic writing. Doing your own thinking and writing is essential for your education. University policies reinforce this by setting consequences for plagiarism and

other forms of misconduct. Submitting writing that is not your own could result in a grade of zero for that assignment and a Dean's warning entered into your student record. For more detailed information, see the student code of conduct at <http://www.aub.edu.lb/pnp/generaluniversitypolicies/Documents/StudentCodeConduct/StudentCodeConduct.pdf>

Classroom Etiquette: Arrive to class on time. Be sure to put cell phones away during class time!

### Course Schedule

Topics	Activities
Overview of course requirements	
The Phenomenology of Error	READINGS: WILLIAMS 1981
Morphology: Word Classes	READINGS: WARDAUGH, CHP 2
Morphology: Word Formation	READINGS: WARDAUGH, CHP 11
Syntax: Phrases and Constituents	READINGS: LOBECK, CHP 2
Syntax: Evidence for Phrases and Constituents	READINGS: LOBECK, CHP 3  <b>Midterm</b>
Syntax: The Noun and the Noun Phrase	READINGS: LOBECK CHP 4
Syntax: The Verb and the Verb Phrase	READINGS: LOBECK, CHPS 5, 6
Syntax: The Complex Sentence	READINGS: LOBECK CHP 10
The Language Mavens	READINGS: PINKER 1994, CHP 12
<b>CLASS PRESENTATIONS OF GROUP PROJECTS</b>	

### Possible Topics for Research and Presentation

- ★ Double negatives
- ★ Syntactic aspects of AAVE
- ★ Problems that Arabic speakers/learners of English have, how to identify them, and how to provide help
- ★ Passive and the resistance to it in style manuals
- ★ Common English misuses, e.g. *hopefully*, *literally*, etc.
- ★ Texting and other linguistic innovations

### Selected References

*Jafet Library has a rich collection of books and journals dealing with English grammar. You will find many useful references on the topic. In addition, here are some references I have used in preparation for this class.*

Baker, Mark. 2001. *The Atoms of Language: The Mind's Hidden Rules of Grammar*.

New York: Basic Books.

van Gelderen, Elly. 2002. *An Introduction to the Grammar of English: Syntactic Arguments and Socio-Historical Background*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Huddleston, Rodney and Geoffrey Pullum. 2002. *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*. Cambridge: CUP.

Pinker, S. 1994. *The Language Instinct: How the Mind Creates Language*. New York: HarperPerennial.

Pinker, S. 1999. *Words and Rules: The Ingredients of Language*. New York: Basic Books.

Wardaugh, Ronald. 1995. *Understanding English Grammar: A Linguistic Approach*. Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers.