
The Morphosyntax of Focus

LING 490/3.0 - Syllabus (Tentative: to be revised)

Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures

Winter 2021

Instructor: Charlotte Reinholtz

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Class meetings: Monday 2:30-4:00 & Thursday 4:00-5:30 via Zoom at this link: <LINK>.

Drop-in hours: Tuesday 2:00-4:00, or by appointment. Office hours work on a drop-in basis, and will be held via Zoom at this link: <LINK>.

Website: Available via onQ

Remote Course Design

As you know, Winter 2021 course will be offered remotely. This course will have a combination of ‘live’ class meetings held via **Zoom**, and online course materials which you can access at any time via the onQ course website.

There will be two ‘live’ class meetings every week, held via Zoom at this link: <LINK>. They will take place in **our timetabled slot (Monday 2:30-4:00 & Thursday 4:00-5:30)**, but will usually last 40-50 minutes to minimize “Zoom fatigue”. All ‘live’ class meetings will be recorded and made available on the onQ website.

Everyone is expected to attend ‘live’ class meetings. You will be responsible for material covered in these meetings. If you are prevented from attending ‘live’ class meetings, you will need to watch the recorded sessions (available on the onQ course website).

The schedule of activities for each week will follow the same basic schedule:

1. ‘Live’ Lecture and Q&A meeting: **Monday**.
2. Weekly Reading Survey: due **Tuesday** evening.
3. Weekly Discussion Questions: prepare for **Thursday**.
4. ‘Live’ Review and Discussion meeting: **Thursday**.
5. Materials for next week: Posted every **Friday**.

Weekly topic guide & announcements: Each week, there will be a weekly topic guide and announcements (posted **Friday** of the preceding week).

Discussion Board: There will be a discussion board where you can talk to each other about anything relating to the course. I will drop in from time to time to respond to any questions.

Links & resources: There will also be a links & resources section on the onQ website which provides relevant links and resources.

Readings: All readings will be available via the course website on onQ.

Course Description

This course explores the syntax and semantic of contrastive focus. The course begins with an introduction to the notion of contrastive focus. Following this, we will look at a series of morphosyntactic phenomena associated with contrastive focus and a variety of theoretical treatments proposed for them. The aim of the course is to develop an understanding of the diverse ways in which languages encode contrastive focus, the challenges this has presented to generative syntactic theory, and some of the current theories that have emerged about contrastive focus as a functional category.

There will be weekly lecture presentations and discussion meetings. Readings are selected from the current literature in linguistics and includes journal articles, working papers, and unpublished manuscripts.

Prerequisites: 9.0 units at the 300 level or above in LING.

Required Textbook: None. All readings will be made available via onQ.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify and describe a variety of morphosyntactic phenomena associated with contrastive focus.
- Read and summarize descriptive work and theoretical treatments of specific morphosyntactic phenomena associated with contrastive focus.
- Critically evaluate descriptive and theoretical work on the topic area.

Grading Method

All components of this course will receive numerical percentage marks. The final grade you receive for the course will be derived by converting your numerical course average to a letter grade according to [Queen's Official Grade Conversion Scale](#).

Grading Scheme:	Short summary paper 1	20%
	Short summary paper 2	25%
	Final paper	45%
	Topic Proposal	5%
	Slide Presentation	10%
	Final Paper	30%
	Check-in Survey	5%
	Participation	5% (+1% bonus)

Course Requirements

1. Readings

Every week, there will be an assigned reading consisting of one or more published articles. These articles will be available via onQ. You will need to print these articles so you can refer to them during 'live' class meetings.

The readings for this course are often quite difficult, and you should not be disheartened if you find it difficult to follow some parts. Do not worry! Try to read past the parts that are difficult to follow and focus on trying to understand the basic descriptive facts and analysis. Bring your questions to class.

2. 'Live' Class Meetings

Every week, there will be two 'live' class meetings: (1) a 'live' lecture and Q&A session on the week's topic; (2) a 'live' review and discussion meeting. You will be responsible for material covered in these meetings.

Everyone is expected to participate in 'live' class meetings provided that they have sufficient internet connection and are located in Ontario (or a reasonably close time zone).

If you are not able to attend 'live' class meetings you will need to watch the recorded meetings (available via the onQ course website).

3. Check-in Surveys

Every week, there will be a brief check-in survey (quiz format) of material covered that week. The purpose of the survey is to check for points that need follow-up in upcoming class meetings. The survey will usually ask what you found most/least clear, and what questions you have. There may also be questions about a particular concept or phenomenon covered that week.

Surveys will usually be evaluated for completion only. However, if you give extremely minimal responses, this may be factored into your final Participation grade.

4. Discussion Questions

Every week, there will be 2-3 reading questions that you should prepare for the Thursday review and discussion session. The questions will deal with key points in the reading. Expect questions about the linguistic data presented and the analysis proposed. As we move into the course, there will also be questions asking you to compare and contrast data and analysis in the current reading with material covered in previous weeks.

5. Short Summary Papers

There will be two short papers, one dealing with a reading from the first half of the term, the other dealing with a reading from the second half of term. Each paper will be due in the week from which you selected it (see Course Calendar). You must sign up for two specific readings in Week 2.

- *Short summary 1* should give a clear summary of the linguistic data and the analysis proposed in the reading you selected.
- *Short summary 2* should give a clear summary of the linguistic data and the analysis proposed in the reading you selected and discuss how they compare to another reading from the same week.

6. Long Paper

There will be one long paper in which you discuss a morphosyntactic phenomenon associated with contrastive focus. The paper, which will be based on two or more published articles, should provide a clear description of the phenomenon in two or more languages, and discuss the formal morphosyntactic analysis of the phenomenon. What are the key properties of the phenomenon that emerges from comparison of the languages? How can they be addressed in a formal morphosyntactic analysis?

The long paper is designed as a project which consists of three graded components:

- Topic proposal, due in Week 7
- Slide presentation, in Week 11-12
- Final long paper, due April 1

7. Participation

Participation refers to your active engagement in the course material and activities, AND your interaction with me and other students in this course. This includes doing the assigned readings, completing the weekly check-in surveys, and being prepared for the weekly review and discussion meetings.

Because this is a seminar style course, participation in class discussions is particularly important! However, if you have significant concerns about speaking in class, for any reason, please meet with me to discuss alternative modes of participation.

Participation by itself carries 5% of your grade. In addition, regular, consistent and active participation throughout the course may earn a 1% bonus to your overall course grade.

Course Policies

Late Policy

If you need an extension on written work, you should contact me at least one day before the assignment is due. You will need to confirm the extension we agree on.

Contacting Me

During [office hours](#), you can reach me via Zoom at the following link: [Office Hours](#). Outside office hours, you can reach me by email.

To balance work and other parts of life during this Fall 2020 remote teaching term, I ask that you keep communications with me to weekday working hours: Monday to Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. I usually respond to emails within 24 hours (except late Friday emails).

Email

The use of your official Queen's University email is required for all email exchanges in this course. Begin your subject line with "LING 340". Sign with your full name.

Recordings of 'live' lectures - Privacy Policy

Please keep in mind that recordings of 'live' lectures are not public and should not be shared. Under no circumstances should they be posted online or otherwise shared with anyone not registered in this LING 490 Morphosyntax of Contrastive Focus course (Winter 2021).

Also note that when you participate in 'live' class meetings, you can use voice only if you prefer. You can also use video and obscure the background of the space where you are sitting. I will explain how to do this when we have our first 'live' class meeting.

A Fact sheet on Privacy and Remote Teaching and Learning may be found at <https://www.queensu.ca/accessandprivacy/Privacy-and-Remote-Teaching-and-Learning> . Contained within the Fact Sheet is a link to a set of FAQs on Recording online classes and meetings to show how to use Zoom and Teams/MS Stream in a privacy-protective way: <https://www.queensu.ca/accessandprivacy/faqs>

Notice of Recording

Synchronous (live) classes will be delivered in this course through Zoom, a video conferencing platform supported by the University. Steps have been taken by the University to configure this platform in a secure manner. 'Live' class meetings - but not group discussions! - will be recorded with video and audio (and transcription if this turns out to be required by anyone) and will be made available to students in this course for the duration of the term. The recordings may capture your name, image or voice through the video and audio recordings. By attending these live classes, you are consenting to the collection of this information for the purposes of administering the class and associated coursework. If you are concerned about the collection of your name and other personal information in the class, please contact the course instructor to identify possible alternatives.

To learn more about how your personal information is collected, used and disclosed by Queen's University, please see the general [Notice of Collection, Use and Disclosure of Personal Information](#).

Copyright of Course Materials

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Disability Accommodations

Queen's University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you are a student with a disability and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact Student Wellness Services (SWS) and register as early as possible. For more information, including important deadlines, please visit the [Student Wellness Website](#).

The resources of the Queen's Learning Commons and Student Wellness Services are available to all students (whether or not they are registered for Disability Accommodations).

I would encourage all of you to contact me if there are any circumstances that may affect your participation in the course. This could be personal, related to physical or mental health, or arising from issues in your family or personal life. The sooner you contact me, the earlier we can discuss what adjustments to the coursework may be possible to accommodate your circumstances.

Academic Consideration for Students in Extenuating Circumstances

The Senate Policy on Academic Consideration for Students in Extenuating Circumstances (accessible at the [Student Wellness Services website](#)) was approved in April, 2017. Queen's University is committed to providing academic consideration to students experiencing extenuating circumstances that are beyond their control and which have a direct and substantial impact on their ability to meet essential academic requirements. Each Faculty has developed a protocol to provide a consistent and equitable approach in dealing with requests for academic consideration for students facing extenuating circumstances. Arts and Science undergraduate students can find the Faculty of Arts and Science protocol and the portal where they submit a request through the [Queen' Arts & Science Academic Consideration and Accommodation web page](#). Students in other Faculties and Schools should refer to the protocol for their home Faculty.

Academic Integrity

Queen's students, faculty, administrators and staff all have responsibilities for supporting and upholding the fundamental values of academic integrity. Academic integrity is constituted by the five core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (see www.academicintegrity.org) and by the quality of courage. These values and qualities are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Adherence to the values expressed through academic integrity forms a foundation for the "freedom of inquiry and exchange of ideas" essential to the intellectual life of the University.

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with and adhering to the regulations concerning academic integrity. General information on academic integrity is available at this link: [Integrity@Queen's University](#), along with Faculty or School specific information. Departures from academic integrity include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials, facilitation, forgery and falsification. Actions which contravene the

regulation on academic integrity carry sanctions that can range from a warning, to loss of grades on an assignment, to failure of a course, to requirement to withdraw from the university.

Acknowledgement of Territory

Queen’s University is situated on Traditional Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Territory. In acknowledging this land, we seek to rebuild right relations with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, to learn from them, and to live on this land with respect and gratitude for its bounty.

Technology

Web Browsers

onQ performs best when using the most recent version of the web browsers, Chrome or Firefox. Safari and Edge are strongly discouraged as these web browsers are known to cause issues with onQ.

Internet Speed

While wired internet connection is encouraged, we recognize that students may be relying on a wireless connection. A minimum download speed of 10 Mbps and up to 20 Mbps for multimedia is recommended. To test your internet speed, click this link: <https://www.speedtest.net/>. For technology support ranging from setting up your device and issues with onQ to installing software, contact ITS Support Centre at this link: <https://www.queensu.ca/its/itsc>.

Course Calendar (to appear in the final version of the syllabus!)

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