Family resemblances
Cross-linguistic and historical explorations of Romance grammar
SPN 6735 (x 0418)

Spring 2016, University of Florida
AND 32, M 9-11 period
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Description
With the formation of the European Union, the cultural ties between speakers of erstwhile Latin varieties, such as Spanish, French, Portuguese, Italian, and Catalan, are growing ever tighter. At the same time, language-based nationalism, inspired by the looming prospect of language loss under the globalization of English, provokes newfound feelings of unique linguistic and cultural identities.

Along with this sociocultural rapprochement and heightened transnational sentiment, linguists studying the formation of grammar are concurrently evermore intrigued by the benefits of cross-linguistic analysis. Cross-linguistic work with natural data, facilitated by large computer-based corpora of historical and modern language, can help linguists understand the unique aspects of each variety they study, to visualize the dynamic process of language change, and, most importantly, to uncover some of the universal tendencies in human linguistic efficiency and creativity.

This course will cover the following topics: a) language policy and linguistic conflict in the European Union; b) functionalist models of language, including grammaticalization theory; c) corpus design and quantitative methods for studying natural data; and d) case studies of variation and change, focusing on modern Romance varieties spoken in the European Union. Students will utilize freely available large, electronic corpora to carry out their own cross-linguistic and/or historical studies, thereby gaining a more intimate understanding of the relationship between and the unique history of the language(s) they have chosen to study.

This course will be taught English, with readings in English, Spanish, and French. Most students will have functional use of two or more Romance languages, though those interested in investigating the history of one particular Romance language will also benefit.

Objectives
- an understanding of and ability to articulate the role of frequency in language change
- an ability to articulate the various concomitants of grammaticalization
- an ability to use information about variability to identify appropriate areas for study
- deeper understanding of the similarities and differences between Romance languages
- practice in studying grammaticalization phenomena scientifically, including coding for various factors in Excel and carrying out multivariate multiple regression analyses using GoldVarb X
- experience utilizing large online corpora of natural data to extract occurrences of linguistic phenomena
- the completion of an original research paper
Evaluation

Participation/presentation 10%
Reaction papers and peer reviews 20%
Take-home exams, 5-7 pp. essays (2) 25% (@12.5%)
Paper proposal and bibliography 10%
Coding of factors in Excel 10%
Final paper, 8-12 pp. (MA), 12-20 pp. (Ph.D.) 25%

Texts (required)

- Readings on Canvas

Also recommended: HC = Harris, Alice, & Lyle Campbell. 1995. *Historical syntax in cross-linguistic perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
# Course schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>READING (due class day listed)</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction: Linguistic diversity in Europe: Romance</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>11 January</td>
<td>Caviedes 2003; López 2007; Harris-Northall 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>NO HAY CLASE</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Shelly 1999; Dal Negro &amp; Vietti 2006; Wright 2007; (Gaquin 2005)</td>
<td>Autobiography due</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Historical syntax I: Grammaticalization</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1 February</td>
<td>Bybee 2006; HT Ch 1, BPP Ch 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>HT Ch 3; HC Ch 3</td>
<td>Receive exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>HT Ch 4; HC Ch 11</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Historical syntax II: Methods</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Butler 2004; Diver 1986</td>
<td>Exam 1 DUE</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>NO HAY CLASE</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 March</td>
<td>Penny 2006</td>
<td>Proposal DUE</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Workshop: Extraction of data, preliminary exploration; using Excel to code variables; brief intro to GoldVarb</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Historical syntax III: Grammaticalization in Romance</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>BPP Ch 3; Squartini &amp; Bertinetto 2000*</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Jacobs 2011*; Acosta 2011</td>
<td>Biblio DUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 April</td>
<td>Lamiroy 2003*; Batllori &amp; Roca 2011*; (BPP Ch 5)</td>
<td>Receive exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>BPP 6.1-6.2; BPP Squartini 2008*; Lauwers &amp; Duée 2011*</td>
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Reaction Papers
Each week before the beginning of class, students should turn in a one- to two-page reaction paper on the week’s readings on Canvas. These reflections should address at least two of the following questions:

1) What in this week’s readings stood out to you as interesting?
2) What theoretical questions are addressed by this week’s readings?
3) To what extent are this week’s readings satisfying in terms of their evidence and/or methodology?
4) How could future studies of the phenomena addressed in this week’s readings shed new light on these issues or answer the questions raised in the readings? How would you design a study?

Moreover, on Canvas, each student is required to review and comment on the responses of two other classmates each week. These comments should be substantive, directly addressing the issues raised by the student.

Presentation
Each student will do one presentation of a class reading. The class readings available for presenting are marked with * and the sign-up list is available on Canvas.

The reading presentations should include: a) a handout summarizing the reading; b) a description of how the reading exemplifies general trends in language change (or not); c) a critical analysis of the strong and weak points of the methods used; and d) questions for clarification and discussion. The day of the presentation, students will lead part of the class, generally for about one hour per presented article. If more than one reading is listed as required for that day, students should only present the article marked, drawing on the other readings as useful.

Take-home Exams
There will be two take-home exams. Each exam will have an assigned topic that will ask students to show both general conceptual understanding of the material covered (e.g., the notion of grammaticalization) and the ability to provide real-world examples of linguistic phenomena (e.g., the path of anteriors to simple past in French and/or Spanish). The exams should be 5-7 pp. typed, double-spaced, 1-inch margins in 12 pt. Times New Roman. They should be turned in by midnight on the date due, by email, to jeaaron@ufl.edu. Deviation from these requirements will result in a lower grade for the exam. Students will receive the topic for the exams two weeks before the due date. Students are highly encouraged to discuss the topics with each other and with the professor before turning in the exams.

Paper Proposal
Each student will turn in a 2- to 3-page proposal (double spaced, APA format) that includes the following information:
- Linguistic phenomenon to be studied
- Language(s) to be studied, corpora and time frame. Explain why these are the best for your study
- Description of the student’s hypotheses about the phenomenon in terms of grammaticalization theory (e.g., has semantic bleaching occurred? has there been contextual generalization? is there retention of lexical meaning? does it look like something documented in another language?)
- Description of any variation, i.e., any alternatives that exist in the language, where speakers must choose.

Proposals will be graded on the amount of thought put into the proposal, not on the accuracy of the student’s predictions. Proposals should be the organized results of a preliminary brainstorm, providing a summary of ideas that will help the professor to provide guidance. Students should allow both the readings and their own intuitions/curiosity to guide them in finding a suitable topic, since the list of appropriate topics is nearly endless. **It is the student’s responsibility to decide on a topic and consult with the professor and/or other students regarding methods well before the proposal is due.**

**Bibliography**
Each student should provide a preliminary bibliography in APA format that includes at least three (3) theoretical or general sources (e.g. general variation or grammaticalization theory) and seven (7) sources related in some way to the specific topic chosen, resulting in ten (10) sources. A maximum of two (2) may be readings from class. These sources do not include the corpora used. Students are advised to look in the LLBA database for appropriate articles. **Wikipedia and other internet-based information** (except web-based scholarly journals) are not an acceptable scholarly source.

**Coding in Excel**
Each student will extract a number of examples appropriate for her/his research project and place them in Excel. The appropriate number will generally range between 150 and 500, depending on numerous factors, including the frequency of the phenomenon, the quality of the corpus, the complexity of the phenomenon, the student’s previous experience working with such data, and the student’s ultimate goals. The necessary amount for each student will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Once the student has extracted examples from corpora, these examples will be coded for various features, as appropriate for the study the student has designed. This coding will be used as the basis of the final paper. **The Excel file must be turned in along with the final paper.**

**Final Paper**
The final paper will be typed in APA format, double-spaced, 1-inch margins in 12 pt. Times New Roman font. It should be turned in by 5 p.m. on the date due, on Canvas. Deviation from these requirements will result in a lower grade for the paper. Details on specific requirements will be provided later in the semester.
**MA students:** The final paper should be between 8 and 12 pp. (without references), and must include at least 10 references. Your paper must include both real-life examples collected from corpora and some quantitative analysis of percentages and trends.

**Ph.D. students:** The final paper should be between 12 and 20 pp. (without references), and must include at least 15 references. Along with providing examples of natural usage, you are encouraged to use GoldVarb for statistical analysis. If not, Chi-square tests for statistical significance must be done whenever possible. It is expected that you will produce a paper of publishable quality, and you are encouraged to write with conference presentation and/or publication in mind.

**Articles in Canvas**

**Language policy and linguistic diversity in Europe**


**Language change / grammaticalization**


**Methods**


Romance case studies


Extra readings (not required)


**Corpora**

Students may choose to work with any Romance language(s) they wish, though the professor will only be able to offer linguistic help with Spanish, French, and Portuguese, and, to a limited extent, Italian. Students are encouraged to examine variation in the modern-day varieties of two languages with parallel, though not necessarily identical, structures. Historical cross-linguistic research is also an option. Languages other than Romance languages for comparison may be approved on a case-by-case basis.

**Class Attendance**

Students are expected to attend all class sessions. Students may miss one session without damage to their grades. Beyond one absence, students must provide proof of extenuating circumstances, such as the death of a loved one, conference presentation or sponsored research travel, hospitalization, or illness. Students are responsible for managing their own time.

**Classroom Etiquette**

A general attitude of openness, respect, and focus is expected. The inappropriate use of cell phones or other mobile devices during class time is unacceptable. Cell phones should be put out of view while class is in session. Laptops and tablets may only be used for participation in class activities. The use of texting, Facebook, email, chat, and other such behavior during class time is not respectful to others present and will not be tolerated. **Repeated problems in this regard will lead to a zero (0) participation grade for the course.**

**Make-up Work**

No make-up work will be accepted. All exams and presentations must be presented when due. In no case shall extra written work be accepted in lieu of class attendance or participation. Late work will lose 10% off the final grade for each day late. No extra credit work will be accepted.

**Grade Scale**

The grade scale for classes in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese Studies is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100-93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>92-90</td>
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<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>91-93</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>86-83</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89-87</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>82-80</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>79-77</td>
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<td>C(S)</td>
<td>76-73</td>
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<tr>
<td>C(U)</td>
<td>72-70</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>69-67</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>66-63</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>62-60</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>59-0</td>
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NOTE: A grade of C- will not be a qualifying grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, Gordon Rule or Basic Distribution Credit courses. For further information regarding passing grades and grade point equivalents, please refer to the Undergraduate Catalog at [http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html](http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html).
Course Evaluations
Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at https://evaluations.ufl.edu. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results.

Attendance and Make-ups
Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the online catalog at: https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx.

Academic Integrity
All students are required to abide by the Academic Honesty Guidelines of the University. The UF Honor Code reads: “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.” On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” For more information please refer to http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide.

Accommodations
Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. For more information see http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc.

Counseling and Wellness
A variety of counseling, mental health and psychiatric services are available through the UF Counseling and Wellness Center, whose goal is to help students be maximally effective in their academic pursuits by reducing or eliminating emotional, psychological, and interpersonal problems that interfere with academic functioning. The Center can be found online at http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc or reached by phone at 392-1575.