

DSL3
Bilingual Acquisition and Diachronic Shifts Driving Grammatical Change
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This course bridges the gap between historical linguistics and modern language acquisition to explore the “life cycle” of grammar. By looking at syntax through both a bilingual and a historical lens, students will discover how individual language learning shapes global language change. The course is structured into two main components:

1 - The Bilingual Mind & Language Learning: We will investigate how individuals acquire and manage multiple languages simultaneously. Students will engage with first, second and heritage language acquisition theories, alongside cognitive processing challenges. Topics include code-switching, translanguaging and the critical period hypothesis, showing how individual constraints set the stage for systemic grammatical developments.

2 - The History of English Syntax: We will trace the actual structural journey of the English language over centuries. Students will analyze how nominal categories like gender, number and case disappeared or changed. We will follow the rise of modern auxiliary and modal verbs, explore shifts in complementation, and dissect major clause-level changes like the Verb Second phenomenon and modern word order.