Linguistics 650 is a topics course for graduate students. This year the topic is historical/diachronic syntax. The course will investigate a range of syntactic changes that have occurred in the Germanic and the Romance languages of western Europe, languages for which there is a rich historical record. It will begin by discussing what historical syntax is, focusing on two aspects of the subject:

I. What is the comparative grammar aspect of language change, that is, how do grammars differ at different stages of the evolution in a given language.
II. What are the diachronic sources of the linguistic changes that we observe, including sources in language acquisition by children, sources in the instability in the language usage of adults, and sources in language/dialect contact.

Here is a preliminary list of the topics to be covered:

1. The nature of grammatical change.
   a. grammatical variation: comparative variation and grammar change
   b. a potential source of grammatical change in mislearning by children.
   c. another source of changes in innovations in language use by adults.

2. Cases of grammatical change as the result of language contact; for example, change in V2 in English as a result of Scandinavian influence.

3. Syntactic change due to morphological change; for example, the loss of V-to-T caused of loss of agreement.

4. Cases that will be investigated.

I. The shift from OV to VO
   a. Germanic
      i. English
      ii. Norse
   b. Romance from Latin

II. The loss of V2
   a. English
   b. Romance

III. The loss of subject-verb agreement (and V-to-T movement)
   a. Germanic
      i. English
      ii. Norse
   b. Romance
      i. French
      ii. Brazilian Portuguese

IV. The loss/decline of subject pro drop
a. French
b. Brazilian Portuguese
V. The history of negative concord in Germanic
   a. Dutch and West Flemish
   b. English
VI. History of Romance clitic pronouns
VII. The rise of the article system in Romance