“Typology” is the study of the ways in which languages differ and the ways in which they are similar. In this course, we will compare syntactic constructions in a variety of languages. We will examine issues such as word order, the relation between structure and function, properties of subjects, Case-marking patterns, and relative clauses. We will also discuss markedness hierarchies and optimality theory.

A couple of quotes to consider
Martin Joos 1957: “...[L]anguages [can] differ from each other without limit and in unpredictable ways.” [Readings in Linguistics I p. 96]

Hilda Koopman and Dominique Sportiche 1991: “[W]e suppose that the null assumption concerning language variation is that it does not exist.” [Lingua 85 p. 218f]

Course Outline
I. Basic concepts of typology [Chapters 1 and 2]
II. Dimensions of linguistic representation [Chapter 3]
   A. General issues
   B. Configurationality
III. Word Order Typology [Chapter 4]
IV. Argument Typology
   A. Ergativity
      1. Case-Marking Patterns
      2. Subjects and Pivots: Syntactic Ergativity [Chapter 5 and Falk 2006]
      3. Differential Marking I: Description [Chapter 6]
      4. Differential Marking II: Prominence hierarchies and Optimality Theory[Chapter 9]
   B. Objects
V. Relative Clauses [Chapter 7] (time permitting)
VI. Causatives [Chapter 8] (time permitting)
VII. Final comments [Chapter 11]

Course requirements/grading
Homework—two major assignments (50%)
Final exam (50%)
Students who take this course as a seminar write a seminar paper.

Reading

Teacher information
Prof. Yehuda N. Falk
Office 7812 ☺ Sundays and Wednesdays 14:45–15:00 ☑ 83978
Home Telephone 672-3803 ⏩ msyfalk@mscc.huji.ac.il
http://pluto.mscc.huji.ac.il/~msyfalk/
Course: http://pluto.mscc.huji.ac.il/~msyfalk/Typology/