

Semantics 3

LING 660

Fall 2020

Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:35 am - 12:25 pm

(Note: the official calendar meeting time is 11:35 am - 12:55 pm, see below under 'Remote delivery'.)

Instructor

Luis Alonso-Ovalle

Office location: 1085 Penfield, room 113 (not in use for now.)

Office hours (online): Thursday, 1:00pm - 2:00pm or by appointment.

Email: luis.alonso-ovalle@mcgill.ca

Content of course

This course is a graduate level introduction to formal semantics. The course develops a basic compositional semantics for a number of extensional constructions. Topics include predication, modification, semantic binding, the semantics of quantificational determiners, and pronouns. Students will familiarize themselves with a number of basic mathematical concepts that underlie the semantic interpretation system developed (sets, relations, functions.)

Remote delivery

There will be two Zoom online meetings per week from 11:35-12:25am (EST). These will be devoted to discussing selected parts of the class handouts, which will be made available beforehand through MyCourses.

Please read the [Guidelines on Remote Teaching and Learning](#). You will be notified through a 'pop-up' box in Zoom if a lecture or portion of a class is being recorded. By remaining in sessions that are recorded, you agree to the recording, and you understand that your image, voice, and name may be disclosed to classmates. You also understand that recordings will be made available in myCourses to students registered in the course.

To avoid Zoom fatigue, the meetings are shorter than the officially scheduled lectures, in line with current Faculty of Arts guidelines. The shorter meeting times will be compensated by slightly longer assignments (see below.)

If any of you cannot attend the online meetings at some point, you will still be able to access the meeting recordings, and you are encouraged to meet me during office hours.

Evaluation

Weekly homework assignments (worth 85% of the final grade.)
One snippet (worth 15% of the final grade, see below.)

Readings

Readings, class handouts, and assignments will be available via myCourses.

Although there is no required textbook, we will make extensive use of Heim and Kratzer's textbook (a few copies should be available at the McGill bookstore.)

- Irene Heim & Angelika Kratzer. 1998. *Semantics in Generative Grammar*. Blackwell.

A note on class handouts

Class handouts will be posted in myCourses. You are expected to read the class handouts before the online meetings. They contain exercises that you will be asked to do beforehand. One handout usually covers more than one meeting. Handouts will be revised and modified from meeting to meeting, so you should always check myCourses for the latest version.

The snippet

Your 'snippet' will be a very short, self-contained, and explicit note (max. 2-3 pages) that can:

- (i) present a new set of data that either confirms or calls into question previously accepted generalizations, poses a challenge to existing theories, or leads to interesting theoretical questions, or
- (ii) present inconsistencies, point out unnoticed assumptions, or call attention to new predictions of an existing analysis.

If your snippet presents a puzzle, it does not have to provide a solution to it.

You can read more about snippets here: <http://www.ledonline.it/snippets/>

If all of you are comfortable attending the online meetings, snippets will be presented in class, at the end of the semester. If any of you cannot present your snippet online, we will set up a discussion board where the snippets will be posted. You will be asked to submit written questions for your classmates about their snippets.

Course policies

Homework

Student collaboration

Students are encouraged to discuss homework assignments with their classmates, but every student must submit his or her own write-up. Homework assignments must clearly list the students that collaborated in the assignment. You are expected to hand in the assignment in class on the date that it is due. No late assignments will be accepted.

Level of difficulty

There will be times where the homework will mostly consist of ‘finger exercises’: you will be simply asked to apply rules and perform mechanical computations so that you understand what these rules and computations do. However, there will also be times where you will be forced to test the limits of what you learned in class and where you will have to explore and grope in the dark. This will be challenging and it can be sometimes frustrating for some people. Don’t despair. Making mistakes will help you figure out what you do not fully understand.

Academic integrity

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (for more information, see <http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest>).

Students are advised to declare all sources in their homework assignments and other written work, following the citation conventions that are standard in the field.

Right to submit written work in English or French

In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit any written work either in English or in French.

Inclusive learning environment

As the instructor of this course I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the Office for Students with Disabilities (514-398-6009).

Roadmap

The following is a preliminary and approximate list of topics and readings in chronological order. The list will most probably be adjusted and fine-tuned during the semester, in response to the needs of the class. Significant changes will be announced kept track of through myCourses.

Week		Topic	Reading
1.	Th 9/3	Logistics	Start reading handout 1.
2.	T 9/8 Th 9/10	What is semantics? Truth conditions. Semantics and grammar: NPI licensing and downward entailingness.	Cresswell (1998), Portner (2005), 1.2-1.3. Larson (1995), secs.1-3. Baker (1970), Ladusaw (1983)
3.	T 9/15 Th 9/17	Semantics and grammar: NPI licensing and downward entailingness. Meanings, extensions, functional application. Tools: Sets, Relations, Functions.	Partee, ter Meulen and Wall (1993), ch. 1-2, Heim & Kratzer (1998) 2.5.
4.	T 9/22 Th 9/24	Tools: Sets, Relations, Functions.	
5.	T 9/29 Th 10/1	Meaning composition, semantic types. Modification (I)	H&K, ch. 4, Partee (1995) Advanced: Morzicky (2015), chapter 2.
6.	T 10/6 Th 10/8	Modification (II): Traces and Binding.	H&K, ch. 5.
7.	T 10/13 Th 10/15	DP semantics (I): Quantifiers	Larson (1995), secs. 4-5, Szabolcsi (2010), ch.3
8.	T 10/20 Th 10/22	DP semantics (I): Quantifiers	Fox (2003) 2.1-2.3, H&K, ch. 7
9.	T 10/27 Th 10/29	DP semantics (II): Covert movement. Bound variable pronouns.	Heim (2008)
10.	T 11/3 Th 11/5	Bound variable pronouns. DP semantics (III): Indefinites.	H&K, ch. 11. Heim (1982), chapter 1. Schwarz (2011)
11.	T 11/10 Th 11/12	DP semantics (III): Indefinites.	Alonso-Ovalle and Menéndez-Benito (2013)

12.	T 11/17 Th 11/19	The limits of extensionality. Intensionality (I)	H&K, ch.12. von Fintel & Heim (2011), ch. 1.
13.	T 11/24 Th 11/26	Intensionality (I) Snippet presentation session(s).	
14.	T 12/1	Snippet presentation session(s).	Geurts (2010), ch.3; Sauerland (2010). Hacquard (forthcoming)

Readings

- Alonso-Ovalle, Luis and Menéndez-Benito, Paula: 2013, 'Epistemic Indefinites', *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 7:2, 102-122.
- Baker, C. Lee: 1970, 'Double Negatives', *Linguistic Inquiry* 1, 169-186.
- Cresswell, M. J.: 1988, 'Semantic Competence', chapter 2 of *Semantical Essays: Possible Worlds and their Rivals*, Springer, Dordrecht: 12-33.
- Fox, Danny: 2003, 'On Logical Form', in Randall Hendrick (ed.), *Minimalist Syntax*, Blackwell, Oxford, pp. 82-95.
- Geurts, Bart (2010). *Quantity Implicatures*. Cambridge University Press.
- von Fintel, Kai & Irene Heim: 2011. *Intensional Semantics*. MIT ms.
- Hacquard, Valentine (forthcoming), 'Actuality Entailments' in L. Matthewson, C. Meier, H. Rullmann, T. E. Zimmermann (eds.) *Companion to Semantics*. Wiley.
- Heim, Irene: 1992, *The Semantics of Definite and Indefinite Noun Phrases*, Ph. D. dissertation, University of Massachusetts at Amherst.
- Heim, Irene: 2001, 'Degree Operators and Scope', in C. Féry and W. Sternefeld (eds.), *Audiatur Vox Sapientiae*, Akademie-Verlag, Berlin, pp. 214-239.
- Heim, Irene: 2008, 'Features on Bound Pronouns', in D. Adger, S. Béjar, and D. Harbour (eds.), *Phi Theory: Phi Features across Interfaces and Modules*, Oxford University Press.
- Heim, Irene and Angelika Kratzer: 1998, *Semantics in Generative Grammar*, Blackwell, Oxford.
- Ladusaw, William: 1983, 'Logical Form and Conditions on Grammaticality', *Linguistics and Philosophy* 6, 373-392.
- Larson, Richard: 1995, 'Semantics', in Gleitman, Lila R., and Mark Liberman (eds.), *An Invitation to Cognitive Science, Vol. 1: Language*. MIT Press/Bradford Books, Cambridge, pp. 361-380.
- Morzicky, Marcin: 2015, *Modification*. Oxford University Press.
- Partee, Barbara H.: 1995, 'Lexical Semantics and Compositionality', in Gleitman, Lila R., and Mark Liberman (eds.), *An Invitation to Cognitive Science, Vol. 1: Language*. MIT Press/Bradford Books, Cambridge, pp. 311-360.
- Partee, Barbara H, Alice ter Meulen, Robert E. Wall: 1993. *Mathematical Methods in Linguistics*, Kluwer, Dordrecht.
- Portner, Paul: 2005, *What is Meaning? Fundamentals of Formal Semantics*, Blackwell, Oxford.

- Sauerland, Uli. 2010. 'The Computation of Scalar Implicatures: Pragmatic, Lexical or Grammatical?', *Language and Linguistics Compass* 6/1, 36-49.
- Schwarz, Bernhard: 2011. 'Long Distance Indefinites and Choice Functions', *Language and Linguistics Compass* 5/12, 880-897.
- Szabolcsi, Anna: 2010. *Quantification*. Cambridge University Press.

Some Resources

Journals

Natural Language Semantics (since 1992)

Linguistics and Philosophy (since 1977)

Journal of Semantics (since 1982)

Semantics and Pragmatics (online open access journal; since 2008) [<http://semprag.org/>]

Snippets (online open access journal; since 2000) [<http://www.ledonline.it/snippets/>]

Annual conferences with proceedings

Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT, usually in North America.) Available online at: <http://elanguage.net/journals/salt>

Sinn und Bedeutung (SuB, in Europe). Recent proceedings available online at:

SuB9: <http://ncs.ruhosting.nl/sub9/>

SuB10: <http://www.sfs.uni-tuebingen.de/~cebert/papers/SuB10Proceedings.pdf>

SuB11: <http://parles.upf.edu/llocs/glif/pub/sub11/index.html>

SuB12:

<http://www.hf.uio.no/ilos/forskning/aktuelt/arrangementer/konferanser/2007/SuB12/proceedings/>

SuB 13: http://www.uni-stuttgart.de/linguistik/sfb732/index.php?article_id=110

SuB 14: <http://www.univie.ac.at/sub14/>

SuB 15:

<http://universaar.unisaarland.de/monographien/volltexte/2011/30/html/artikeluebersicht.html>

SuB 17: <http://semanticsarchive.net/sub2012/>

SuB 18: <http://semanticsarchive.net/sub2013/>

SuB 19: <http://semanticsarchive.net/Archive/TVIN2I2Z/sub19proc.pdf>

SuB 20: <https://semanticsarchive.net/Archive/GRmOGQ4N/SUB20html4.html>

SuB 21: <https://sites.google.com/site/sinnundbedeutung21/proceedings-preprints>

SuB 22: <https://semanticsarchive.net/sub2018/>

SuB 23: <https://semanticsarchive.net/Archive/Tg3ZGI2M/Proceedings23.html>

SuB 24: <https://semanticsarchive.net/Archive/mZhNDA4Y/index.html>

Amsterdam Colloquium (AC, in Amsterdam, every other year). Recent proceedings available online at:

AC22: <http://events.illc.uva.nl/AC/AC2019/Proceedings/>

AC21: <https://semanticsarchive.net/Archive/iZiM2FhZ/AC2017-Proceedings.pdf>

AC20: <http://semanticsarchive.net/Archive/mVkOTk2N/AC2015-proceedings.pdf>

AC19: <http://www.illc.uva.nl/AC/AC2013/Proceedings/>

AC18: <http://www.springerlink.com/content/978-3-642-314810/#section=1087298&page=1>

AC17: <http://www.springerlink.com/content/978-3-642-14286-4/-section=784115&page=1>

AC16: <http://www.ilc.uva.nl/AC/AC2007/index.php%3Fpage=15.html>

North East Linguistics Society (NELS)

West Coast Conference for Formal Linguistics (WCCFL, usually every year)

Recent proceedings available online: <http://www.cascadilla.com/wccfl.html>

An online paper archive

<http://semanticsarchive.net/>

Useful collections

Aloni, Maria and Paul Dekker (eds.): 2016, *The Cambridge Handbook of Formal Semantics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Davis, Steven and Brendan Gillon (eds.): 2004, *Semantics: A reader*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Horn, Larry and Gregory Ward (eds.): 2006, *The Handbook of Pragmatics*, Blackwell, Oxford.

Lappin, Shalom (ed.): 1994, *The Handbook of Contemporary Semantic Theory*, Blackwell, Oxford.

Maienborn, Claudia, Klaus von Heusinger, and Paul Portner (eds.): 2011/to appear, *Semantics: An International Handbook of Natural Language Meaning (3 volumes)*, Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Partee, Barbara and Paul Portner (eds.): 2002, *Formal Semantics: the Essential Readings*, Blackwell, Oxford.

Stechow, Arnim von and Dieter Wunderlich (eds.): 1991, *Semantik: Ein internationales Handbuch der zeitgenössischen Forschung (Semantics: an International Handbook of Contemporary Research)*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin.

Textbooks

Altshuler, Daniel, Terence Parsons, and Roger Schwarzschild: 2019, *A Course in Semantics*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.

Chierchia, Gennaro and Sally McConnell-Ginet: 2000. *Meaning and Grammar* (2nd. ed.), MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.

Coppock, Elizabeth and Lucas Champollion: 2017, *Formal Semantics Boot Camp*, ms. <http://eecoppock.info/semantics-boot-camp.pdf>

Heim, Irene and Angelika Kratzer: 1998. *Semantics in Generative Grammar*, Blackwell, Oxford.

Larson, Richard and Gabriel Segal: 1995. *Knowledge of Meaning. An Introduction to Semantic Theory*. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.

De Swart, Henriëtte: 1998. *Introduction to Natural Language Semantics*. CSLI.

Winter, Yoav: 2016. *Elements of Formal Semantics*. Edinburg University Press.

Zimmermann, Thomas Ede & Wolfgang Sternefeld: 2013. *Introduction to Semantics. An Essential Guide to the Composition of Meaning*, de Gruyter Mouton, Berlin/Boston.

(If you read Italian, you should check out:

Chierchia, Gennaro: 1997. *Semantica*. Il Mulino, Bologna.)

Informal introductions to formal semantics written for a general audience

Bach, Emmon: 1989. *Informal Lectures on Formal Semantics*. SUNY Press. [Informal, but great reading.]

Elbourne, Paul: 2011. *Meaning. A Slim Guide to Semantics*. Oxford University Press.

Portner, Paul: 2005, *What is Meaning? Fundamentals of Formal Semantics*, Blackwell, Oxford.

Formal background

Gamut, L.T.F. *Logic, Language and Meaning. Vol. 1: Introduction to Logic*. University of Chicago Press.

Gamut, L.T.F. *Logic, Language and Meaning. Vol. 2: Intensional Logic and Logical Grammar*. University of Chicago Press. [more advanced.]

McCawley, James D. : 1981. *Everything that Linguists have Always Wanted to Know about Logic but Were Ashamed to Ask*. The University of Chicago Press.

Partee, Barbara H, Alice ter Meulen, Robert E. Wall: 1993. *Mathematical Methods in Linguistics*, Kluwer, Dordrecht.