

**Semantics 4, LING 665**  
**Seminar in Semantics, LING 765**  
**Winter 2024**

Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:35 pm - 12:55pm  
1085 Penfield, rm.117

**Instructor**

Luis Alonso-Ovalle

Office: 1085 Penfield, Room 314  
Office hours: Tuesdays 1:30 - 2:30 or by appointment.  
Use this [link](#) to book an appointment with Luis.  
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**Course description**

Semantics 4 / Seminar in Semantics explores advanced topics in formal semantics. The course provides a bridge between the introductory topics discussed in Semantics 3 and more advanced topics. The main goal of the course is to get students started with their own research projects.

The course will move from a gentle pedagogical extension to Semantics 3 to more seminar-style discussions of advanced topics. The broad roadmap for the course is tentative and open-ended, so that it can be adjusted to the interests and technical background of students. This semester, the most advanced part of the course will focus on quantity DPs, amount relatives, and free relatives.

*Pre-requisite:* LING 660, or equivalent.

**Evaluation schema**

<u>Semantics 4</u>		<u>Seminar in Semantics</u>	
Homework assignments	30%	Final grade: Pass/Fail	
Class project:			
potential interests presentation	5%	Reading presentation	25%
reading presentation	10%		
progress report	20%	Short squib	75%
final presentation, paper	35%		

## **Homework assignments**

Homework assignments will be handed out on Thursdays and will be due by next Tuesday. They will be more frequent in the first part of the course, and then taper off in the second part, as students work on their projects. The assignments will largely consist of technical exercises, but they might also include open-ended questions.

The aim with homework is to help you master the material. You might not get all the answers right on the first pass, and that is expected. What's important is to see where you ran into difficulty and to understand the assignment fully by the end.

## **Class project**

You will conduct an original research project in semantics. Ideally, your topic would relate in some way to the course, but the most important goal is to find something you are interested in that you want to continue working on afterwards.

## **Reading presentations**

You will be asked to present a reading related to your class project. The reading should be chosen in consultation with me.

## **Talk to me!**

I would like to encourage you to meet with me—early and often—with questions from class, project ideas, or puzzles you run into. You should be starting to think about research questions immediately, and I am here to help. Note that you do *not* need a well worked out idea to schedule a meeting. Please schedule appointments through this [link](#).

## **Class materials**

Readings, class handouts, and assignments will be available in myCourses, added and modified as we progress.

## **Tentative roadmap for the course**

You can find below a list of topics to be covered in the course, together with a tentative schedule. The plan is ambitious, and will most likely be truncated, as the class progresses. Part 1 can be shortened, depending on the background of students.

week		deadlines	topic	
Part 1: Bootcamp Training / Review: Basics of Compositional Semantics.				
1	1/4		Basics: Meanings, extensions, functional application, Heim & Kratzer's notation. Modification. Traces and binding. Quantification.	
2	1/9			
	1/11			
3	1/16			
	1/18			
4	1/23			
	1/25	potential interests		
Part 2: Intensions.				
5	1/30		The limits of an extensional semantics. Setting up an intensional semantics. Transparency. Modal auxiliaries (conditionals?).	
	2/1			
6	2/6			
	2/8			
7	2/13			
	2/15	reading presentations		
Part 3: Advanced Topics (I) Quantity DPs, Amount Relatives and Free Relatives				
8	2/20		Quantity DPs: the flexibility puzzle. Analysis 1: a rich syntax and a lean semantics. Parallels: container DPs. Analysis 2: a lean semantics and a rich semantics. Challenges for Analysis 2. Retrieving entities from quantities. Inflexible quantity DPs. Intensionality: <i>de dicto</i> readings. Non-overlapping quantities. Challenges for Analysis 1: noun duplication.	
	2/22			
9	2/27			
	2/29			
10	3/5	Reading Break		
	3/7			
11	3/12	progress reports		Ander Mendia (2017) on nominal amount relatives and propositional amount relatives in Spanish.
	3/14			
12	3/19		Free relatives: the basics, higher order readings, compositionality.	
	3/21			
13	3/26			
	3/28			
14	4/2			
	4/4	final presentations		
15	4/9	final presentations		
4/11 (Monday schedule)				

## Readings

### PARTS 1 & 2

#### *Extensional semantics*

Selections from Heim and Kratzer's *Semantics in Generative Grammar*.

#### *Intensional semantics*

von Fintel, Kai and Irene Heim. *Intensional Semantics* (Spring 2011 version), ms. MIT (chapters 1-5).

## Modality

#### *Background*

Hacquard, Valentine. (2011) Modality. In Heusinger, Klaus von; Claudia Maienborn and Paul Portner (eds.) *Semantics: An International Handbook of Natural Language Meaning*. Vol.2, de Gruyter, pp. 1484-1515.

von Fintel, Kai. (2006) Modality and language. In Donald M. Borchert (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Philosophy – second edition*. Detroit: MacMillan Reference USA.

#### *Modal auxiliaries*

Kratzer, Angelika (1991b). Modality. In Arnim von Stechow and Dieter Wunderlich (eds.), *Semantics: An International Handbook of Contemporary Research*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 639–650.

Kratzer, Angelika (1977) What “must” and “can” must and can mean. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 1:337–355.

Kratzer, Angelika (1979) Conditional necessity and possibility. In R. Bäuerle, U. Egli, and A. von Stechow (eds.), *Semantics from Different Points of View*. Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 117–147.

Kratzer, Angelika. (1981) The notional category of modality. In Hans-Jürgen Eikmeyer & Hannes Rieser (eds.), *Words, Worlds, and Contexts: New Approaches in Word Semantics* (Research in Text Theory 6), 38–74. Berlin: de Gruyter.

Kratzer, Angelika (1986) Conditionals. In Anne M. Farley, Peter Farley, and Karl Eric McCollough (eds.), *Papers from the Parasession on Pragmatics and Grammatical Theory*. Chicago, IL: Chicago Linguistics Society.

Kratzer, Angelika (1991a). Conditionals. In Arnim von Stechow and Dieter Wunderlich (eds.), *Semantics: An International Handbook of Contemporary Research*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 651–656.

These classic papers have been updated (sometimes partially or extensively rewritten) in the following collection:

Kratzer, Angelika (2012). *Modals and Conditionals. New and Revised Perspectives*. Oxford University Press.

*Modals and Aspect: Actuality Entailments and the Height of Modals.*

Hacquard, Valentine (2009) On the interaction of aspect and modal auxiliaries. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 32, pp. 279-312.

Hacquard, Valentine. (2006) *Aspects of Modality*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology Ph.D. dissertation.

Homer, Vincent. (2010a) French modals and perfective: A case of aspectual coercion. *Proceedings of WCCFL* 28.

## PART II

### *Quantity DPs*

Alonso-Ovalle, Luis and Bernhard Schwarz (2023) Structural ambiguity in DPs with quantity nouns, *Proceedings of SALT* 33.

Scontras, Gregory. 2017. A new kind of degree. *Linguistics and Philosophy* (40). 165–205.

### *Amount Relatives*

Mendia, Jon Ander. 2017. Amount Relatives Redux: University of Massachusetts Amherst PhD dissertation. [https://scholarworks.umass.edu/dissertations\\_2/1111/](https://scholarworks.umass.edu/dissertations_2/1111/).

### *Free Relatives*

#### *Overview*

Šimík, Radek (2021) Free relatives. In *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Semantics*, ed. by Daniel Gutzmann, Lisa Matthewson, Cécile Meier, Hotze Rullmann, and Thomas Ede Zimmermann.

#### *Compositionality*

Chierchia, Gennaro and Ivano Caponigro (2018) Questions on questions and free relatives. *Sinn und Bedeutung* 18, unpublished handout.

Hirsch, Aron (2018) A compositional semantics for *wh-ever* free relatives. *Proceedings of Sinn und Bedeutung* 20, ed. by Nadine Bade, Polina Berezovskaya & Anthea Schöller, 341-358.

Homer, Vincent (2019) That's *all*. *Proceedings of the 36th West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics*, ed. by Richard Stockwell, Maura O'Leary, Zhongshi Xu, and Z.L. Zhou, 1-21.

### **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 (<http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest>).

I encourage students to discuss homework assignments and class projects with other students, but every student must submit his or her own individual write-up. Homework assignments must list the students that collaborated in the assignment. Students are advised to declare all sources in their homework assignments, presentations, and final paper, 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.