

## Ling 264/664: Semantics II

Spring 2017, Mondays & Wednesdays, 2:30–3:45pm, DOW 112

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*Office hours:* Thursdays 3:30–5:00pm and by appointment

### Description

This course is the second course in sequence with LING 263/663, which is a prerequisite for this course. The goal is to expand students' understanding of the empirical domain and techniques in formal semantics and pragmatics as well as to develop skills in doing independent semantic analysis. We will focus on analyzing a range of empirical phenomena and use these to strengthen our feel for asking questions and solving puzzles in Semantics. This course has a heavy hands-on component. Early in the semester, each student will come up with a topic that they want to work on in more detail. The topics covered and readings done in the second part of the semester will depend on student choices for research topics. I will designate readings around these topics and they will be read by all of us so that each student can "tinker" around fruitfully with the appropriate semantic tools to come up with an analysis.

### Requirements

1. **Attendance and participation (10%):** Active attendance, participation in class, and preparation (doing the readings) are crucial for success in the class.
2. **Class presentations (25%):** Each student will be responsible for leading class discussion on two occasions of their choice. Students will meet with me prior to their presentation to ensure that they have digested the paper they present.
3. **Paper proposal (15%):** You will be expected to do research on a paper that you will be writing starting from Week 4. The initial topic choice will be due by February 17, in the form of a 1-page summary of your idea plus some initial suggested readings. Periodically, you will be asked to present progress on your research in the class.)
4. **Final paper (50%):** A final paper based on the topic you have been working on throughout the semester will be due by the end of the semester. The paper should be 12–15 pages long. (This is an excellent way to identify puzzles that can turn into long-term projects!)

## Rules of note

- **Cooperation:** You may discuss homework assignments with other students. However, you must always submit your own write-up, and you must list the students who you worked with on your assignment.
- **Integrity:** The use of others' ideas or expressions without citation is plagiarism. You must declare all sources in submitted work. Citations don't need to be in any particular format, but they have to be there. Click [here](#) for more information.
- **Disabilities:** Any student who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss their specific needs and to discuss potential accommodations. I rely on the Resource Office on Disabilities for assistance in verifying the need for accommodations and developing accommodation strategies. Please see [here](#) for more information.
- **Talk to me:** I want you to succeed in this class. If any material or requirement is unclear, let me know. In extreme cases, alternative arrangements can be made for some of the course requirements, but only by talking to me first.

## Tentative schedule

The schedule is subject to change. Consult the website!

### Quick recap (Week 1)

We'll spend the first week doing a quick review of extensional semantics, to ensure that everyone is on the same page moving forward.

Reading: Heim and Kratzer (1998)

### Intensionality (Weeks 2, 4, 5)

\*\*No class January 30 & February 1 (Hadas is away). Discuss makeup options.\*\*

The semantics covered in last semester was largely extensional. In the first part of Semantics 2, we will cover the semantic system used for natural language phenomena where "extensions" fail to deliver the right analysis for natural language. We will closely follow the first few chapters of the lecture notes of von Fintel and Heim for this.

- von Fintel, Kai and Irene Heim (2011): Intensional Semantics  
available at: <http://web.mit.edu/fintel/fintel-heim-intensional.pdf>
- Kratzer (1981) (The notional category of modality)
- Condoravdi (2002) (The temporal interpretation of modals)

## **Discourse and pragmatics (Weeks 6, 7)**

In this part of the class we'll concentrate on language in context, including some formal approaches to pragmatics and to discourse management.

- Lewis 1979 (Scorekeeping in a language game)
- Stalnaker 2002 (Common ground)
- Büring 2003 (On D-trees, beans, and B-accents)
- Kadmon and Landman (1993) (Any)

## **Measuring and counting (Weeks 8, 9)**

During this period, we will read some literature that takes a close look at phenomena in the nominal and adjectival domain that lead us to think about the notions underlying the denotations of these lexical categories.

- Kaplan 1979 (On the logic of demonstratives)
- Link 1983 (The logical analysis of plurals and mass terms)
- Kennedy and McNally 2005 (Scale structure, degree modification, and the semantics of gradable predicates)
- Fox and Hackl 2006 (The universal density of measurement)

## **Weeks 10, 11, 12**

TBD. In this part of the semester, the papers we read will be guided by the semantic puzzles for analysis that you choose. Possible topics include tense and aspect, genericity, quantification, event semantics, formal pragmatics, degree semantics, focus and questions, evidentiality, relative clauses, presuppositions and implicatures, etc.