Rutgers University   Fall 2022
Department of Linguistics

Semantics I (01:615:530)

Time: Monday & Thursday 10:20-11:40am
Location: Linguistics Department (18 Seminary Place), Room 108
WWW: hosted at `canvas.rutgers.edu`

Instructor: Peter Alrenga
Email: `peter.alrenga@rutgers.edu`
Office Hrs: Monday 4:00-5:30pm, or by appt.
                 (18 Seminary Place, Room 106, or online via `Zoom`)

Course Overview

This course is an introduction to formal semantics in the generative tradition. We will examine the principles that allow humans to pair linguistic forms with meanings, as well as the foundational concepts, findings, and theoretical approaches that underlie current semantic research. We will also encounter, and become proficient with, the formal mathematical tools that are employed by semanticists today (e.g., set theory, relations and functions, generalized quantifiers, lambda notation, etc.). Along the way, we will look at some of the central questions and "fault lines" that characterize our subfield. Our empirical focus throughout will be English, our primary language of study, but comparisons/extensions to other languages will also be made.

My overarching goal is to equip you to engage critically with current semantic research. Students who successfully complete this course will be able to grasp a good portion of the primary research literature, and to evaluate and respond to semantic argumentation. Students will also gain a better understanding of how to formulate and investigate semantic "questions", regarding both familiar and unfamiliar languages. For those students who intend to specialize in semantics, this course provides the necessary foundation for enrollment in more advanced courses (e.g., Semantics II).

Course Readings

There is no required textbook for this course. Individual reading assignments will be distributed in PDF format via the course website. Most of our readings will be drawn from the following textbooks:

Allwood, Jens, Lars-Gunnar Andersson and Östen Dahl. 1977. *Logic in Linguistics*. Cambridge University Press.
Chierchia, Gennaro and Sally McConnell-Ginet. 2000. *Meaning and Grammar: An Introduction to Semantics*. MIT Press.
Coppock, Elizabeth and Lucas Champollion. 2020. *Invitation to Formal Semantics*. Draft available at authors' websites.
von Fintel, Kai & Irene Heim. 2011. *Intensional Semantics*. MIT lecture notes.
Heim, Irene and Angelika Kratzer. 1998. *Semantics in Generative Grammar*. Blackwell Publishers.

Articles drawn from the primary research literature may also be assigned (towards the end of the semester, time permitting).

Course Requirements

All enrolled students will be expected to complete the weekly reading assignments in advance of each class meeting, attend class regularly, and participate actively in class discussion. Additionally,

Assignments: You will complete seven homework assignments during the semester. Some of your homework problems will be technical exercises designed to develop familiarity with our formal tools, and will not require prose write-ups. Others will be more substantial problems in semantic analysis and argumentation. These will require clear and well-reasoned prose exposition, as well as illustrative derivations. The assignments will both test your understanding of previously covered material and also serve to introduce new topics that will be discussed in subsequent class meetings. In some cases, you will not yet have the tools to fully solve a particular problem—your goal here will be to develop a novel proposal for how to solve the problem.

Assignments will be distributed via the course website after class, and will be due at the beginning of the next class meeting. (See the following schedule for anticipated due dates.) We will often discuss some portion of the assignment on the day that it is due. For this reason, <u>late assignments will not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made.</u>

Final Paper: You will also write a short paper (~5 single-spaced pages) on a topic in semantics. Ideally, the paper would consist of (i) an organized description of some pattern of facts (perhaps from a language other than English), (ii) an exploration of their possible significance to semantic theory, and (iii) a concrete proposal for how one might analyze them. (This is what linguists

call a "squib".) You might discover these facts for yourself (in your classes, daily conversations, readings, etc.), or you might find them in a reference grammar or linguistics book. The facts can, but need not, come from English. I encourage you to discuss possible paper topics with me as they occur to you.

A one-paragraph topic proposal will be due on **Monday, November 14**. During our final class meeting(s), you will briefly present your paper as a work-in-progress to your classmates. The paper itself will be due on **Thursday, December 22 at noon**.

Course Policies

Academic Integrity: I encourage you to discuss the course material with each other. However, <u>each student must complete his/her written work independently, without reference to the written work of any other student.</u> You are expected to abide by the University's Academic Integrity Policy (`http://nbacademicintegrity.rutgers.edu`). If you have not yet reviewed this policy, then you should do so now. Since students are expected to be familiar with this policy and its commonly accepted standards, ignorance of these standards does not suffice to establish lack of intent. If you are unsure of any aspect of this policy, please ask!

Plagiarism in any form (including from online sources), presenting someone else's work as your own, and other academic misconduct will not be tolerated.

Instructor Communication: Please contact me via my Rutgers email address (`peter.alrenga@rutgers.edu`). I will reply to emails within <u>24 hours</u> during weekdays. Emails sent over the weekend may not receive a reply until the following Monday, but I will try my best to communicate promptly.

Technical Support: For help with Canvas, please contact the Office of Information Technology (OIT) at `https://it.rutgers.edu/help-support`.

Preliminary Schedule (subject to change as the semester proceeds)

WEEK	DATE	CLASS TOPIC	READINGS	ASSIGNMENT
1	Th 9/8	Course Overview		
2	M 9/12	Conceptual and Empirical Foundations;	C&McG Chap. 1; C&McG Chap. 4 (§5); C&McG Chap. 6 (§3)	
2	Th 9/15	Types of Inferences		
3	M 9/19	Sets, Relations, and Functions; Logical Languages	AA&D, Chap. 2; AA&D, Chap. 4; AA&D, Chap. 5 (§1,4,8)	
3	Th 9/22			HW1 due
4	M 9/26	First Steps Towards a Compositional Theory; Lambda Notation and Type Theory	Heim & Kratzer, Chap. 1; Heim & Kratzer, Chap. 2; Heim & Kratzer, Chap. 3,	
4	Th 9/29			HW2 due
5	M 10/3	Semantic Composition as Saturation and Modification		
5	Th 10/6			HW3 due
6	M 10/10	Two Approaches to Modification; Definite Descriptions and Partial Functions	Heim & Kratzer, Chap. 4	
6	Th 10/13			HW4 due
7	M 10/17	Pronouns, Indices, and Assignments; Relative Clauses, Wh-Movement, and Predicate Abstraction	Heim & Kratzer, Chap. 9 (pgs. 239-245); Heim & Kratzer Chap. 5	
7	Th 10/20			HW5 due
8	M 10/24			
8	Th 10/27			

Preliminary Schedule (subject to change as the semester proceeds)

WEEK	DATE	CLASS TOPIC	READINGS	ASSIGNMENT
9	M 10/31	Quantified Arguments and Quantificational Determiners; Scoping Quantified Arguments; VP-Internal Subjects and Scope Positions;	Heim & Kratzer, Chap. 6; Heim & Kratzer, Chap. 7; Heim & Kratzer, Chap. 8,	
9	Th 11/3			
10	M 11/7			HW6 due
10	Th 11/10			
11	M 11/14	Referential vs. Bound Pronouns; Scope and Binding	Heim & Kratzer, Chap. 9; Heim & Kratzer, Chap. 11	Topic Proposal due
11	Th 11/17			
12	M 11/21			HW7 due
12	Tu 11/22	Limits of Extensional Semantics		
13	M 11/28	Intensional Semantics	Heim & Kratzer, Chap. 12	
13	Th 12/1	**No Class**		
14	M 12/5	Scalar Implicatures and Negative Polarity Items; (Final Paper Presentations)	To Be Determined	
14	W 12/8			
15	M 12/12	Final Paper Presentations		
Final Paper due (Th 12/22 @ noon)				