



Academic Year/course: 2021/22

31363 - Semantics and Pragmatics

Syllabus Information

Academic Course: 2021/22

Academic Center: 803 - Masters Centre of the Department of Translation and Language Sciences

Study: 8037 - Theoretical and Applied Linguistics - MA

Subject: 31363 - Semantics and Pragmatics

Credits: 5.0

Course: 1

Teaching languages:

Theory: Group 1: English

Seminar: Group 101: English

Group 102: English

Teachers: Peter Roger Sutton , Laia Mayol Toll

Teaching Period: Second Quarter

Presentation

This course is an introduction to natural language semantics and pragmatics, including the basic issues and data that have traditionally been the focus of study in the most influential theoretical frameworks and in commonly used research methodologies. The overall goal is to develop the student's ability to analyze semantic and pragmatic phenomena in language.

Associated skills

- General skills:
 - Analysis and problem solving: To be able to propose the best analysis of a semantic or pragmatic phenomenon given some set of theoretical concepts and specific methods.
 - Application of theoretical knowledge to practical cases: To be able to apply

theoretical concepts and knowledge about semantics and pragmatics to the analysis of new data.

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Motivation for quality: To be better able to recognize different degrees of precision in the analysis of data and to develop a sense of the importance of formulating descriptions and analyses with maximal precision.

- Specific skills: Ability to reflect on the functioning of language: To be able to distinguish between the respective roles of semantics and pragmatics in linguistic communication.

Contents

1. Week 01 Introduction, organizational issues. What is meaning? Content and context in meaning, semantics vs. pragmatics vs. other modules in grammar, basic notions in semantics and pragmatics
2. Week 02 Propositional logic and first order logic
3. Week 03 Formal composition
4. Week 04 Modality and possible worlds
5. Week 05 Quantifiers
6. Week 06 Overview of pragmatics topics; conversational implicature and speech acts
7. Week 07 At-issue and non-at-issue meanings (presuppositions and conventional implicatures)
8. Week 08 Information structure
9. Week 09 Rhetorical relations
10. Week 10 Reference

Teaching Methods

- There will be weekly readings and mostly weekly exercises, all of which will be posted on the Aula Global Moodle for the course and which will form the basis for class discussion.
- The readings and exercises should be done BEFORE the class in which they are discussed.

Evaluation

The grade for the course will be based on performance on a set of 4 exercises done over the course of the quarter (the first 3 counting 20% each towards the final grade; the last one, 30% towards the final grade), and participation (10% of the final grade).

Bibliography and information resources

Most of the reading for the semantics part of the course will come from Kearns (2011). Most of the reading for the pragmatics part of the course will come from Birner (2013), Cummins (2019) and Kroeger (2019). Other reading material will be posted on the Aula Global.

General background material.

Aloni, M. & P. Dekker (eds.) (2016). *The Cambridge Handbook of Formal Semantics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Altshuler, D., Parsons, T., & Schwarzschild, R. (2019). *A course in semantics*. MIT Press.

van Bentham, J., Groenendijk, J., and de Jongh D. (aka L. T. F. Gamut). (1991). *Logic, Language and Meaning Volumes 1 and 2*. The University of Chicago Press.

Birner, B. J. (2013). *Introduction to Pragmatics*. Wiley-Blackwell. ([Freely available](#) through the UPF library online catalog)

Carpenter, Bob. (1998). *Type-Logical Semantics*. MIT Press. (See, especially, chapter 1)

Chierchia, G. & S. McConnell Ginet (1990). *Meaning and Grammar*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Coppock, E. & L. Champollion (2021). *Invitation to Formal Semantics*.
<https://eecoppock.info/bootcamp/semantics-boot-camp.pdf>

Cummins, C. (2019). *Pragmatics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Cummins, C., & Katsos, N. (Eds.). (2019). *The Oxford Handbook of Experimental Semantics and Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press

Davis, S. (ed.) (1991). *Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Féry, C., & Ishihara, S. (Eds.). (2016). *The Oxford handbook of information structure*. Oxford University Press.

Ginzburg, J. (2012). *The interactive stance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Green, G.M. (1989). *Pragmatics and Natural Language Understanding*. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Gutzmann, D., Matthewson, L. & Meier, C., Rullmann, H. & Zimmermann, T. E. (eds.). (2020). *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Semantics*.

Gutzmann, D. Semantics vs. Pragmatics. (2020). In: D., Matthewson, L. & Meier, C., Rullmann, H. & Zimmermann, T. E. (eds.): *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Semantics*.

Heim, I. & A. Kratzer (1998). *Semantics in Generative Grammar*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Horn, L.R. & G.L. Ward (eds) (2004). *The Handbook of Pragmatics*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Kadmon, N. (2001). *Formal Pragmatics: Semantics, Pragmatics, Presupposition, and Focus*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Kamp, H. & U. Reyle (1993). *Introduction to Discourse Representation Theory*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.

Kearns, K. (2011). *Semantics* (2nd Edition). Palgrave Macmillan.

Kroeger, P. (2019). *Analyzing meaning: an introduction to semantics and pragmatics*. Language Science Press. ([Freely available](#))

- Lappin S. & C. Fox. (2015). *The Handbook of Contemporary Semantic Theory* (2nd Edition). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Levinson, S.C. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Maienborn C., K. von Stechow, & P. Portner (eds.). (2011-2013). *Semantics: An International Handbook of Natural Language Meaning, Volumes 1-3*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- McNally, Louise. 2013. [Semantics and Pragmatics](#). *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Cognitive Science* 4, 285-297. Pre-publication version [here](#).
- Mey, J.L. (1993) *Pragmatics: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Östman J.-A. & J. Verschueren (eds.) *The Handbook of Pragmatics Online*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. <http://benjamins.com/online/hop/>.
- Oxford Bibliographies (Linguistics). Consultable online at http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/browse?module_0=obo-9780199772810.
- Partee, B., A. ter Meulen, & R. Wall (1990). *Mathematical Methods in Linguistics*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Portner, P. & B. (eds.) (2002). *Formal Semantics: The Essential Readings*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Portner, P. (2005). *What is Meaning? Fundamentals of Formal Semantics*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Winter, Y. (2016). *Elements of formal semantics: An introduction to the mathematical theory of meaning in natural language*. Edinburgh University Press.
- The Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Linguistics*. Consultable online at <http://linguistics.oxfordre.com/>.