

Graduate Semantics I (Champollion, Fall 2013)

Time / Location: Mondays and Wednesdays, 2pm-3:15pm, 10 Washington Place, room 103

Goals: This course has two overlapping goals: to introduce what every well-trained researcher who cares about language should know about semantics; and to prepare scholars who may want to specialize in semantics and closely related fields (syntax, philosophy of language, sentence processing, etc.) for further study. The emphasis in this course (as opposed to Semantics II) is on the first goal (basic semantic literacy). Furthering these goals includes the following sub-goals:

- learning how to read the primary literature in formal semantics;
- learning a certain amount of mathematics underlying the structures on which some semantic explanations rest;
- becoming acquainted with some of the main problem domains of formal semantics;
- learning to evaluate and critique semantic solutions;
- learning to come up with new research questions.

Prerequisites: I will assume that everyone has significant exposure to basic linguistic concepts, especially notions such as “tree”, “derivation”, and “constituent”. The course will also involve considerable manipulation of formal systems from logic and set theory. It will be important to have a firm instinctive grasp of the basic principles of set theory, propositional logic and predicate logic. Please review the first five chapters of *Logic in Linguistics* (by Allwood, Andersson, and Dahl, Cambridge UP, 1977) or make sure you have equivalent knowledge about propositional logic, predicate logic, and set theory. Gamut 1991, *Logic, language, and meaning* (by L.T.F. Gamut, University of Chicago Press, 1991) is another worthy resource. But the main source of information must be your student colleagues and me in class and in office hours.

Textbook: We will provide lecture notes and excerpts from various textbooks. There is no required textbook, but we will sometimes rely on parts of Heim and Kratzer. 1998. *Semantics in Generative Grammar*. Blackwell. In addition, it is strongly recommended to acquire a copy of Anna Szabolcsi’s 2011 book, *Quantification*, Oxford, available from Amazon for \$45. Note that the first three chapters contain background material that covers or supplements many of the topics in this course.

Software: The course will make use of the *Penn Lambda Calculator*, an interactive pedagogical software tool. Exercise files will be provided.

Readings: Readings will generally be available through NYUClasses (<http://newclasses.nyu.edu/>). Let me know if you have problems accessing NYUClasses. The reading list in the syllabus is nonexhaustive and will be updated as the class progresses. *HSK* refers to *Semantics: An International Handbook of Natural Language Meaning*. Maienborn, von Stechow, and Portner (eds). de Gruyter. *H&K* refers to *I. Heim and A. Kratzer. Semantics in Generative Grammar. Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, UK, 1998.*

Work: There will be book chapters and papers to read and discuss, and there will be regular problem sets. Collaboration is encouraged but please write up your assignments yourself. In addition, there will be **two squibs** (short—5 pages or less—papers making a simple point).

Contact: champollion@nyu.edu

Office hours: Mondays 11am-noon, or drop-in, or by appointment.

Schedule (preliminary)

Week 1: Review

- Mon Sep 2: Labor Day (no class)
- Wed Sep 4: organizational matters; overview of semantics; formal vs. other kinds of semantics; truth and truth conditions; compositionality

Week 2: Logic and beyond

- Mon Sep 9: review of propositional and predicate logic; translating English into logic by hand
- Wed Sep 11: implicatures and presuppositions
 - H. Paul Grice. 1975. *Logic and Conversation*. In P. Cole and J. Morgan (eds), *Speech acts*. Syntax and semantics Volume 3, 41–58, Academic Press.
 - HSK - Implicature (Simons)
 - HSK - Presupposition (Beaver and Geurts)

Week 3: Set theory and the lambda calculus

- Mon Sep 16: review of set theory; simple compositional derivations
 - Jan van Eijck and Christina Unger, *Computational Semantics with Functional Programming*, Cambridge University Press, 2010, Chapter 2.
- Wed Sep 18: introduction to the lambda calculus: function application
 - H&K Chapters 1-3
 - Henk Barendregt and Erik Barendsen. *Introduction to Lambda Calculus*. Revised edition December 1998, March 2000.

Week 4: Lambda calculus and type theory

- Mon Sep 23: beta reduction continued; the issue of variable capturing
 - Anna Szabolcsi's lambda handout
- Wed Sep 25: type theory, type-driven interpretation, syntax-semantics interface
 - Heim & Kratzer Chapter 4

Week 5: Generalized Quantifiers

- Mon Sep 30 and Wed Oct 2: Quantifiers: Determiners as relations over sets
 - H&K Chapter 6
 - Barwise, J. and R. Cooper: 1981, *Generalized Quantifiers and Natural Language*, *Linguistics and Philosophy* 4, 159–219.

Week 6: Quantifiers continued; relative clauses and wh-movement

- Mon Oct 7: Quantifiers and conservativity, and definiteness effect
 - Keenan, E.L. 2002. Some Properties of Natural Language Quantifiers: Generalized Quantifier Theory. in *Linguistics & Philosophy* 25: 627–654.
 - Keenan, E.L. 2006. A truth conditional approach to the definiteness effect. Ms.
- Wed Oct 9: Relative clauses and wh-movement
 - H&K ch. 5.

Week 7: Relative clauses and wh-movement (continued)

- Mon Oct 14: *Fall break – no class*
 - Wed Oct 16: Relative clauses and wh-movement (continued)
 - H&K ch. 5.
- Fri-Sun Oct 18-20: NELS conference at UConn.*

Week 8: Quantifier scope and binding

- Mon Oct 21: From binding to quantifier scope. Resolution by quantifier raising.
 - H&K ch. 7.
- Wed Oct 23: Quantifier scope resolution by flexible types. Binding.
 - H&K ch. 7; HSK – Scope and binding (Szabolcsi)

Week 9: Events and quantifiers

- Mon Oct 28: Event semantics.
 - Davidson, Donald (1967). The logical form of action sentences. In N. Rescher (ed). *The Logic of Decision and Action*. University of Pittsburgh Press.
 - HSK – Event semantics (Maienborn)
- Wed Oct 30: Event semantics meets quantification.
 - F. Landman. *Plurality*. In S. Lappin, editor, *Handbook of Contemporary Semantics*, pages 425-457. Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, UK, 1996.
 - L. Champollion. *Quantification and negation in event semantics*. In: *Formal Semantics and Pragmatics: Discourse, Context, and Models*. The Baltic International Yearbook of Cognition, Logic and Communication, Vol. 6 (2010). Barbara H. Partee, Michael Glanzberg and Jurgis Skilters, pages 1-23. Manhattan, KS: New Prairie Press.

Week 10: Algebraic semantics

- Mon Nov 4: Cross-domain parallels.
 - E. Bach. 1986. The algebra of events. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 15:5-16.
- Wed Nov 6: Plurals. Distributivity.
 - Chapters 2 and 7 of Link 1998: *Algebraic semantics in language and philosophy*. CSLI publications.

Week 11: Coordination

- Mon Nov 11: Plurals and conjunction.
 - HSK – Coordination (Zamparelli)
- Wed Nov 13: Conjunction continued. Disjunction.
 - HSK – Coordination (Zamparelli)
 - Winter 2001: *Flexibility principles in Boolean semantics*. MIT Press, Cambridge, 2001. Chapter 2.

Week 12: Conditionals

- Mon Nov 18:
 - HSK – Conditionals (von Fintel)
 - Stalnaker 1968. A theory of counterfactuals.
- Wed Nov 20:
 - F. Veltman. 2005. Making counterfactual assumptions. *Journal of Semantics* 22(2).

Week 13:

- Mon Nov 25:
 - F. Veltman. 2005. (continued)
- Wed Nov 27: Disjunction and alternative semantics. Inquisitive semantics.
 - Alonso-Ovalle 2009. Counterfactuals, correlatives, and disjunction. *Linguistics and Philosophy*.
 - Ciardelli et al. to appear. Inquisitive semantics: a new notion of meaning. *Language and linguistics compass*.

Week 14:

- Mon Dec 2:
 - Compositionality below the word level.
 - Szabolcsi, Whang and Zu. 2013. Quantifier words and their multi-functional(?) parts. To appear in *Language and Linguistics* 15/1.
- Wed Dec 4: Focus
 - Rooth, Mats. 1996. Focus. In Lappin (ed). *Handbook of contemporary semantic theory*. Blackwell.

- Krifka, Manfred. 2007. Basic notions of information structure. In C. Fery and M. Krifka (eds.), *Interdisciplinary Studies of Information Structure* 6, Potsdam, 2007. Also in *Acta Linguistica Hungarica* 55 (2008), 243-276.

Week 15: Miniconferences

- Mon Dec 9: Miniconference (student squib presentations)
- Wed Dec 11: Miniconference (student squib presentations)