

Semantics and Pragmatics 1

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Class website: <http://semantics.uchicago.edu/kennedy/classes/f11/sp1/>

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Course Description This is the first course in the first-year graduate sequence in semantics and pragmatics, designed to introduce students to the core principles and empirical issues addressed by formal semantics and to familiarize them with the analytical tools involved in the investigation of this domain. The focus of this class is truth-conditional aspects of meaning and the compositional interpretation of phrases and sentences. Students will develop skills in semantic analysis and argumentation by focusing on semantic questions that arise in the analysis of a range of different phenomena, including argument structure, quantification, binding, anaphora and ellipsis.

Assignments and evaluation The written work for the course will consist of weekly homework assignments and a take-home final. These will range from technical exercises designed to develop familiarity with the formal tools we will use, to more open-ended and substantial problems in semantic analysis. The assignments will both test your understanding of what we have covered and also serve to introduce new issues that will be discussed in subsequent classes. In some cases, you will not yet have the tools to handle a particular problem; your task here will be to figure out how to extend our system to deal with it. It is important to remember that there is often no single correct answer; your goal in writing up the assignments should be to produce at least well-reasoned discussions of the problems you encounter in the exercises, and at best well-argued and clearly explained proposals for how to solve them.

Assignments will be handed out on Thursday and due at the beginning of class the following Tuesday. Late assignments will not be accepted. Some of the problems will be purely formal exercises, and will not require prose write-ups. However, most of the problems will require analysis and argumentation (as well as derivations), and you will be expected to write them up with appropriate exposition, as though they were short papers. Finally, you are expected to do the work on your own.

Your evaluation will be based on your performance on the assignments and on participation in class.

Readings

- Heim, Irene and Angelika Kratzer. 1998. *Semantics in Generative Grammar*. Blackwell: Malden, Mass.
- Jacobson, Pauline. In preparation. *Direct Compositionality: An Introduction to the Syntax-Semantics Interface*.
- A few additional readings that can be downloaded from the class website.

The Heim and Kratzer text should be available at the Seminary Coop; I will email you copies of the Jacobson text. The classroom discussion will presuppose familiarity with the reading, so it will be important to do it in advance. At the same time, much of what we do in class will be independent of the texts, and in particular some of our assumptions will modify or go beyond the framework described in Heim and Kratzer.

The Plan Below is an initial plan for the course, with primary readings underlined. However, I want to allow for a certain amount of flexibility, depending on the interests and pace of the class, so we may end up diverging from this plan. It will therefore be important to regularly check the class website for weekly topics, readings, handouts and assignments.

Week 1: Foundations

Grice 1957; HK ch. 1; Jacobson ch. 1; Partee, B., A. ter Meulen and R. Wall (1993) chs. 1-2

Week 2: Semantic types

HK ch. 2; Jacobson ch. 3

Week 3: The syntax-semantics interface

HK ch. 3; Jacobson chs. 4-5

Week 4: Categorical grammar

Jacobson chs. 6-7

Week 5: Modification

HK ch. 4; Jacobson ch. 8

Week 6: Variables

HK ch. 5; Jacobson ch. 9

Week 7: Quantification

HK ch. 6

Week 8: Quantification

HK ch. 7

Week 9: TBD

Week 10: TBD