Ling. 425: Advanced Semantics
Ling. 525: Semantic Theory and Analysis

1 The course

The overriding aim of this course is to move from a a basic understanding of issues in semantics to being able to actually *do* semantics yourself—that is, to generate original research in the field. The course will consist of two parts (which may temporally overlap):

- We'll develop a (reasonably) explicit type-driven and fully compositional theory of semantic interpretation, revisiting some issues that you'll already be familiar with from a different technical perspective.

- In the second, we'll build on that foundation in some hopefully novel directions and gradually turn our attention to the literature.

2 Contact Information

Me:	Marcin Morzycki
Email:	marcin.morzycki@ubc.ca
Office hours:	2:30–3:30 Wednesdays or by appointment
Office:	Totem Field Studios 226

3 Requirements

The principal requirements for the course are:

- Ordinary take-home assignments, of which there will be between three and five. These will require you to devise solutions to empirical problems and present them in the form of a brief well-reasoned argument.

- Two longer take-home exams (a midterm and a final). They will essentially be long assignments.

- Contributing frequently and thoughtfully to class discussions.

- Optionally, instead of doing the last ordinary take-home assignment (i.e., not instead of the take-home final exam), you can put together a very brief in-class presentation on exploring problem in semantics of interest to you. This should consist of original research—your own ideas—rather than being a survey of the literature.

Outside of class You can—in fact, definitely should—discuss your work with other students. *You're encouraged to collaborate on a single write-up* in groups of up to three, but each group member must be able to defend the proposed solution. Other people's ideas must be properly cited. If you find any of this confusing, ask me for clarification.

In class The course will revolve primarily around in-class discussion, and much of the progress we make will be made that way, so *coming to class is crucial*. If you miss classes, you are likely to miss information that will be necessary to understand the assignments and subsequent discussion. If you anticipate having to miss class frequently, do not take this course.

4 Grading

Each assignment and each exam will receive a letter grade. Your final grade will be (no lower than) the mean of the following:

- your grades on the assignments

- your grades on the exams, weighted double (that is, each will count as two assignments)

- a grade for what you contributed to class discussions (this will count as one assignment)

Of course, this is subject to UBC's broader policies about grading, which include the possibility of 'scaling' your grade to better accord with institutional goals.

5 Reading

We'll use the following textbook as a general resource:

Heim, Irene and Angelika Kratzer. 1997. *Semantics in Generative Grammar*. Blackwell Publishers, Oxford.

We won't follow it chapter-by-chapter, however. It's useful for providing depth and breadth—it pursues some topics farther than we will, and covers some we won't discuss. It is, of course, *not a substitute for coming to class*—much of what we discuss will have no direct counterpart in the textbook, and where there is overlap, the conclusions will often have been arrived at differently.

You will get occasional review handouts that go over some of what happened in class. You should of course take notes, but you definitely *don't* need to write down everything that appears on the board.

We'll also read a few articles, including some classics and some recent work.

6 Communication

You'll get handouts, assignments, and exams via Canvas. You should turn them in that way too, in the form of a PDF file. Please *don't* submit files in Word or any other format. Please turn assignments in on the due date *before the start of class*.

7 Other notes & policies

Disability?   Please notify me during the first two weeks of the course to make any special arrangements to accommodate a disability. If you haven't already done so, you should contact the UBC Centre for Accessibility.

Academic integrity   Don't plagiarize. The structure of the course may make this a little trickier than it might seem. If someone that isn't actually a coauthor of your write-up gives you an idea that you use or build on, say in the write-up who it was. *Don't look for solutions to the problems on your assignments online.* In most cases, this isn't possible, but in all cases, it's a form of cheating. For more on the university's academic integrity policies, look at the university's Academic Honesty and Standards statement.

Social media and copyright issues   Don't share course materials (handouts, assignments, etc.) with anyone outside of class. Don't record anything that happens in class without my prior approval.

8 Approximate roadmap

The following is a *very* approximate roadmap of some of the topics we'll discuss in something like the order we'll discuss them. We'll customize this as we go to reflect our pace of progress and the directions of our collective interests. (Also, we're very likely not to move remotely as fast as indicated here.)

Jan. 3	Logistics & syllabus
	The design of the semantics
	Direct & indirect interpretation
	Functions and lambda abstraction
	After class, read: Heim & Kratzer chapter 1
Jan. 8	Types and type-driven interpretation
	Simple nouns, verbs, and adjectives
	Multiple arguments and Schönfinkeling/Currying
	After class, read: Heim & Kratzer chapter 2
Jan. 10	Higher types and functional categories
	Negation
	The passive
	After class, read: Heim & Kratzer chapter 3
Jan. 15	Type clashes
	Presupposition
	Definite descriptions
	Discourse-sensitivity
	After class, read: H&K chapter 4.4–4.5
Jan. 17	Definite descriptions continued
	Two kinds of functions
	Presupposition beyond definite descriptions
	Diagnostics for presupposition
Jan. 22	Modification
	Vagueness and structural ambiguity
	After class, optionally read: H&K chapter 4.1–4.3
Jan. 24	Pronouns, movement, and relative clauses
	Only after we've discussed this topic, read:
	H&K chapter 5
Jan. 29	Quantification
	Scope ambiguity
Jan. 31	Resolving scope ambiguity
	Only after we've discussed this topic to death, read:
	H&K chapter 6–7

Feb. 5	Intensionality & possible worlds Clausal embedding *Start reading:* H&K chapter 12
Feb. 7	Modals & conditionals
Feb. 12	Degrees & gradability
Feb. 14	Other degree constructions Measure phrases *Optionally, after we've discussed this topic to death read:* Morzycki (2016), chapter 3
Feb. 26	Degree constructions across languages *Before class, read:* Schwarzschild (2012)
Feb. 28	Events Thematic roles revisited *Start reading:* Davidson (1967)
March 5	Adverbial modification
March 7	Kinds & genericity *Optionally, after class discussion read:* Carlson (1977) or Chierchia (1998)
March 12	Generalized conjunction
March 14	Plurals
March 19	Tense & aspect in English
March 21	Conventional implicatures *Read:* Potts (2003) ch. 3
March 26	Expressive meaning *Read:* Potts (2007)
March 28	Focus *Read:* Rooth (1996)
April 2	Discourse structure Formal pragmatics *Only after class discussion, read:* Gunlogson (2002) *Optionally, you could also read the classic in this area:* Stalnaker (1979)
April 4	Squib presentations & discussion

References

Carlson, Greg. 1977. *Reference to Kinds in English*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Massachusetts Amherst. Published in 1980 by Garland.

Chierchia, Gennaro. 1998. 'Reference to kinds across languages'. *Natural Language Semantics* **6**(4), 339–405.

Davidson, Donald. 1967. 'The logical form of action sentences'. In Nicholas Rescher (ed.), *The Logic of Decision and Action*, pp. 81–95. University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh. Republished in Donald Davidson, 1980. *Essays on Actions and Events*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Gunlogson, Christine. 2002. 'Rising declarative questions'. In Brendan Jackson (ed.), *Proceedings of Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT) 12*. CLC Publications, Ithaca, NY.

Morzycki, Marcin. 2016. *Modification*. Key Topics in Semantics and Pragmatics. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Potts, Christopher. 2003. *The Logic of Conventional Implicatures*. Doctoral dissertation, UC Santa Cruz. Published in 2005 by Oxford University Press.

Potts, Christopher. 2007. 'The expressive dimension'. *Theoretical Linguistics* **33**(2), 165–198.

Rooth, Mats. 1996. 'Focus'. In Shalom Lappin (ed.), *The Handbook of Contemporary Semantic Theory*, pp. 271–297. Blackwell Publishing, Oxford.

Schwarzschild, Roger. 2012. 'Directed scale segments'. In Anca Chereches (ed.), *Proceedings of Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT) 22*. eLanguage.

Stalnaker, Robert. 1979. 'Assertion'. In Peter Cole (ed.), *Syntax and Semantics*, vol. 9. Academic Press, London.