

LING 115: SEMANTICS I

Syllabus

SoSe2020

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces the students to the foundations and essential concepts of Semantics (Formal Semantics). A procedure will be developed which derives the meaning of a complex linguistic unit (for example, a sentence or a phrase) from the meaning of the words and the syntactic structure that compose it. By examining different aspects of semantic composition, this course provides techniques and formal tools to investigate the empirical properties of natural language.

MEETINGS: **Lecture:** asynchronous lecture in advance +
synchronous Q/A on lecture on Tuesdays at 16h-16:45h
Tutorial: synchronous on Wednesdays at 17h-18:30h
Both Q/A on lecture and Tutorial will take place at:
<https://zoom.us/j/95960699730?pwd=Tm9PWEG4Y3dYeFhZVjVhNU5KYXhldz09>

INSTRUCTORS: Prof. Maribel Romero (short for María Isabel Romero Sangüesa)
maribel.romero@uni-konstanz.de
Office hours: Wednesdays 9h-10h (you have to book a slot in advance via my secretary angelika.albrecht@uni-konstanz.de)

TUTOR: Anna-Sofia Höpfner
anna-sofia.hoepfner@uni-konstanz.de
Office hours: Mondays 15:15h-16:45h

PREREQUISITES: Ling101 (Introduction to Linguistics)

READINGS (see Ilias)

Selected readings out of the following textbooks:

Chierchia, G. and S. McConnell-Ginet. 1990. *Meaning and Grammar. An Introduction to Semantics*. MIT Press.

Heim, I., and A. Kratzer. 1998. *Semantics in Generative Grammar*. Blackwell.

Partee, B., Ter Meulen, A., and Wall. 1990. *Mathematical Methods in Linguistics*. Kluwer.

Experimental papers: See outline of the course

Optional additional reading:

Lohnstein, H. 2011. *Formale Semantik und natürliche Sprache*. De Gruyter.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADE

Weekly exercises to practice	0%
Two take-home exams (together)	80%
Final exam (Klausur)	20%

IMPORTANT: You need to pass the final exam / Klausur by itself –i.e., independently of the take-homes– to pass the course.

OUTLINE OF THE COURSE

I. Foundations and formal tools.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction: The empirical domain of semantics, compositional semantics• Set Theory• Propositional Logic• Predicate Logic• Lambda Calculus
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experimental Study: Noveck, I. 2001. When children are more logical than adults: experimental investigation of scalar implicature. <i>Cognition</i> 78: 165-188.
⇒ TAKE-HOME I

II. Compositional Semantics: Building simple sentences.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Names and predicates• Modifiers (adjectives, prepositional phrases, etc.)• Computing ambiguities from syntactic attachment• Quantifier meanings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experimental Study: Markmann, E.1990. Constraints children place on word meanings. <i>Cognitive Science</i> 14: 57-77.
⇒ TAKE-HOME II

III. Semantic phenomena.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tense• Negation• Lexical aspect• Intension and extension

FINAL EXAM (KLAUSUR): July 20 at 15:15h-16:45h
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SCHEDULE

April 13	Syllabus Empirical Domain of Semantics	Chierchia & McConnell-G.: pp. 1-8 and 17-28 of Ch.1
April 20	Intro to Compositional Semantics Set Theory	Heim & Kratzer: pp. 1-3 of Ch. 1 Partee: pp. 3-17 of Ch. 1 pp. 27-33 of Ch. 2
April 27	Propositional Logic	Partee: pp. 99-106 of Ch. 6
May 4	Propositional Logic (cont'd) Predicate Logic	Partee: pp. 107-113 of Ch. 6
May 11	Predicate Logic (cont'd)	Partee: pp. 137-142 of Ch. 7
May 18	Names and Predicates	Heim & Kratzer: pp. 34-40 of Ch. 2
May 25	Experimental paper: Noveck Take Home I	Noveck (2001)
June 1	LECTURE FREE PERIOD	
June 8	Semantic rules	Heim & Kratzer (1998): rest of Ch. 2
June 15	CONSOLIDATION WEEK	
June 22	Adding connectives Syntactic rules and trees	Heim & Kratzer (1998): pp. 43-49 of Ch. 3
June 29	Semantic computation of syntactic ambiguities	Heim & Kratzer (1998): pp 61-65 of Ch. 4
July 6	Quantifier meanings Experimental paper: Markmann Take Home II	Heim & Kratzer (1998): pp .145-151 of Ch 6 (namely, §6.4 and §6.5) Markmann (1990)
July 13	Recap	
July 20	Final exam	

Important: Remember to care of your physical and psychological health in these pandemic times. See the following university services:

<https://seezeit.com/en/advice/psychotherapeutic-counselling/>