1 Goals

The primary goal of the course is to acquaint students with the basic principles and methodology of semantics and pragmatics.

2 Practice

The course will use the textbook [Semantics] by Kate Kearns, available in the campus bookstore. There will be exercises for most of the chapters covered. Please be sure to get the Second Edition.

3 Pre-requisites

Ling 420 or Ling 501. Strictly enforced. Please see instructor if you have not taken one of these classes, even if you have taken an equivalent at another institution.
4 Grading

Grading will be based on exercises and take-home midterms and finals.

- Assignments: 50%
- Quizzes: 10%
- Midterm 20%
- Final 20%

Complete your homework assignments before class.

Not only is homework worth 50% of your grade, but homework problems will resemble problems on your midterm and final. Homeworks will generally be due on Tuesday, and will be handed back and discussed on Thursday. Be prepared to discuss the material covered on the homework in class.

There will be 4 ten-minute quizzes distributed throughout the term given on Tuesdays, covering either (a) material in your reading; (b) material in the assignment you have just turned in. or (c) material from the previous week’s assignment. You will be notified of a quiz on the Thursday before it is given, in class (no notification will appear on the class outline).

The quizzes will cover concepts introduced in the readings, and practiced on the homework. You will need to do both to score well on the quizzes. Many homeworks are graded loosely, especially at the beginning of the course, since they are regarded as learning experiences. But quizzes, midterms, and finals will be graded as evaluations of knowledge. Basically, I will let many mistakes go on assignments; I will deduct for mistakes on the quizzes.

5 Late Assignments

The general structure of the course is not well-suited to late assignments. Assignment solutions will be discussed in detail on the day they are turned in, and thus students who turn assignments in late will be at an advantage. However, to allow for some flexibility, late assignments will receive partial credit. Here is the lateness policy:

1. Up to one week late: 50% credit for assignment
2. More than one week late: not accepted
6  Group Work

Group work is encouraged on the assignments. The midterm and final should be completed without any help. To be clear on this, collaboration or group work on the midterms and finals will be considered cheating.

When turning in collaborative assignments, your collaborators should be identified on your paper.

One option to explore with respect to group work:

You may wish to change groups in mid-semester. This is a good idea. I encourage existing groups to admit new members. Moving around will help you get to know more people and you will probably learn more. On the other hand, if you find a group that is a good fit, there is no requirement that you leave it.

7  Attendance

Attendance is not a formal part of your grade.

However, be aware that participation is, so do the math. Also, hints on how to solve problems on the assignments, the midterms, and the final are handed out liberally in class. These hints will not be posted on the web page. Since the problems can be challenging and the hints can be of great help, problems stemming from non-attendance can cascade.

8  Student Learning Outcomes


1. Students will be able to define denotation and sense for basic linguistic units and apply possible worlds to some basic semantic problems.

2. Students will produce translations of simple sentences into propositional logic and predicate logic and explain the relationship of those translations to the words and phrases in the sentence, including definite and indefinite noun phrases.
3. Students will learn what the goals of a modern semantic theory is and how a theory is tested against those goals.

4. Students will be able to identify the logical predicates in a sentence, as well as their arguments.

5. Students will be able to identify and explain the implicatures of simple sentences, tracing their relationship to Grice’s maxims.

6. Students will be able to identify the scope of semantic operators and show how the scope of semantic operators explains a class of semantic ambiguities.

9 Office Hours

Tu  3:30-4:30
Tu,Th 11:00-12:00
Th  09:30-10:30
by appointment

10 Mailing address

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