

Introduction to Semantics and Pragmatics Ling 525

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1 Goals

The core subfields of Linguistics are Syntax, The primary goal of the course is to acquaint students with the basic principles and methodology of Semantics and Pragmatics, two core subfields of linguistics.

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**.

There will also be readings posted on Blackboard from other sources. Students are responsible for the assigned readings, whether from Kearns or the other sources. Readings will generally be assigned weekly as posted in the course outline.

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 assignments, quizzes, midterms and finals.

- Assignments: 40%
- Quizzes: 20%
- Midterm 20%
- Final 20%

Complete your reading and homework assignments before class.

There are three reasons to complete the readings and homework assignments before each class:

1. Midterm/Final: Not only is homework worth 40% of your grade, but homework problems will resemble questions on your midterm and final.
2. Quizzes: Not every chapter will have a quiz, but for every chapter that has a quiz, the quiz for that chapter will be given the week that chapter's N readings are to be done. Suppose are in the week for chapter N and suppose that chapter N is a quiz chapter. The chapter N quiz will assume students have read chapter N and have completed the homework for Chapter N. Quiz questions will be simpler than homework questions, because students have less time, but they will probe student knowledge of facts and principles introduced in both the reading and homework for Chapter N.
3. Homeworks will generally be due on Tuesday, and will be handed back on Tuesday of the next week. This will be the only opportunity to discuss homework solutions, and will include discussion of typical student issues and knowledge gaps. Students can hardly benefit from those discussions if they haven't done the assignment or have tried to do the assignment.

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 quizzes and assignments are, so do the math. Also, hints on how to solve problems on the assignments 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 will cascade. Missed quizzes can be made up with a written excuse from your doctor or employer,

8 Student Learning Outcomes

Concepts: Denotation and sense. Possible worlds. Compositional semantics. Truth conditions. Propositional logic. Predicate logic. Predicates and arguments. Quantifiers. Scope. Modality. Definites and indefinites. Tense and aspect. Implicature. Grice's Maxims.

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 Cheating: Academic Dishonesty

Academic misconduct includes the following examples as well as any other similar conduct which is aimed at falsely representing a student's academic performance: cheating, plagiarizing, unauthorized collaborating on course work, stealing course examinations or materials, falsifying records or data, or intentionally assisting another individual in any of the above.

Academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Students who cheat will receive an "F" for the course grade and the Linguistics Department's Undergraduate Advisor and SDSU's Judicial Coordinator will be notified. The Judicial Coordinator will conduct an investigation, and depending on the outcome, the student may be expelled, suspended, or placed on probation. As explained in the Group Work Section, group work and collaboration on assignments is allowed, but **any** collaboration on the Midterm or Final is cheating. These are tests intended to evaluate your individual level of achievement.

For more information on SDSU's policies and procedures regarding academic misconduct visit the following site: [Academic Dishonesty](#).

10 Office Hours

Office SHW 238
Tu 3:30-4:30
Tu,Th 11:00-12:00
Th 09:30-10:30
by appointment

11 Contact Information

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12 Course Outline

Week One	Lexical Semantics Case study: Componential Kinship Semantics
Week Two	Set Theory: Brief introduction, using sets of possible worlds as truth sets
Week Three, Four	Introduction to Statement Logic, truth tables and simple entailments
Week Five	Introduction to Predicate Logic
Week Six	Entailment, contraries, contradictories
Week Seven	Gricean Maxims: Pragmatics unburdening the semantics
Week Eight	More quantifiers: most and many, definiteness
Week Nine	Opacity and scope
Week Ten	Modality and possible worlds
Week Eleven	Tense
Week Twelve	Lexical aspect, Vendlerian categories
Week Thirteen	Event semantics
Week Fourteen	Overview: Translating English into logic
Week Fifteen	Review