

## Linguistics 319: Introduction to Semantics

Fall 2008, TuTh 2:00-3:15pm

### INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Dr. Kimiko Nakanishi  
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### TA INFORMATION

Nicolas Welch  
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### COURSE WEBPAGE

<http://blackboard.ucalgary.ca/>

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

We will survey some of the main areas of linguistic semantics: lexical semantics (the meaning of content words), basic propositional and predicate logic (the meaning of function words, i.e. connectives such as *and*, *or*, and *not*, and quantifiers such as *all*, *some*, and *no*), the semantics of verbs and auxiliaries (tense, aspect, and modality), and pragmatics (the use of language).

### PREREQUISITE

You must have achieved a grade of at least C- in Linguistics 201 to be permitted to take this course.

### TEXTBOOKS

- Kearns, Kate. 2000. *Semantics*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Additional reading materials (to be made downloadable from the course webpage):
  - Gamut, L.T.F. 1991. *Logic, Language, and Meaning. Volume 1: Introduction to Logic*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Parts of chapters 2 and 3)
  - Portner, Paul. 2005. *What is Meaning? Fundamentals of Formal Semantics*. Oxford: Blackwell. (Chapters 8, 10, 11)

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- 2 homework assignments (15 % each) 30 %
- 2 midterm exams (20 % each) 40 %
- Final exam 30 %

Note: The final exam is “cumulative”: it covers the whole course.

### GRADING SCHEDULE

A+	97-100	B+	84-87	C+	71-74	D+	56-61
A	92-96	B	79-83	C	66-70	D	50-55
A-	88-91	B-	75-78	C-	62-65	F	0-49

## TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

- Important dates
  - October 2                      Assignment 1 due
  - October 16                     Midterm 1 (in-class)
  - November 6                    Assignment 2 due
  - November 20                  Midterm 2 (in-class)
  - Registrar scheduled         Final Exam

<b>1. Introduction: What is Meaning?</b> (Kearns Ch 1)		
Week 1	Sept 9, 11	Semantics/pragmatics distinction
Week 2	Sept 16, 18	Some basic concepts of semantics
		Sense and reference
		Compositionality
		Lexical semantics

<b>2. Propositional Logic</b> (Kearns Ch 2, part of Gamut Ch 2)		
Week 3	Sept 23, 25	Propositions, truth, entailment, validity
Week 4	Sept 30, Oct 2	Truth-functional connectives; simple truth tables
		The language of propositional logic; composite truth tables

<b>3. Predicate Logic</b> (Kearns Ch 2, part of Gamut Ch 3)		
Week 5	Oct 7, 9	Predicates and arguments; Quantifiers
Week 6	Oct 14	Quantifiers and negation
		The language of predicate logic

<b>4. Natural Language Quantifiers</b> (Kearns Ch 4)		
Week 7	Oct 21, 23	Multiple quantifiers; scope
Week 8	Oct 28, 30	Linguistic applications ( <i>there</i> construction, negative polarity items)

<b>5. Tense, Aspect, and Modality</b> (Kearns Ch 3, Ch 9)		
Week 9	Nov 4, 6	Kinds of modality
Week 10	Nov 13	Tense and aspect
Week 11	Nov 18	Aspectual classes of events

<b>6. Pragmatics</b> (Kearns Ch 11, Portner Ch 10 and 11)		
Week 12	Nov 25, 27	Deixis
Week 13	Dec 2, 4	Presupposition
		Implicature; Grice's maxims
		Scalar implicature; metalinguistic negation
		Speech acts

## **Some Ground Rules**

**Communication:** Students are encouraged to see the TA and me during our office hours with any questions concerning the course material. If the students cannot come to our office hours and still need to see us, we can set up an individual appointment.

**Late assignments:** Assignments must be handed in on the due date at the beginning of class. Late assignments will be penalized by a deduction of 10 percent of the full marks per calendar day past the due date. An extension of the deadline will only be granted at the instructor's discretion if the students can present a legitimate and documented reason for why the deadline has been missed, for instance in case of illness or family circumstances.

**Missed exams:** Students will receive a grade of 0 (zero) for a missed midterm or a final exam, unless they can provide a legitimate and documented excuse. Valid reasons for missing a test include birth, death, marriage, or serious illness or injury applying to you or a member of your immediate family. If there is a valid reason for missing the midterm, the instructor may transfer the percentage weight of the midterm to the final exam, which will then count for 70% of the course grade. There will be no make-up midterm. A deferred final exam can only be granted by the Dean.

**Plagiarism and cheating:** Homework assignments, the midterm and the final exam should all be the students' own individual work and written by the students in their own words. Exactly the same answers (especially in the assignments) are considered to be plagiarism. During the exams, the use of notes, books, articles, electronic devices or any other aids is not permitted. Carefully read the definition of plagiarism and academic misconduct below.

**Student advising:** For any questions regarding the linguistics major or minor, the organization of your program, or the selection of courses, you can see the linguistics undergraduate adviser:

Dr. Suzanne Curtin (ling.undergrad@ucalgary.ca)

### **Student's Union Contact Information:**

SU VP Academic Phone: 220- 3911 and email: suvpaca@ucalgary.ca

## **Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct**

Plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course, when, in fact, it is not. Most commonly plagiarism exists when:

- a) the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test),
- b) parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author,
- c) the whole work (e.g. an essay) is copied from another source, and/or
- d) a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted. Some course assignments call for students to work in groups. Unless noted otherwise in writing, students must write up their own answers for submission of the assignment. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism.

Plagiarism is an extremely serious academic offence. Possible penalties for plagiarism include: failing the assignment, failing the course, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion.

Any student who voluntarily and consciously aids another student in the commission of plagiarism is also guilty of academic misconduct.

## **Disability Accommodation**

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of this course.