

Syllabus

January 8 2021

1 Class Coordinates

Instructors:	Andrea Beltrama & Florian Schwarz
Office:	311C, 3401 Walnut
Email:	florians@ling.upenn.edu & beltrama@sas.upenn.edu
Andrea Office hours:	make appointment via email!
Florian Office hours:	by appointment (which means just about any time!) see schedule at http://florianschwarz.net/schedule)
Course Website & Tools	Canvas Site ; Zotero library (see folder (and subfolders) here ; Campuswire platform

2 Course Description

This course continues the introduction to formal semantics for natural language from LING 580 and presupposes the materials covered there, as well as familiarity with the textbook (Heim and Kratzer 1998). One part of the course expands the semantic system developed there to include intensional constructions, e.g., ones involving modals, attitude verbs, and conditionals. We will introduce the relevant formal tools, such as intensional logic and different versions of possible worlds semantics, and investigate natural language phenomena in light of them to decide what type of system is most adequate for modeling meaning in natural language. As in the first part of the course sequence, the focus is on hands-on work so that you learn how to DO semantic analysis.

The other part of the course turns to a selection of advanced topics from current semantic research, including: exclusive operators; the Question under Discussion model; subjective predicates; gradability and vagueness. Readings will be drawn both from classic papers and current research publications.

3 Class Structure for Spring 2021

We'll have synchronous class sessions via Zoom, which will be a combination of lectures, hands on problem sets in small groups, and student presentations. Students should generally plan on attending class, but accommodations can be made in special circumstances, including making class lecture recordings available asynchronously. Overall, class structure will be comparable to usual in-person structure, as laid out in standard syllabus below. Details of topics are TBD and will be finalized between instructors and students to best serve students' interests.

4 Website

In addition to the [Canvas site](#), we will use [Zotero](#) [<http://www.zotero.org>] for class materials and readings, as well as project resources. You have to create an account there, if you don't have one already, and request an invitation for the group [schwarzlab](#) (or accept one, if I sent you one already).

5 Requirements

- attend class & do assigned readings
- Participate actively in class
- Homework assignments
- Semester project, which includes &
 - 3 presentations of relevant readings

- Final project presentation
- Class paper

The homework assignments are a very important part of the class. In order to learn how to do semantics, you have to do it yourself. You are welcome to discuss homework with your classmates, but you have to write up what you turn in on your own.

Homework has to be turned in on time. This will make sure that you don't fall behind. There will also be plenty of in-class exercises which will prepare you for the homework.

You should embark on a small research project during the semester. The topic can build on issues we cover in the course, or address an independent issue, as long as it is within formal semantics (you will have to consult with me before deciding on your topic). The projects will develop over the semester through 2-3 presentation of both introductory readings and selections from the current literature, and cumulate in a class paper.

Your grade for the class will be based on your homework (30%), your presentations (20%) and paper (40%), as well as class participation (10%).

6 Textbooks

von Fintel, K. & Heim, I. *Intensional Semantics*. Lecture Notes (2011 version and possibly parts of newer version), MIT
(available at <http://mit.edu/fintel/fintel-heim-intensional.pdf>)

There is a Zotero group at www.zotero.org, schwarzlab, where we will post references and resources as we go along, and where you will be able to share and organize papers for your projects as well.

7 Tentative Schedule

- Week 1-2 (**Read:** vF&H 1)
 - The limit of extensional approaches
 - Introduction to intensions
- Week 3 (**Read:** vF&H 2; Hintikka (1969))
 - Propositional attitudes
 - Accessibility Relations
- Week 4-5 (**Read:** vF&H 3-4)
 - Modals: a first stab
 - Conversational background and ordering sources
 - Modals and scope
 - Practice with derivations
- Week 6: student presentations I
- Week 7-8 (**Read:** Stalnaker 1978; Roberts 1996/2012; Farkas & Bruce 2010)
 - Propositions and Discourse
 - Assertion and the Common Ground
 - The Question Under Discussion Model
 - The effect of response particles

- Week 9 (**Read:** von Fintel & Iatridou 2003; Coppock & Beaver 2014)
 - Exclusives particles
 - Minimal sufficiency: at the interface of modality and exclusion
- Week 10 (**Read:** Lasersohn 2005; Stephenson 2007; Stojanovic 2016)
 - Subjectivity and Predicates of Personal Taste
 - From PPT to epistemic modals
- Week 11: Student Presentations, II
- Week 12-13 (**Read:** Kennedy & McNally 2005; Morzycki 2011; Lassiter 2016)
 - Gradability in the adjectival domain
 - Gradability beyond the adjectival domain
 - Gradability and Modality
- Week 14 Student Presentations, III

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References

Hintikka, J. (1969). Semantics for propositional attitudes. In I. J. W. Davis and D. J. Hockney (Eds.), Philosophical logic, pp. 21–45. Dordrecht: Reidel.