

ENGL 5337: Studies in Linguistics: Meaning
Spring 2011: January 13 to May 03

I. Basic Information

Instructor:	Dr. Min-Joo Kim
Class time:	T/R 11:00 – 12:20 AM
Classroom:	English/Philosophy 450
Office:	English/Philosophy 480 (East Wing of the English/Philosophy Bldg.)
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Office hours:	T&R, 3:40-4:50 PM (or by appointment)

II. Information on the course

A. Course Description

We use words, phrases, and sentences to convey information about ourselves, about the things we like or dislike, or about the states of affairs in the world. This course is concerned with how meaning is encoded and expressed in natural human language.

Three main sets of topics to be covered are:

- (i) basic concepts of and theoretical approaches to truth-conditional meaning (semantics),
- (ii) ways in which language is used to convey the speaker's intentions and to update the hearer's knowledge of the world (pragmatics)
- (iii) ways in which these two aspects of meaning interact with each other.

B. Course material

1. Required textbooks:

- Kearns, Kate. 2000. *Semantics*. Palgrave MacMillan.
- Portner, Paul. 2005. *What is meaning?: Fundamentals of Formal Semantics*. Blackwell Publishing.

Note: These two textbooks have some overlap but they complement each other: the Kearns book adopts a more traditional logic-based approach to meaning and the Portner book takes a more compositionality-based approach and deals with more advanced topics and theoretical apparatuses one needs to understand recent research in formal semantics/pragmatics.

2. Supplementary readings (not exhaustive): excerpts from **some** of the following texts will be provided by the instructor either in PDF or any other format. If you need a more advanced introductory textbook in semantics, you may want to consult the starred books (**) below.

- Bach, Emmon. 1989. *Informal Lectures on Formal Semantics*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Chierchia, Gennaro and Sally McConnell-Ginet. 2000. 2nd ed. *Meaning and Grammar: An Introduction to Semantics*. Cambridge: MIT Press.**

- Giannakidou, Anastasia. 2007. The landscape of EVEN. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 25: 39-81.
- Heim, Irene. 1984. A note on negative polarity and downward entailingness. In Jones, C. and P. Sells (eds.), *Proceedings of NELS 14*, GLSA, pp. 98-107.
- Kadmon, Nirit and Fred Landman. 1993. Any. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 16: 353-422.
- McNally, Louise. 1998. Existential sentences without existential quantification. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 21: 353-392.
- Martin, Robert M. 1987. *The Meaning of Language*. MIT Press.
- Matthewson, Lisa. 2006. Presuppositions and cross-linguistic variation. In Davis, C. et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of NELS 36*, GLSA.
- Levinson, Stephen. 1983. *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rooth, Mats. 1985. Association with focus: Montague grammar, semantic, only, and even. Ph.D. Dissertation. University of Massachusetts-Amherst.
- Rooth, Mats. 1992. A theory of focus interpretation. *Natural Language Semantics* 1: 75-116.
- Saeed, John. 2008. *Semantics, 3rd edition*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.**
- Searle, John. 1965. What is a speech act? In Black, M. (ed.), *Philosophy in America*. Allen and Unwin, 221-239. Reprinted in Davis, S (ed.). 1991. *Pragmatics: A Reader*. Oxford University Press, 254-264.
- Siegel, Muffy. 2002. Like: The discourse particle and semantics. *Journal of Semantics* 19: 35-71.
- Simmons, Mandy. 2005. Dividing things up: the semantics of *or* and the modal/*or* interaction. *Natural Language Semantics* 13: 271-316.
- Simmons, Mandy. 2008. Notes on embedded Implicatures. Ms. Carnegie Mellon University.
- Traugott, Elizabeth C. 2006. The semantic development of scalar focus modifiers. In van Kemenade, A and B. Los (eds.), *The Handbook of the History of English*. Malden, MA: Basil Blackwell, 335-359.
- Tsujimura, Natusko. 2001. Degree word and scalar structure in Japanese. *Lingua* 111: 29-52.

C. Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to do the following:

- (i) Define basic concepts and technical terms used in semantics and pragmatics (e.g., sense and reference, truth-conditions, quantification, speech acts)
- (ii) Get familiarized with some classic literature in semantics and pragmatics
- (iii) Conduct preliminary research in the two disciplines
- (iv) Develop appreciation for the complexities of human language and linguistic communicative processes and apply the acquired semantic and pragmatic knowledge to daily linguistic communications
- (v) Acquire a better understanding of the ways in which humans conceptualize objects in the world by using language and develop and expand knowledge of human language as a system essential to the human condition and the expression of human culture
- (vi) Take more advanced courses in linguistics as well as in other related disciplines such as philosophy, psychology, second language studies, mass communication, and computer science.

You will be able to acquire the aforementioned skills and knowledge by doing the following:

- (i) Take ownership of your learning.
- (ii) Come to every class and contribute to our collective knowledge in a positive fashion.
- (iii) Do all reading assignments in a timely fashion, i.e., before they are due.
- (iv) Try to make connections between what you're learning in class and your daily life.
- (v) Clear up any confusion as soon as possible by asking questions in class or setting up an appointment with the instructor.

D. Assessment Method: To earn a passing grade, a student must successfully complete **all** course requirements stated in the syllabus and announced via e-mail correspondences. See the schedule section below for the due date for each requirement.

(i) Attendance and participation: 5%
(ii) Homework assignments: $5\% \times 7 = 35\%$
(iii) Journal article critique: 15%
(iv) Proposal for the final research project: 5%
(v) Oral presentation on the final project: 15%
(vi) Final-term paper: 25%
(vii) Total: 100%

1. Attendance and participation (5%): Students will come to every class prepared and participate actively in class activities.

Attendance will be checked every day. The first absence will not be counted but starting from the second one, every absence will count as **-1 point** off of the final grade. **More than four absences** without justification will result in **an automatic F**.

In the event of an absence, the student must **notify the instructor as soon as possible**. Such notifications will be taken into account when the final grades are being calculated. If the documentation is justifiable, the absence may not result in reducing the final grade by one point.

2. Homework assignments (35%): There will be weekly homework assignments until spring break. The homework will be given out on a Thursday and will be **due the following Tuesday**. We'll review the homework problems in class on Tuesday. So all of us must come to the class **prepared** to participate in the in-class discussions.

3. Journal article critique (15%): After learning about quantifiers, students will be reading a *Linguistics and Philosophy* article by McNally (1998) and do a critique on it. A critique is an essay summarizing the main points of the article and providing an engaged discussion on them by assessing their argumentative strengths, both on theoretical and empirical grounds. The critique will be **6-7 pages long, double-spaced**. Just like the article you'll be critiquing for this assignment, your paper should contain **clear, well justified sections with headings and page numbers**.

4. Requirements on final-term papers (45%): Students will write a final term-paper taking up a topic on semantics and pragmatics in areas such as the following:

- literature review of a particular topic in semantics or pragmatics

- commentary on some of the semantics-pragmatics interface issues raised in the course
- semantic change of a lexical item in English or any language
- comparison of a grammatical category (e.g., Aspect, Tense) in English and other languages
- comparison between human language and computer language

Students must have their final paper topics approved by the instructor and submit a **one-paged, single-spaced proposal by Thursday, April 7th**. The proposal should clearly outline the research question or topic, and contain some crucial references to be relied on. Additionally, if relevant, it must also spell out the research methods to be utilized (e.g., how the data will be collected).

Students will make **oral presentations** on their final projects in class before the final paper is due. The presentations should be done professionally accompanied by visual aids such as power-point slides if possible. In any case, a **hard copy handout is obligatory**.

The evaluation criteria for presentations will be: (i) structure/organization (30%); (ii) content (40%); and (iii) effectiveness of delivery (20%).

The length of the paper will be **10-12 paged, double-spaced, excluding** references. It must contain **clear section headings, research topic or question statements in the introduction section, and page numbers**. The references must include at least **8 published** works (e.g., journal articles, book chapters, and books).

Evaluative criteria for papers will be: (i) organization and style (20%); (ii) clarity of exposition (10%); (iii) thoroughness and accuracy of the literature review (40%); and (iv) originality of research & contribution potential (30%).

More information on the final project will be given in due course of time.

II. Course schedule (subject to change): Below readings that must be done **before class** are bold-faced.

Week	Date	Topic	Reading	Notes
1	1/13	Introduction & overview	Portner (P) CH. 1	Homework (HW): reading
2	1/18 1/20	Truth conditions, sense, reference and compositionality. Cont.	Kearns (K) CH 1, pp 16-23 & CH 3; P CH 2, 7 & 9.	HW1 given out
3	1/25 1/27	Homework 1 review Propositional logic and truth tables	K. CH 2	HW2 given out
4	2/01 2/03	Homework 2 review Predicate logic, quantification, and scope ambiguity	K. CH 4 (& P. CH 4)	HW3 given out
5	2/08 2/10	HW 3 Review Discussion/loose ends		
6	2/15 2/17	Natural language quantifiers Cont.	K. CH 4 & P. CH 6	HW4 given out

7	2/22 2/24	HW 4 review Definite descriptions	K. CH 5 & P. CH 5	HW5 given out
8	3/01 3/03	HW 5 review Tense and Aspect	K. CH 7 & P. CH 8	HW6 given out
9	3/08 3/10	HW 6 review Events & verb classes	K. CH 8 & 9	
10	3/15 3/17	Spring Break: No class Spring Break: No class		
11	3/22 3/24	Article review Thematic roles & Neo-Davidsonian event semantics	K. CH 8 & 10	Article critique due HW 7 given out
13	3/29 3/31	HW 7 review & loose ends Student-teacher conference		No regular lecture
14	4/05 4/07	Implicature and Gricean Maxims of Conversation Presupposition vs. Assertion; Topic vs. Focus	K. CH 11 & P. CH 11 P. CH 10	Proposal due
15	4/12 4/14	Speech Acts Polarity & semantics of <i>any</i>	Martin 1987 & Searle 1965 Kadmon & Landman 1993	
16	4/19 4/21	Noun modification Cont.	P. CH. 4	
17	4/26 4/28	Loose ends and bigger picture issues Student presentations	P. CH. 12	
18	5/03	Student presentations		Term-paper due: 4:00 PM on Thursday, May 5th in the instructor's office.

III. Course Policies

A. Basic Course-Related Requirements:

- In the event of missing the class, students must inform the instructor as soon as possible; failure to do so will have serious consequences for their grades. Each absence will count as **-1 point**. Students with more than **4 absences without justification** will receive an **automatic F** for the course.
- Students must be **punctual** to respect other students' time, let alone their own. Being late for class **more than twice** will lead to **lowering the course grade** by one level, i.e., A becomes B+.

- Assignments must be either typed up or neatly hand-written and submitted **stapled**. **No late submissions** will be accepted. If late submission is granted for emergency reasons, it may not be given full credit.
- Announcements will be made both in class and via e-mail. E-mail announcements will be sent to students' **TTU e-mail** account, so students must check TTU e-mails on a regular basis, **preferably every day**.

B. Civility in the Classroom

- Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is **conducive to learning**.
- Appropriate student behavior (whether online, in person, or over the telephone) creates a better environment for learning and teaching.
- No behavior that will cause distraction or discomfort such as **chatting with someone without the instructor's permission, texting in class, or responding rudely** to someone's remarks or questions will be allowed.
- Inappropriate behavior in the classroom will minimally result in a **request to leave class**. It can lead to **lowering of the grade by more than one level**.
- Students are encouraged to participate actively in class but no one should dominate the **entire** class discussion. Such behavior will be considered inappropriate and hence will be subject to the same set of rules applied to inappropriate behavior. See above.

C. Academic Integrity

- This course follows the University's statement on academic integrity as in p. 82 of the *Bulletin of Texas Tech*: "It is the aim of the faculty of Texas Tech University to foster a spirit of **complete honesty** and a **high standard of integrity**."
- We will also abide by the Code of Student Conduct as laid out in the Student Affairs Handbook (<http://www.studentaffairs.ttu.edu/campuslife/handbook.pdf>).
- Failure to uphold such guidelines may result in one or more of these penalties depending on the instructor's assessment of the seriousness of the violation:
 - failing grade on an assignment or for the entire course,
 - reporting to the Dean of Students,
 - referral for disciplinary action to the Student Mediation Center, or other relevant disciplinary action.
- In sum, students must remember that every action has a consequence and they bear **full responsibility** for their own actions.
- This class has **no tolerance for cheating or plagiarism**.

- **What counts as cheating:**
 - dishonesty on examinations, quizzes, and written assignments,
 - illegal possession of examinations,
 - use of unauthorized notes during an examination or quiz,
 - obtaining information during an examination from the examination paper or otherwise from another student,
 - assisting others to cheat,
 - alteration of grade records,
 - illegal entry to or unauthorized presence in an office

- **What counts as plagiarism:** Using other people's work as if it were his/her own **without proper acknowledgments.**

- Therefore, any student will be guilty of plagiarism if he/she fails to give credit for quotations or essentially identical expressions of material taken from books, encyclopedias, magazines, the Internet, or from the themes, reports, or other writings of a fellow student or any other person.

- Consequence of plagiarism will result in **an automatic F, regardless of the reason.**

D. Student with Disabilities

- Any student with disabilities who needs special arrangements to minimize the effects of their disabilities should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make any necessary accommodations.
- But students must present appropriate **verification from TechAccess first.**