

Semantics II

G61.2370-001

Spring 2004

Instructor: Paul Elbourne

1 Housekeeping

Timing: Wednesdays 2–4.45pm
Room: Conference room, Linguistics Department (719 Broadway, 4th floor)
Credits: 4 points
Prerequisites: Semantics I or permission of the instructor

2 Subject Matter

This is the second in a sequence of two courses which together comprise a graduate-level introduction to semantics. It aims to give the beginning researcher an introduction to some central semantic frameworks that will be encountered irrespective of whether one works on the topics that originally motivated them: possible worlds semantics, situation semantics, event semantics and dynamic semantics. We will also investigate two empirical topics of general interest: the semantics of focus, which is potentially relevant to a wide range of phenomena; and the semantics of questions, which has implications for syntactic topics like *wh*-movement, on the one hand, and for foundational debates about the nature of meaning, on the other. We will read some classic papers and also try to get a feel for areas of current controversy and uncertainty that might profitably be the focus of future research.

Reference will sometimes be made to the second Gamut volume for the explanation of technicalities. Some have been ordered from the NYU bookstore. In addition, many of the papers we will be reading are to be found in Paul Portner and Barbara H. Partee, eds., *Formal Semantics: the essential readings* (Blackwell, 2002), which would be well worth buying.

3 Requirements for Registered Students

1. Lots of reading.
2. A few technical exercises.
3. A paper on a topic related to the course, to be handed in Monday May 10.

4 Provisional Syllabus

		1. Possible worlds semantics and situation semantics
JANUARY	Wed 21	Introduction to possible worlds semantics
	Wed 28	Modals (Kratzer 1981, 1991; Zvolenszky 2002)
FEBRUARY	Wed 4	Montague Grammar and other formalism (Gamut textbook)
	Wed 11	Intensional transitive verbs (Partee 1974; den Dikken, Larson and Ludlow 1996)
	Wed 18	Situations and propositional attitudes (Soames 1987, Edelberg 1994)
		2. Event semantics
	Wed 25	Adverbial modification and other topics (Davidson 1967, Parsons 1990)
MARCH	Wed 3	Argument structure (Kratzer 1994, Pylkänen 2002)
		3. Dynamic semantics
	Wed 10	The dynamic conception of meaning (Stalnaker 1979, Heim 1982)
	Wed 17	SPRING RECESS
	Wed 24	Dynamic Montague Grammar (Groenendijk and Stokhof 1990)
	Wed 31	Presupposition and presupposition projection (Heim 1983, Soames 1990)
		4. Focus
APRIL	Wed 7	Focus (Rooth 1992a,b)
	Wed 14	Focus (Schwarzschild 1999)
		5. Questions and type-shifting
	Wed 21	Questions (Hamblin 1973, Karttunen 1977)
	Wed 28	Questions and type-shifting (Partee 1986, Groenendijk and Stokhof 1989)

Bibliography

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