

Syntax and Semantics: The Structure and Meaning of Utterances
Unique #41520 – LIN 372L – Spring 2014 – TTH 12:30–2:00 – CBA 4.326

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Course website: <http://gboleda.utcompling.com/teaching/courses/lin372l>

Goals: The goal of this course is to explore the structure and meaning of sentences in human languages. We will do this from the perspective of *formal semantics*, which seeks to formulate precise models of phrase and sentence meaning using tools from logic and set theory. The ultimate goal of the course is to deepen your understanding of human language. In addition, the course will equip you with a set of analytical tools that will be useful not only to understand how language works, but also in developing skills to make sense of any complex phenomenon by breaking it down into smaller pieces and clarifying the relationships between the pieces.

Prerequisites: Upper-division standing and Linguistics 306.

Required textbooks:

- Kate Kearns 2000, *Semantics*. Palgrave Macmillan. (We'll be using the first edition.)
- **E-BOOK:** Paul Kroeger 2005, *Analyzing Grammar: An Introduction*. You should probably just use the eBook from the UT library, as we will only use chapters 1 and 3.

Evaluation: Research has shown that knowledge that is *actively* acquired (for instance, through inquiring or hands-on experience) is acquired faster and retained longer than knowledge that is *passively* acquired (for instance, through hearing lectures). In this course, you should aim at acquiring the necessary knowledge as autonomously as possible, with my support and that of the TA. Therefore, weekly class preparation, participation, and homework will be crucial for this course. There will also be an in-class midterm exam and a final exam. The questions and exercises in the exams will be very similar to those of the homework, so doing the homework will be equivalent to effectively prepare for the exams.

Basis for grading: Class preparation (10%), class participation (5%), homework (40%), midterm exam (15%), final exam (30%).

I will not give lectures, but expect you to read and work on the material on your own and use the class to go over difficult points and discuss and clear any questions you may have. So, it is very important that you (a) **read the book parts** due every Thursday, (b) **do the homework** due every Tuesday, and (c) **actively participate** in and out of the classroom. Regular attendance is strongly encouraged. If you miss a class, be sure to know about everything that has been said in it, as some of the analyses in class may deviate from the textbook.

1. *Class preparation: 10%.*

As mentioned above, every Thursday a reading is due. You should read it and send me one to three questions about the material via email at most at 11am. This way, I can make sure

that you are preparing the class and I can prepare for the class myself, focusing on the points that are least clear to most students. To have the maximal grade, you must send questions at least 10 times. I expect most questions to be about something that is not clear to you (“I did not understand X”, “I don't know how to apply the theory in section Y to example number Z”), but you can ask any kind of question that you deem relevant, for instance about new data (examples you come up with, or read somewhere) that does not seem to fit the theory, or how the theory applies to some other language that you speak.

2. Class participation: 5%.

In or out of class, please participate actively. In class, ask questions, or ask me to go over something again. Answer a question that your classmate has asked. Answer a question that the teacher asks, even if the answer seems obvious. If you are not comfortable speaking up in class, ask a question on the Discussion Board on Blackboard, or answer a question that a classmate has asked there (I will give at least 24 hours to classmates before answering any question myself), or come to office hours to solve any problem you may have with the course. To obtain the maximal grade, you should participate at least three times during the semester.

3. Homework: 40%.

Homework is due in class at 12:30 on Tuesdays, on the date indicated in the schedule on the course website. Write your name, the date, and the assignment content (for instance, “Exercises Ch. 2, A to E”) at the top of the first page of your work. It is essential that you keep up with the homework. **Late homework will receive no credit.** It is highly recommended that you **start on the problem set before the weekend**, so that you can ask any questions in class or at office hours. For evaluation, I will consider your 10 best homework grades.

4. Midterm: 15%.

The midterm exam will comprehend the material covered up to the midterm date. It will consist of exercises very similar to the ones you have done for the homework. I will let you know ahead of time whether you will be allowed to consult the book and any notes you may have (no laptops).

5. Final exam: 30%.

The final exam is comprehensive, including material from the entire semester. It will be similar to the midterm exam. If you have a higher grade in the final exam than in the midterm exam, I will drop the midterm grade and have the final exam count 45%.

Academic Dishonesty Policy: I encourage you to work with your classmates on your reading and the homework, as you can help each other understand the material better – in fact, there is no better way to learn a concept than to explain it to someone else. However, always **write the homework answers on your own.**

Giving or receiving help on a midterm or the final exam from anyone other than the teacher or TA is considered cheating and will be subject to UT's disciplinary code.

Any academic dishonesty of any sort (including basing your write-up on someone else's) will be handled according to the procedures in the office of Student Judicial Services (<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs>). Typical outcomes are that the incident is reported to the dean, possibly with a 0 on that assignment or exam and/or an F in the course.

Feedback: During this course I may ask you for feedback on your learning, through anonymous surveys about how my teaching strategies are helping or hindering your learning.

Also you may give me any feedback, by email or in person, concerning the class.

Religious holidays: By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, or a homework assignment in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Documented Disability Statement: Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities at 512 471-6259 (voice) or 512 232-2937 (video phone) or <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd> .

Course schedule: see next page.

Course schedule:

week	day	reading due	homework due
1. Jan	Tu 14	Ch. 1 Kroeger, Grammatical form	
	Th 16	Ch. 3 Kroeger, Constituent structure	
2.	Tu 21		Ex. Ch. 3 Kroeger, A, B, and 3A
	Th 23	Ch. 1 Kearns, Introduction	
3.	Tu 28		Ex. Ch. 3 Kroeger, 3B-3D
	Th 30	Ch. 2, First Order Logic, sections 2.1-2.2	
4. Feb	Tu 4		Ex. Ch. 2, A to E.
	Th 6	Ch. 2, First Order Logic, sections 2.3 to end	
5.	Tu 11		Ex. Ch. 2, F to K
	Th 13	Ch. 3, Modality and Possible Worlds	
6.	Tu 18		Ex. Ch. 3, A to E
	Th 20	Ch. 4, Natural Language Quantifiers	
7.	Tu 25		Ex. Ch. 4
	Th 27	Ch. 5, Definite Descriptions	
8. Mar	Tu 4		Midterm in class
	Th 6	Midterm review, Q&A on the course	
		Spring Break	
9.	Tu 18		Ex. Ch. 5
	Th 20	Ch. 6, Indefinite Descriptions, Plurals, ...	
10.	Tu 25		Ex. Ch. 6
	Th 27	Ch. 7, Tense and Aspect	
11. Apr	Tu 1		Ex. Ch. 7
	Th 3	Ch. 8, Events	
12.	Tu 8		Ex. Ch. 8
	Th 10	Ch. 9, Aspectual Classes of Events	
13.	Tu 15		Ex. Ch. 9
	Th 17	Ch. 10, Thematic Roles Reviewed	
14.	Tu 22		Ex. Ch. 10
	Th 24	Ch. 11, Implicature and Explicature	
15.	Tu 29		Ex. Ch. 11
May	Th 1	Review	