

The Semantics of Other Stuff
Linguistics 222: Semantics 3
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class: Mondays & Wednesday, 2-4pm in Campbell 2122

office hours: Tuesdays 10:00am-12:00pm, in Campbell 3103M

about

There is so much more to language than individuals and possible worlds and at-issue content! This class is about learning a bit about the other stuff, so you can apply it to your own research. This year we've had to do a hodge-podge to accommodate as many different interests as possible.

We're going to approach things a little differently than usual. Every Monday class, I will present us with an empirical puzzle, and I will crowd-source semantic solutions to the puzzle. The readings, for Wednesday, will present a popular solution to the puzzle. Weekly homeworks, due on Monday, will review what we discussed and extend those concepts to new empirical considerations.

expectations

This is a very interactive class! So you'll get the most out of it if you do all the reading and homework.

4 units: participation–20% \wedge homeworks–40% \wedge final presentation–40%

2 units: participation–40% \wedge (homeworks \vee final presentation)–60%

HOMEWORK: If you are a homework student, I will give you an A on homework if you complete every homework assignment on time with a reasonable amount of effort. I will give homework extensions to any student who approaches me before the deadline. Grades will decrease slowly from that point, but are less likely to decrease the more a student communicates with me about their progress and struggles.

PRESENTATION: The final day of class will consist of student presentations. I will ask presentation students to give a 10-20-minute presentation on an "other stuff" topic of your choice. It should take (at least) one of the following narrative forms, where "Semantic Theory" refers to the theory as we've innovated it in class so far, and where data, theories, ramifications, and methodologies count as new if we haven't addressed them (in depth) in class.

- I've got some cool new data! here's what I think it means for Semantic Theory
- I've got a cool new theory! at least as it pertains to [phenomenon we've discussed in class]
- I've discovered a cool new empirical ramification for Semantic Theory! and I wonder if it's true
- I've thought of a cool new methodology for testing some prediction of Semantic Theory! here's how I'd like to use it

It is incredibly helpful for students to meet with me before these student presentations, at the very least so I can help guide you to readings and warn you away from messy topics. So please plan on doing so, either in office hours or in a privately scheduled meeting.

topic-general optional readings

Champollion, Lucas. 2017. *Parts of a whole*. Oxford.

Laserson, Peter. 1995. *Plurality, conjunction, and events*. Dordrecht.

Rett, Jessica. 2022. A typology of semantic entities. In D. Altshuler (ed.) *Linguistics meets philosophy*. Oxford.

Portner, Paul. 2017. *Mood*. Oxford.

Murray, Sarah. 2026. Speech acts and modality. In A. Arregui, M. Ippolito, and V. Hacquard (eds.) *Cambridge Handbook of Natural Language Modality*.

schedule

wk	date	topic	weekly readings (<i>optional italicized</i>)	Monday homework
1	March 31 April 2	introduction CLASS CANCELED	Lewis 1975 (<i>Partee 1973</i>)	
2	April 7 April 9	plurals theories of plurals	Nouwen 2016 (<i>Bayer 1997 p39–47</i>)	
3	April 14 April 16	events & aspect event semantics	(<i>Moens & Steedman 1988</i>) Bayer 1997 p3–28 & p55–59	homework 1
4	April 21 April 23	plural events plural event semantics	(<i>Bach 1986</i>) Schwarzschild 2011 (<i>Nakanishi 2007</i>)	homework 2
5	April 28 April 30	degrees degree semantics	(<i>Schwarzschild 2008</i>) Rett 2015 Ch2 (<i>Rett 2014</i>)	homework 3
6	May 5 May 7	illocutionary mood modeling varieties of content	(<i>Portner 2017 Ch3</i>) Farkas & Bruce 2010 (<i>Murray 2014, 2026</i>)	homework 4
7	May 12 May 14	rising declaratives modeling prosody	(<i>Farkas & Roelofsen 2017</i>) Jeong 2018 (<i>Biezma & Rawlins 2017</i>)	homework 5
8	May 19 May 21	response particles modeling response particles	Farkas & Roelofsen 2019	homework 6
9	May 26 May 27	VERUM FOCUS theories of VERUM FOCUS	Gutzmann et al. 2020 (<i>Frana & Rawlins 2019</i>)	homework 7
10	June 2 June 4	events & illocutionary content student presentations	Rett 2024	

weekly readings

- Bach, Emmon. 1986. The algebra of events. *Linguistics & Philosophy* 9: 5–16.
- Bayer, Samuel. 1997. *Confessions of a lapsed Neo-Davidsonian*, Routledge.
- Biezma, M. & Rawlins, K. 2017. Rhetorical questions: severing questioning from asking. *SALT* 27: 302–322.
- Farkas, D. & Bruce, K. 2010. On reacting to assertions and polar questions. *Journal of Semantics* 27(1): 81–118.
- Farkas, D. & Roelofsen, F. 2017. Division of Labor in the Interpretation of Declaratives and Interrogatives. *Journal of Semantics* 34: 237–289.
- Farkas, D. & Roelofsen, F. 2019. Polarity particles revisited. *Semantics & Pragmatics* 12(15): 1–25.
- Frana, I. & Rawlins, K. 2019. Attitudes in discourse. *Semantics & Pragmatics* 12(16): 1–55.
- Gutzmann, Daniel and Hartmann, Katharina and Matthewson, Lisa. 2020. Verum focus is verum, not focus: crosslinguistic evidence. *Glossa* 5(1): 51.
- Jeong, Sunwoo. 2018. Intonation and sentence type conventions. *Journal of Semantics* 35(2): 305–356.
- Lewis, David. 1975. Adverbs of quantification. In *Formal semantics of natural language*, Cambridge, p3–15.
- Malamud, S. & Stephenson, T. 2015. Three ways to avoid commitments. *Journal of Semantics* 32: 275–311.
- Moens, M. & Steedman, M. 1988. Temporal ontology & temporal reference. *Computational Linguistics* 14(2).
- Murray, Sarah. 2014. Varieties of update. *Semantics & Pragmatics* 7(2): 1–53.
- Nakanishi, Kimiko. 2007. Measurement in the nominal and verbal domains. *Linguistics & Philosophy* 30.
- Nouwen, Rick. 2016. Plurality. In Aloni & Dekker (eds.) *The Cambridge Handbook of Formal Semantics*.
- Partee, Barbara. 1973. Some structural analogies between tenses and pronouns in English. *J Philosophy* 70(18).
- Rett, Jessica. 2014. *The polysemy of measurement*. *Lingua* 143: 242–266.
- Rett, Jessica. 2015. *The semantics of evaluativity*. Oxford.
- Rett, Jessica. 2024. Characterizing illocutionary content. *SALT* 34: 685–712.
- Schwarzschild, Roger. 2008. The semantics of comparatives and degree constructions. *Language and Linguistics Compass* 2(2): 308–331.
- Schwarzschild, Roger. 2011. Stubborn distributivity, multiparticipant nouns and the count/mass distinction. *NELS* 39: 661–678.