

August 29, 2007

SYLLABUS

## Linguistics 837: Advanced Studies in Semantics and Pragmatics

### 1 The Course

This course is two things at once:

- a continuation of LIN 437, expanding on the framework developed there and introducing more formal tools
- something like a (pro)seminar, in which you'll confront the literature and hopefully begin to do original research

### 2 Topics

This semester the course will focus on three broad topics:

- gradability and degree semantics
- indefinites
- conditionals, modals, and intensionality

### 3 Contact Information

Me: Marcin Morzycki  
Email: morzycki@msu.edu  
Office hours: 4:30–5:30 Tuesday and 2:30–3:30 Thursday  
or by appointment  
Office: A-634 Wells Hall

Email is your best bet for reaching me, and will generally also be fastest. If you must call, though, my office number is 355-5171. (Expect me to be distracted and disoriented.)

### 4 Requirements

The essential requirements for this course are:

- writing two squibs (very short papers); if you prefer, instead of the second squib you can write a more ambitious fully-worked-out term paper that builds on your first squib
- making two in-class presentations, corresponding to the two squibs
- participating vigorously in the discussion<sup>1</sup>
- doing a small number of assignments (1–2, probably)

Your final grade will be determined primarily on the basis of the squibs and your contributions in class (both in the presentations and more generally), weighted equally.

### 5 Textbooks

Much of what we read will be from the primary literature. But you should also get a copy of:

Gamut, L. T. F. 1990. *Logic, Language, and Meaning*.  
University of Chicago Press.

It comes in two volumes. You should get both. This is somewhere between a textbook and a reference work. We'll use it in class a bit, but it's particularly useful as a kind of handbook to have by one's side when reading semantics. It is quite sophisticated formally, which can make it pretty challenging in places.

For *purely* formal background, you might also be interested in this:

Partee, Barbara, Alice ter Meulen, and Robert Wall.  
1990. *Mathematical Methods in Linguistics*. Kluwer,  
Dordrecht.

---

<sup>1</sup>This is not syllabus window-dressing. This really is a requirement.

## 6 Tentative Schedule

This will probably not be the exact schedule we follow or for that matter the exact selection of topics and readings. It's just a rough roadmap. Adjustments will be made along the way.

- Aug. 29: logistics/intro  
direct vs. indirect interpretation  
propositional logic  
adjectives and degree semantics: a first look
- Sept. 5: quantified first-order predicate logic  
adjectives, gradability, vagueness:  
chapter 1 of Kennedy (1997)
- Sept. 12: properties of relations  
orders  
comparatives & AP structure:  
chapter 2 of Kennedy (1997)  
maybe also Heim (2000)
- Sept. 19: *Cancelled*
- Sept. 26: polar opposition & degrees:  
Kennedy (2001)  
scale structure:  
Kennedy & McNally (2005) or  
Kennedy & McNally (1999)
- Oct. 3: measure phrases and Vector Space Semantics:  
Faller (1998) (a shorter version of Faller 2000)  
maybe also Winter (2005)  
intensionality, modality, conditionals: a first look
- Oct. 10: modality: Kratzer (1981a)
- Oct. 17: conditionals: Lewis (1981) or Kratzer (1981b) (TBA)
- Oct. 24: squib presentations
- Oct. 31: propositional attitude ascriptions  
*de re* vs. *de dicto* vs. *de se* readings: Chierchia (1989)  
indefinites: a first look
- Nov. 7: File Change Semantics: Heim (1983)  
(or portions of Heim 1982)

- Nov. 14: Discourse Representation Theory (DRT):  
excerpt from Kadmon (2001)  
(or Kamp 1981 or excerpts from Kamp & Reyle 1993)
- Nov. 21: *Cancelled*
- Nov. 28: Dynamic Predicate Logic:  
excerpt from Chierchia (1995)
- Dec. 5: specific indefinites & choice functions:  
Matthewson (1998)
- Finals week: squib presentations

## References

- Chierchia, Gennaro. 1989. 'Anaphora and attitudes *De Se*'. In Renate Bartsch, Johan van Benthem, & Peter van Emde Boas (eds.), *Semantics and Contextual Expression*, pp. 1–31. Foris, Dordrecht.
- Chierchia, Gennaro. 1995. *Dynamics of Meaning*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Faller, Martina. 1998. 'A vector space semantics for dimensional adjectives'. In *ESSLLI 1998 Student Session Proceedings*.
- Faller, Martina. 2000. 'Dimensional adjectives and measure phrases in vector space semantics'. In M. Faller, S. Kaufmann, & M. Pauly (eds.), *Formalizing the Dynamics of Information*. CSLI Publications, Stanford.
- Heim, Irene. 1982. *The Semantics of Definite and Indefinite Noun Phrases*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Massachusetts Amherst.
- Heim, Irene. 1983. 'File Change Semantics and the familiarity theory of definiteness'. In Rainer Bäuerle, Christoph Schwarze, & Arnim von Stechow (eds.), *Meaning, Use and Interpretation of Language*, pp. 164–189. Walter de Gruyter, Berlin.
- Heim, Irene. 2000. 'Degree operators and scope'. In B. Jackson & T. Matthews (eds.), *Proceedings of Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT) 10*. CLC Publications, Ithaca, NY.
- Kadmon, Nirit. 2001. *Formal Pragmatics*. Blackwell Publishing, Malden, Massachusetts.
- Kamp, Hans. 1981. 'A theory of truth and semantic representation'. In Jeroen Groenendijk, Theo Janssen, & Martin Stokhof (eds.), *Formal Methods in the Study of Language, Part 1*, vol. 135, pp. 277–322. Mathematical Centre Tracts, Amsterdam. Reprinted

- in Jeroen Groenendijk, Theo Janssen and Martin Stokhof (eds), 1984, *Truth, Interpretation, and Information; Selected Papers from the Third Amsterdam Colloquium*, Foris, Dordrecht, pp. 1–41.
- Kamp, Hans & Uwe Reyle. 1993. *From Discourse to Logic: Introduction to Modeltheoretic Semantics in Natural Language, Formal Logic and Discourse Representation Theory*. Kluwer Academic, Dordrecht.
- Kennedy, Christopher. 1997. *Projecting the Adjective: The Syntax and Semantics of Gradability and Comparison*. Doctoral dissertation, UC Santa Cruz. Published in 1999 by Garland, New York.
- Kennedy, Christopher. 2001. ‘Polar opposition and the ontology of ‘degrees’’. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 24(1), 33–70.
- Kennedy, Christopher & Louise McNally. 1999. ‘From event structure to scale structure: Degree modification in deverbal adjectives’. In T. Mathews & D. Strolovitch (eds.), *Proceedings of Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT) 9*. CLC Publications, Ithaca, NY.
- Kennedy, Christopher & Louise McNally. 2005. ‘Scale structure, degree modification, and the semantics of gradable predicates’. *Language* 81(2), 345–381.
- Kratzer, Angelika. 1981a. ‘The notional category of modality’. In Hans-Jürgen Eikmeyer & Hannes Rieser (eds.), *Words, Worlds and Contexts*, pp. 38–74. Walter de Gruyter, Berlin. Reprinted in Partee & Portner (2002).
- Kratzer, Angelika. 1981b. ‘Partition and revision: The semantics of counterfactuals’. *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 10(2), 201–216.
- Lewis, David. 1981. ‘Ordering semantics and a premise semantics for counterfactuals’. *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 10(2), 217–234.
- Matthewson, Lisa. 1998. ‘On the interpretation of wide-scope indefinites’. *Natural Language Semantics* 7(1), 79–134.
- Partee, Barbara H. & Paul Portner (eds.). 2002. *Formal Semantics: The Essential Readings*. Blackwell Publishing, Oxford.
- Winter, Yoad. 2005. ‘Cross-categorial restrictions on measure phrase modification’. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 28(2), 233–267.