

Semantics 1 (Ling 53)

Fall 2019, MWF 9:20-10:25, Stevenson 175

Prerequisites: None

INSTRUCTOR **Tom Roberts** (he/him)
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Office Hours: Tues & Weds 11am-12pm and by appointment
Stevenson 238

TEACHING ASSTS. **Jack Duff** (he/him)
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Office Hours: Thurs 10-11am
Stevenson 265

Stephanie Rich (she/her)
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Office Hours: Thurs 12-1pm
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LSS TUTOR **Elissa Espinoza** (she/they)
egespino@ucsc.edu

Sections

Section	Day	Time	Location	TA
A	M	5:20-6:25pm	Stevenson 151	Jack
B	M	6:40-7:45pm	Stevenson 151	Jack
C	Tu	11:40am-12:45pm	Rachel Carson 242	Stephanie
D	Tu	5:20-6:25pm	Physical Sciences 130	Stephanie

1 Course description

The course is an introduction to the study of meaning in human language. We focus on the *semantics*, a speaker's knowledge of how linguistic meaning is constructed in their language, though to some extent we will also cover *pragmatics*, the rules that guide how

we use and understand language in actual communicative situations.

The goal will be to understand how together the semantic and pragmatic systems allow humans to communicate using language. We will do this within the framework of an explicit theory of linguistic meaning that makes use of logical languages.

In particular, we will investigate several aspects of the semantics of human language, focusing on English since that is the language we all share in the classroom, but with reference to (and exploration of) other languages along the way.

2 Course requirements

Your grade will be determined by weekly problem sets (9 total throughout the quarter) and section/lecture attendance as follows:

- Weekly problem sets: 85%
- Section/lecture attendance and participation: 15%

Attendance at weekly sections and lecture is **mandatory**. Lecture slides will be posted on Canvas after class, but they should not be considered a substitute for actually being in lecture.

2.1 Late work policy - Updated 10/16/19

Your lowest homework grade from the quarter will be dropped. In addition, **a maximum of one late homework with no penalty** will be accepted from each student. Thus, you can drop one homework and turn in another one late with no negative impact to your grade. Any additional late assignments will be marked down by 50% except by prior arrangement or in case of emergency. All late assignments must be turned in no later than **one week** after the original due date. However, not turning in two or more assignments besides the automatically dropped on **will result automatically in a failing grade for the course**. If you are experiencing health or other issues that you feel may interfere with timely completion of work, please let the instructor know so we can formulate a plan that will work for you. If you need accommodations due to a disability, see section 4.

2.2 Materials

There is no textbook for the course. All slides and supplemental materials will be made available on Canvas.

3 Collaboration & Academic Integrity

You are highly encouraged to work out the solutions to the weekly assignments with other students. However, the solution that you turn in must be written up entirely on your own. This means that, **if you work with other students, you may use their ideas in your work, but not their words.**

When you turn in an assignment, you must:

- at the top of the first page, either: (i) list the names of everybody you worked with, or (ii) if you worked entirely alone, write “No collaborators”
- make sure that the work you submit was written up by you alone
- make sure that your work is not copied by any other students

For the purposes of this class, you will not be asked to read outside material. If you do so, using what you have read in your assignment, you must acknowledge your source properly using proper academic citations.

If you do not follow these guidelines, you are in violation of policies on academic integrity. All incidents of suspected academic dishonesty (including copying someone else’s work or allowing them to copy your work) will be pursued and may result in a Report of Academic Misconduct being filed with the student’s provost. This can lead to disciplinary hearings with the Academic Tribunal. More information about these policies can be found here:

https://www.ue.ucsc.edu/academic_misconduct

4 Disability Accommodation

Any student who thinks they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to submit their Accommodation Authorization and discuss specific needs **within the first two weeks of the quarter**. Please contact the Disability Resource Center at 831-459-2089 in room 146 Hahn Student Services or by e-mail at drc@ucsc.edu to coordinate those accommodations.

5 Getting Help

We want to make sure that everyone in the course has access to the resources they need to make it a success. Here are some of those ways:

- **Lecture and Section:** You are always welcome—and in fact, encouraged—to ask questions during lecture and section!
- **LSS Tutor:** There will be an LSS Tutor for the class, Elissa Espinoza. Please contact her (egespino@ucsc.edu) for more information on LSS Tutoring.
- **Office Hours:** The instructor and TAs have designated office hours when any student can drop by. You are strongly encouraged to make use of this opportunity, whether you are having a problem in the course, just want to introduce yourself to the instructor, or need to ask a question in a one-on-one setting. If you are not able to attend an office hour, you can always make an appointment by email.
- **Email:** You are also more than welcome to ask questions of the instructor or TAs over email, and we will respond as quickly as we can (within reason). Email is best suited for questions which require only a short or limited answer. **Note:** We cannot guarantee a response to an email outside of normal business hours (weekdays 9-5), so keep in mind that last-minute emails the night before an assignment is due are unlikely to get a quick response.

6 Schedule

(updated 10/10/19; subject to revisions)

Week 0: Introduction

Syllabus, class overview, fundamental concepts

Week 1: Linguistic meaning

Ambiguity, hypernyms/hyponyms, truth-conditional viewing of meaning

Week 2: Sentence-level meaning

Entailment, implicature

Week 3: Kinds of Implicatures & entailments

Grice's maxims, scalar implicature, presupposition

Week 4: Propositional Logic

Sentential connectives, truth tables, logical systems

Week 5-6: Predicate Logic

Models, predicates/terms/variables, truth value derivations, Predicate Logic translations

Week 7-8: Quantification

Universal and existential quantifiers, scope ambiguities, assignment functions

Week 9: Lexical Semantics 1 - Adjectives

Classes of adjectives, gradability

Week 10: Lexical Semantics 2 - Nouns

Count/mass nouns, plurality, issues in lexical semantics, alternative frameworks