**Department:** Linguistics  
**Year:** 2019/20 Winter – Term 1  
**Course Title:** Ling 327: Introduction to Semantics  
**Course Schedule:** Tu/Th 3:30-5:00 PM  
**Location:** Chemical and Biological Engineering Building (CHBE), Room 103  
**Website:** There is a Canvas website for this course

**Instructor:** Hotze Rullmann  
**Office:** Totem Field Studios 128  
**E-mail:** hotze.rullmann@ubc.ca  
**Office hrs:** Mon 12-1 PM  
**Office hrs location:** Buchanan Tower (BUTO) 608

**Teaching Assistant:** Marianne Huijsmans  
**E-mail:** marianne.huijsmans@ubc.ca  
**Office hrs:** Thu 10-11 AM  
**Office hrs location:** Buchanan Tower (BUTO) 607

**Course description:** This course is about how “meaning” is expressed in language. After reviewing basic concepts such as reference and truth, and briefly discussing word senses (lexical semantics), we will turn to formal logic as used in the analysis of language, in particular sentential connectives (propositional logic) and quantifiers and variables (predicate logic). Unlike standard intro logic courses offered by departments such as philosophy, mathematics, or computer science, the emphasis will be on the translation and logical analysis of sentences of English (or other languages), as opposed to doing formal proofs. Building on logic, we will study the basics of the compositional semantics of natural language using set theory as our formal tool, and focusing especially on quantification and the semantics of nouns and noun phrases. The last part of the course will be devoted to aspects of meaning typically expressed by verbs and auxiliaries: modality, evidentiality, situation types, and tense and aspect. Note that in this course we will mostly stay away from the closely related area of pragmatics (language use in context), which is covered in a separate course, Ling 345. Students are strongly encouraged to take both Ling 327 and 345, but neither is a prerequisite for the other.

**Prerequisite (from calendar):** Ling 201 or permission from the instructor.

**Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of this course, it is anticipated that students will:

- understand, and be able to apply, foundational concepts of semantic theory
- use basic formal tools and techniques of semantics (propositional and predicate logic, and set theory), and apply them to the analysis of natural language
- translate English sentences into formulas of predicate logic (and vice versa)
- be familiar with, and be able to think critically about, some of the main semantic phenomena in natural languages (e.g., definiteness, scope, intensionality, modality, evidentiality, event types, tense, and aspect)
- be able to extract semantic generalizations from natural language data, and know how to formulate a testable hypothesis
- be able to reason and communicate effectively about semantic phenomena and theories, using appropriate linguistic terminology, and supporting their arguments with illustrative examples
Required reading:
- Class notes posted on the Canvas website.

Some additional recommended readings may be made available via the Canvas website

### Course requirements and percentage weight of final grade:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>participation / low stakes writing</td>
<td>10 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 in-class quizzes (10% each)</td>
<td>20 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 homework assignments (10% each)</td>
<td>20 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>term paper (group project)</td>
<td>20 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>final exam</td>
<td>30 %</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

For deadlines and other details, see the course schedule on the last page!

### Assessment, Evaluation, and Grading

**Participation / Low-Stakes Writing**
The participation / low-stakes writing component of the course requires you to:
- Read the assigned materials
- Participate in low-stakes in-class writing exercises
- Participate in discussions in class and/or on the Canvas website

Grading is based on (a) attendance; (b) participation in in-class activities and discussions; (c) participation in low-stakes in-class writing exercises; (d) activity in the discussion board on Canvas.

**Quizzes**
The two in-class quizzes will consist of logic problems and/or short-answer questions, and will take approximately 30 minutes of class time. Quizzes may contain material which is discussed in class but is not in the assigned readings.

There are no retakes of quizzes due to absence, except with a doctor’s note or for an extremely good reason which has been discussed with the instructor in advance. Missed quizzes without a valid excuse will receive a grade of 0 (zero).

**Assignments**
The two homework assignments will involve applications of theories and tools learned in class. They may include one or more essay questions. Some questions may involve gathering your own data from a language of your choice (English or another language you speak well). Each student has to work on their assignments independently. Unless we announce otherwise, assignments have to be handed in to the TA in **hard-copy** on the due date at the beginning of class (no electronic submission via e-mail or Canvas!).

Late assignments will result in a deduction of marks (we apply a penalty of 20 percentage points per day that the assignment is submitted after the due date), unless you have a valid, documented excuse (such as a doctor’s note).
Grading of the assignments is not only based on the content of your answer, but also on the quality of the writing, including (a) the clarity and coherence of the exposition; (b) use of appropriate and relevant evidence and arguments to support what is said; (c) the accuracy, insightfulness and originality of the answer; and (d) correct formatting, presentation of data, etc.

Term paper (group project)
You will work in groups of 3-4 students. Each group will choose a topic in any area of semantics covered in the course. You will research the topic and write a 6-8 page paper (double-spaced). You do not have to solve the issue; it is enough to present some interesting data and explain why the data pose a problem. Guidelines and tips on how to write the paper will be given during the semester. Each group will meet with the TA and/or the instructor at least once before November 14 to discuss your topic ideas. Attending this meeting will count towards your participation grade.

Grading is based on (a) the appropriateness and interest of your chosen topic; (b) evidence of having located and read appropriate literature, where available; (c) the clarity of the exposition; (d) use of appropriate and relevant data to support what is said; (e) the accuracy, insightfulness and originality of the proposals; (f) correct formatting, presentation of data, referencing, etc.

The final exam
The final exam will consist of a mix of short-answer questions, logic problems, and open-ended discussion questions. The exam questions will involve applications of theories and tools learned in class, and may require you to analyze data from English or another language that are provided in the question. The final exam is “cumulative” in the sense that it covers the whole course, and it may contain material which was discussed in class but is not in the textbook. Anything we covered during the semester is fair game.
A deferral of the final exam can only be obtained by requesting Academic Concession from Arts Academic Advising.

Other Policies and Resources

Academic concession
Students must contact me via e-mail as soon as you are aware you may need an in-term concession. We will adjudicate the request. Please include a Student Self-Declaration form, found on the Arts Advising website. If you require a second concession, you must make your request to your Faculty Advising Office.

Academic integrity and responsibility
As a member of this class, you are responsible for contributing to the course objectives through your participation in class activities and your written and other work and projects. In the process of coming into your own as an independent, responsible participant in the academic community, you are encouraged to seek advice, clarification, and guidance in your learning from your instructor and/or Teaching Assistant. If you decide to seek help beyond the resources of this course, you are responsible for ensuring that this help does not lead you to submit others’ work as your own. If an outside tutor or other person helps you, show this policy to your tutor or helper: make sure you both understand the limits of this person’s permissible contribution.

Academic communities depend on their members’ honesty and integrity in representing the sources of reasoning, claims, and wordings which appear in their work. Like any other member of the academic community, you will be held responsible for the accurate representation of your sources: the means by which you produced the work you are submitting. If you are found to have misrepresented your sources and to have submitted others’
work as your own, or to have submitted work for which you have already received credit in another course, penalties may follow. Your case may be forwarded to the Head of the department, who may decide that you should receive zero for the assignment. The Head will report your case to the Dean’s Office, where it will remain on file. The Head may decide, in consultation with your instructor, that a greater penalty is called for, and will forward your case to the Dean’s Office. After an interview in the Dean’s Office, your case may be forwarded to the President’s Advisory Committee on Academic Misconduct. Following a hearing in which you will be asked to account for your actions, the President may apply penalties including zero for the assignment; zero for the course; suspension from the university for a period ranging from 4 to 24 months; a notation on your permanent record. The penalty may be a combination of these.

Academic communities also depend on their members’ living up to the commitments they make. By enrolling in this course, you make commitments to an academic community: you are responsible for meeting deadlines; attending class and engaging in class activities; guaranteeing that the work you submit for this course has not already been submitted for credit in another course. If you find that you cannot meet a deadline or cannot participate in a course activity, discuss your situation with your instructor or TA before the deadline or before your absence.

For more information, see the UBC Calendar: http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,0

**Attendance**
The Calendar says: Regular attendance is expected of students in all their classes (including lectures, laboratories, tutorials, seminars, etc.). Students who neglect their academic work and assignments may be excluded from the final examinations. Students who are unavoidably absent because of illness or disability should report to their instructors on return to classes.

Specific for this course: Although class notes will be posted regularly on the website, this is not a substitute for class attendance. Coming to class and taking notes is crucial.

**Special accommodations**
The university accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with the Access & Diversity office (https://students.ubc.ca/about-student-services/centre-for-accessibility). The university also accommodates students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, submitting assignments, or completing scheduled tests and examinations. Please let me know in advance, preferably in the first week of class, if you will require any accommodation on these grounds. Students who plan to be absent for varsity athletics, family obligations, or other similar commitments, cannot assume they will be accommodated, and should discuss their commitments with the instructor before the drop date. If you experience medical, emotional, or personal problems that affect your attendance or academic performance for an extended period of time, you should discuss this with Arts Academic Advising (or your home Faculty’s Advising Office). I may require a note from Arts Academic Advising or a health care professional before I grant any accommodations (such as extending a due date).

**Communication and assistance**
You are encouraged to see the TA or the instructor during our office hours with any questions you might have concerning the course material. You can e-mail either of us to set up an individual appointment or to ask about some organizational matter. However, questions about class content can often be better answered in person. You should not assume that we can always answer e-mail on short notice (for instance, a day before an assignment is due).
Website
The text of the slides used in class will be posted on the Canvas website for the course, usually right after class. This is not in any way a substitute for class attendance, however. The quizzes and the final exam may contain questions about material that was discussed in class, but that is not on the website or in the textbook. Class attendance is therefore essential. The website may also be used for posting announcements and notices, and for online discussion.

Scaling
From the Calendar: Faculties, departments and schools reserve the right to scale grades in order to maintain equity among sections and conformity to university, faculty, department or school norms. Students should therefore note that an unofficial grade given by an instructor might be changed by the faculty, department or school. Grades are not official until they appear on a student's academic record.

Keeping copies of course work
Students should retain a copy of all submitted assignments and papers (in case of loss) and should also retain all their marked quizzes, assignments, midterm exams, and papers in case they wish to apply for a Review of Assigned Standing. Students have the right to view their marked final examinations with their instructor, provided they apply to do so within a month of receiving their final grades. This review is for pedagogic purposes. The final examination remains the property of the university.

Respectful environment and student code of conduct
It is very important that we foster an environment that is respectful of all participants in the course, no matter what their background. Students, faculty, and staff should be aware of the UBC president's Statement on Respectful Environment and related university policies. See this website for more information:
http://www.hr.ubc.ca/respectful-environment/
All students are also bound by UBC’s Student Code of Conduct:
https://students.ubc.ca/campus-life/student-code-conduct

Wellbeing
Being a university student can sometimes be stressful. If you are experiencing any sort of personal, psychological, medical or financial difficulties, I strongly encourage you to seek help at an early stage. There are many resources for students available on campus. The following page is a very useful guide for a wide variety of services related to your wellbeing:
https://students.ubc.ca/health-wellness
If someone you know is in distress, here is a place where you can find ways to help them:
https://students.ubc.ca/health-wellness/help-friend

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious and cultural observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available here (https://senate.ubc.ca/policies-resources-support-student-success)
# Course schedule (subject to change!)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MODULE I: Fundamentals</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sept. 5</td>
<td>Introduction: The meaning of “meaning”</td>
<td>Kroeger ch. 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sept. 10 &amp; 12</td>
<td>Basic concepts of semantics: reference, truth, compositionality</td>
<td>Kroeger ch. 2, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sept. 17</td>
<td>Word senses; Ambiguity, vagueness, indeterminacy</td>
<td>Kroeger ch. 5, 6 (selected parts)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MODULE II: Logic</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sept. 19</td>
<td>Logical inferences and arguments</td>
<td>Magnus ch. 1</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Sept. 24 &amp; 26</td>
<td>Connectives; truth tables</td>
<td>Magnus ch. 2, 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Oct. 1 &amp; 3</td>
<td>Predicates &amp; arguments; quantifiers &amp; variables</td>
<td>Magnus ch. 4.1-4.3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Oct. 3</td>
<td>QUIZ 1 (propositional logic)</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Oct. 8 &amp; 10</td>
<td>Multiple quantifiers; scope and binding</td>
<td>Magnus ch. 4.4-4.5</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Oct. 15-17</td>
<td>More translation practice; identity</td>
<td>Magnus ch. 4.6</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Oct. 17</td>
<td>QUIZ 2 (predicate logic)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MODULE III: Quantification and (in)definiteness</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Oct. 22 &amp; 24</td>
<td>Russell’s theory of definite descriptions; alternative accounts of definiteness</td>
<td>Magnus ch. 4.6</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Sets</td>
<td>Kroeger ch. 13.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Oct. 29 &amp; 31</td>
<td>Quantifiers in natural language; negative polarity and downward entailment</td>
<td>Kroeger ch. 14</td>
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<td>Oct. 31</td>
<td>ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE</td>
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<tr>
<td>MODULE IV: Intensionality and possible world semantics</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Nov. 5 &amp; 7</td>
<td>Intensionality; substitutivity; propositional attitudes and de re/de dicto ambiguity</td>
<td>Kroeger ch. 12, 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Nov. 12 &amp; 14</td>
<td>Modals; possible worlds; evidentiality</td>
<td>Kroeger ch. 16, 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>MODULE V: Tense and aspect</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Nov. 19 &amp; 21</td>
<td>Situation type and viewpoint aspect</td>
<td>Kroeger ch. 20</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Nov. 21</td>
<td>ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Nov. 26 &amp; 28</td>
<td>Tense; the perfect</td>
<td>Kroeger ch. 21, 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 6</td>
<td>TERM PAPER DUE</td>
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Exam period TBA FINAL EXAM

Course Drop/Withdrawal Dates: [http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,45,99,0](http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,45,99,0)