

Semantics II

Ecole Normale Supérieure
Department of Cognitive Studies
Fall 2020

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1 Lecture and TD times

Lecture Thursdays 2pm to 4pm, starting September 24. 29 rue d'Ulm ground floor, *salle séminaire du DEC*.

TD sessions TBA

2 Course description and prerequisites

This is the second module on natural language semantics offered at the Department of Cognitive Studies. We will cover advanced topics in semantics that weren't covered in Semantics I, and we will revisit topics from Semantics I under a new light. We will focus on the following broad topics.

- Quantification
- Dynamic and update semantics
- Intensional semantics: propositional attitudes, modals, conditionals
- Meaning beyond declaratives: questions and imperatives

Note that **Semantics I is a prerequisite for this course**. If you have not taken Semantics I but would like to take this course, you must contact the instructor as soon as possible to see if this is a possibility.

This course has a TD session. If you cannot attend the TD, you should contact the instructor as soon as possible.

3 Assessment

- a small number of homework assignments (4 or 5)
- discussion of primary readings in class
- term paper (8–16 pages)

4 Textbook and readings

This course does not have a textbook. We will mostly do primary readings from the literature, as well as handbook articles. These will be linked to on the course website.

5 Course website

All information about the course, lecture handouts and notes, readings, and homework assignments will be available on the course's website, details to come on the first day of class.

6 Course policies

Attendance Regular attendance and punctual at lectures are crucial to succeed in this course, and they are **mandatory** for all students registered for credit. This is important both for your individual success in this course, and for every other students' success. Keep in mind in particular that, by arriving late, you are jeopardizing your own but also your classmates' education by disrupting the flow of lectures.

Participation You are strongly encouraged to participate in lectures and in TD. This means asking deep and challenging questions, but also asking simple questions, asking for clarification, saying "I'm just not getting this, please explain it in some new way" or "I'm lost, can you remind me why we're talking about this?" **You can ask questions in French at any time.**

Contacting the instructor and TA Email is the best way to contact us when you have brief questions. Please include both of us in your email and allow us 24 hours to respond (longer on the weekends). We are available to meet by appointment or to chat informally in the hallway.

Homework All homework assignments are to be handed in **at the beginning of class** the day that they are due, in **hard copy**. If you cannot attend the lecture when an assignment is due you may send it by email to Émile, but (i) this cannot be done systematically and (ii) the same deadline applies as for hardcopies. You can write up your answers in French or in English (NB you will not lose points for grammatical mistakes!), and preferably type up your submission.

Discussing assignments with classmates You are allowed (and to some extent encouraged) to discuss homework assignments with your classmates. However two things are required if you engage in substantive discussions of solutions: (i) you must indicate in your write-up the names of classmates with which you discussed solutions in some depth, and (ii) you must write up your answers to the assignment by yourself. Under no circumstances are you to share typed-up answers to the assignments or to discuss the actual write-ups. Use this opportunity for collaboration with your classmates wisely: working with a classmate who is more comfortable than you on a particular topic can help you understand that topic better; working with a classmate who knows less than you about a particular topic can help you consolidate what you know and force you to reassess fundamental elements of your knowledge. But you should collaborate with classmates in very small groups that are relatively well balanced in terms of understanding of the material.

Academic honesty policy Cheating will not be tolerated and may cost you your grade as well as have deeper repercussions in your academic career. The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of what counts as cheating in this course: (i) signing on the attendance sheet without attending the class (e.g. signing and leaving, or signing for someone else); (ii) copying the homework write-up or the exam answers of another student, with or without that student's knowledge; (iii) copying elements of your solutions of exercises from sources in the literature without giving them due credit.

7 Tentative schedule

#	date	topics
1	September 24	<i>Quantification I</i> : Generalized quantifiers, virtues and challenges
2	October 1	<i>Quantification II</i> : Indefinites and scope
3	October 8	<i>Dynamics I</i> : Update semantics, first look at dynamic predicate logic
4	October 15	<i>Dynamics II</i> : Dynamic predicate logic
5	October 22	<i>Dynamics II</i> : Compositional dynamic semantics, incremental update semantics
6	November 5	Guest lecture on plural semantics TBC
7	November 12	<i>Questions of compositionality</i> : Superlatives
8	November 19	<i>Intensional semantics I</i> : Modals and conditionals
9	November 26	<i>Intensional semantics II</i> : Attitudes
10	December 3	<i>Intensional semantics III</i> : Puzzles of sense and reference
11	December 10	<i>Question semantics I</i> : The classics, from Hamblin to Groenendijk & Stokhof
12	December 17	<i>Question semantics II</i> : Inquisitive semantics
13	January 7	<i>Imperative semantics</i> : Modal approaches, hyperplans, and exotica
