

SYLLABUS

CODE

Welcome to Intro to Semantics!¹

I'm Julian Grove - I'm an assistant professor in the Linguistics Department (where this course is offered).

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(Check out the About page for more info about me and this site.)

The goals of this course are to acquaint you with the study of meaning in natural language; specifically, to equip you with a certain vocabulary of concepts, as well as a certain collection of theoretical and methodological tools. This vocabulary and these tools will allow you to:

- collect linguistic data and determine whether and how it is relevant to meaning;
- formulate and test hypotheses and theoretical claims about linguistic meaning; and
- approach questions about how linguistic meaning is situated within the broader scientific study of natural language and the human mind.

The first few weeks of the course will be more-or-less stage setting. Natural language semantics is a young field whose basic aims and guiding principles are somewhat in flux; so it will be useful to have this part of the course be dedicated to making these aims and principles fairly explicit. After these introductory weeks, we will get deep into the practice of doing semantics by focusing on a variety of empirical phenomena. The main acts will be verbs and their arguments, coordination, modification, anaphora, and quantification.

ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION

Come to class! Attendance won't be graded, but you're likely to do better in the course if you come than if you don't.

When you're here, participate! You'll get more out of the class if you do, and it'll be more fun.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

GRADING

Your work in this course will consist of nine (9) short written assignments—sometimes based on assigned readings—as well as an in-person final exam. Each written assignments will be a collection of responses to questions: some of these responses will have a mini-essay format, and some will be more like answers to problem sets (it'll be clear in any given case what the expectation is). Each assignment will be available on this site, at the end of the set of notes to which the assignment corresponds. Please turn in a physical copy of your responses at the beginning of the class on which the assignment is due.

The written assignments will be graded on a 5-point scale, using the following rubric:

- 5: you thoroughly engage with each question on the assignment. This means that you justify each of your responses, as well point out its implications, if appropriate. For example, if the truth of your response is likely to have any unintuitive consequences, you should note and explain these. Doing this well will sometimes be challenging and require you to think a lot.

If the assignment has questions requiring the application of analytical techniques that we have introduced in the course, “thorough engagement”, for current purposes, means applying these techniques in the right way.

- 4: you thoroughly engage with most, but not all, of the questions.
- 3: you thoroughly engage with only a small part of the assignment and give shallow or cursory answers to most of it.
- 2: you give shallow or cursory answers to all of the questions on the assignment.
- 1: you barely do the assignment.
- 0: you don't even barely do the assignment.

The written assignments will account for 90% of your grade, and the final exam, for 10%. The final will take place from 10am-12pm on December 10th (place TBD). It will be formatted similarly to the assignments.

The following grading scale will be used to determine course grades:

93.5 ≤ A ≤ 100	89.5 ≤ A- < 93.5	
86.5 ≤ B+ < 89.5	83.5 ≤ B < 86.5	79.5 ≤ B- < 83.5
76.5 ≤ C+ < 79.5	74.5 ≤ C < 76.5	69.5 ≤ C < 74.5

MISSED OR LATE WORK

Late work will not be accepted unless you've arranged with me beforehand. If you need an extension, ask for one—just do it prior to the due date. No extra credit, sorry.

ZULIP

There is a Zulip site for this course at uf-semantic-2025.zulipchat.com. We'll use it to host discussions of the course material. You can post (and answer!) questions there. I will chime in, as well.

UNIVERSITY HONESTY POLICY

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code." On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (policy.ufl.edu/regulation/4-040/) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

COUNSELING AND WELLNESS CENTER

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center:

- counseling.ufl.edu
- Phone: 352.392.1575

Contact information for the University Police Department:

- police.ufl.edu
- Phone: 352.392.1111

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352.392.8565, disability.ufl.edu) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

ACADEMIC POLICES AND RESOURCES

Available here:

- syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/

CALENDAR

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment
Fri., Aug. 22	Introduction	Frankfurt (1986); Hicks et al. (2024)	
Mon., Aug. 25	Convention	Lewis (1975) (pp. 3–10)	
Wed., Aug. 27	Convention	Grice (1957)	TBD
Fri., Aug. 29	Speech acts	Bach (2006b) (pp. 147–155)	
Wed., Sept. 3	Speech acts		
Fri., Sept. 5	Speaker meaning	Grice (1975)	
Mon., Sept. 8	Speaker meaning		
Wed., Sept 10	Diagnosing inference	Winter (2016) (Ch. 3, pp. 12–16)	

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment
Fri., Sept. 12	Diagnosing inference	Coppock and Champollion (2024) (Ch. 1, pp. 13–33; Ch. 8, pp. 323–330)	TBD
Mon., Sept. 15	Sets and set theory		
Wed., Sept. 17	Functions, relations, and languages		
Fri., Sept. 19	Models	Winter (2016) (Ch. 2, pp. 17–27)	TBD
Mon., Sept. 22	Arabic numeral arithmetic		
Wed., Sept. 24	Arabic numeral arithmetic		
Fri., Sept. 26	What should go into a theory of meaning?	Bach (2006a); Szabó (2020) (§§3–4)	
Mon., Sept. 29	Lambda notation and types	Winter (2016) (Ch. 3, pp. 44–64)	TBD
Wed., Oct. 1	Lambda notation and types	Winter (2016) (Ch. 3, pp. 64–72)	

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment
Fri., Oct. 3	Intransitive verbs		
Mon., Oct. 6	Intransitive verbs		
Wed., Oct. 8	Transitive verbs		
Fri., Oct. 10	Transitive verbs		TBD
Mon., Oct. 13	Applicative categorial grammar	Jurafsky and Martin (2025) (Appendix E)	
Wed., Oct. 15	Applicative categorial grammar		
Fri., Oct. 17	Grammars and models		
Mon., Oct. 20	Verbs and arguments redux		
Wed., Oct. 22	Verbs and arguments redux		TBD

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment
Fri., Oct. 24	Coordinators	Winter (2016) (Ch. 3, pp. 74–80)	
Mon., Oct. 27	Coordinators		
Wed., Oct. 29	Adjectives	Kennedy (2012)	
Fri., Oct. 31	Adjectives		
Mon., Nov. 3	Adjectives		TBD
Wed., Nov. 5	Pronouns		
Fri., Nov. 7	Pronouns		
Mon., Nov. 10	Pronouns		TBD
Wed., Nov. 12	Quantifiers	Winter (2016) (Ch. 4, pp. 99–108)	
Fri., Nov. 14	Quantifiers		

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment
Mon., Nov. 17	Quantifiers		TBD
Wed., Nov. 19	Negative polarity items		
Fri., Nov. 21	Quantifiers and binding		
Mon., Dec. 1	Quantifiers and binding		
Wed., Dec. 3	Quantifiers and binding		

REFERENCES

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- Bach, Kent. 2006b. "Speech Acts and Pragmatics." In *The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of Language*. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470757031.ch8>.
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- Frankfurt, Harry. 1986. "On Bullshit." *Raritan: A Quarterly Review Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey* 6 (2). <https://raritanquarterly.rutgers.edu/issue-index/all-articles/560-on-bullshit>.
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- Lewis, David K. 1975. "Languages and Language." In *Arguing about Language*, edited by Darragh Byrne and Max Kölbel. Arguing about Philosophy. Routledge.
- Szabó, Zoltán Gendler. 2020. "Compositionality." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Fall 2024, edited by Edward N. Zalta and Uri Nodelman. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2024/entries/compositionality/>.
- Winter, Yoad. 2016. *Elements of Formal Semantics*. Edinburgh Advanced Textbooks in Linguistics. Edinburgh University Press.

FOOTNOTES

1. Listed as both LIN4803 and LIN6804 at one.ufl.edu. ↩