

Modality and Possible World Semantics  
LIN 4930- 24BE; LIN6932-2573  
Spring 2019  
MWF 7<sup>th</sup> period (1:55-2:45)  
AND 21

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Office hours: MWF 6<sup>th</sup> period (12:50-1:40), or by appointment

Course website on E-Learning in Canvas: <http://elearning.ufl.edu>

### Course Description

There are two approaches to modality: pragmatic and semantic.

The pragmatic approach defines modality as a volitive property, concerned with the opinion of the speaker, their attitude, wishes, desires, intentions, and the like.

The semantic approach of modality adopts the analysis proposed in modal logic, and thus suggests a more general definition for modality, showing volitives to be only a subcategory of modals. According to modal logic, modal sentences involve operator of necessity or possibility, analyzed in terms of possible worlds.

The pragmatic approach is not the aim of the course but it will be discussed briefly, to acquaint the students with the approach and enable them to read the literature. The goal of the course, however, is mainly the semantic (logical) approach of modality. Thus, students are expected to be familiar with basic notions of classical logic: set theory, propositional logic and predicate calculus.

Natural languages have different devices to express the different kinds of modality: lexicals (e.g., English uses modals such as “may,” “must” and “will”), verb morphology (e.g., French uses the subjunctive), clitics (as in Luiseño), etc. Since the course is meant to provide a semantic account for modality, regardless of how it is encoded in language, it will not deal with the different devices but only illustrate them.

The course will be divided into two parts. The first part will deal with the key notions of modality and discuss the state of the art. The second part will be conducted like a seminar. Students will choose a number of issues to discuss in depth.

**Pre-requisites:** LIN 4803 or LIN 6804, or a logics course, or permission of instructor.

**Texts:** See “List of readings.”

### Course requirements and grading:

#### Undergraduates

<i>Homework</i>	7 x 5% = 35%
<i>In class Exam</i>	20%
<i>Take-home Exam</i>	30%
<i>Term paper OR Presenting an article</i>	15%

#### Graduates

<i>Homework</i>	7 x 5% = 35%
<i>In class Exam</i>	20%
<i>Take-home Exam</i>	26%
<i>Presenting an article</i>	7%
<i>Term paper</i>	12%

*Homework* will not be graded but only given a pass/fail check. In order to pass, each assignment must be completed and its lower grade should be a D, i.e., at least 60% of the assignment should be good. For each failing or unsubmitted homework assignment, your grade will be lowered by 5%.

Homework exercises are to be typed and printed out neatly. Staple multiple sheets together and put your name on it. Please write in complete sentences and complete thoughts. H/W assignments are due in class on the date stated on the syllabus. We will typically discuss the homework in class, so late homework cannot be accepted. If you are not in class when homework assignments are handed back, it is your responsibility to get your work from the instructor.

You may discuss the problems with other members of this class section only. You must write up your solutions entirely on your own, without help, in accordance with the Honor Code: <http://www.chem.ufl.edu/~itl/honor.html>

*The exams* are not cumulative except to the extent that the material builds on itself and you cannot control the more complex concepts without first getting the more basic ones. There is no final exam. There will be no make-up exams without a documented medical excuse.

*A term paper* is a conference-style paper, to be presented in class weeks 14, 15.

The paper (10+ pages) and oral presentation (10-15 minutes, plus questions) will constitute 12% of the final grade (6% for the written part and 6% for the presentation). Topics must be approved by week 13. All papers due by April 22nd.

Students may choose a theoretical topic to investigate or look into some local devices, e.g., analyzing modal expressions in English or the subjunctive in French.

#### *Presenting an article*

You can choose one of the articles listed in this syllabus or an article you find in the literature. Your presentation should be in such a way that the audience (the instructor and the students) will understand all of the issues the article discusses that you choose to present. Engage the students in your presentation, maybe by preparing questions or suggesting intriguing ideas. Students have to coordinate with instructor when they present their article.

#### *Attendance and participation*

Attendance and participation are essential. You are unlikely to succeed in this course without coming to class and paying attention. The material on the exams will come from the texts but also from what we do in class. Lecture notes and the texts will not always coincide.

Each student will be allowed 3 absences without penalty. After that, one point will be deducted from the final grade for every non-excused absence. Showing up later or leaving earlier is considered ½ absences.

**Cell Phone Policy:** Cell phones should be switched off for class. If you need it on for a specific class (because of a family medical emergency, for example) please notify me before class and sit near the door.

*Note:* There will be no extra credit work to help raise your grade; please do not ask. The best strategy is to do the best work you are capable of on the assigned work (exams, homework, presentation, etc.).

The course grading scale is below. Further information about UF's grading policies can be found at:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-
93 or above	90-92.9	87-89.9	83-86.9	80-82.9	77-79.9	73-76.9	70-72.9
D+	D	D-	E				
67-69.9	63-66.9	60-62.9	59.9 or below				

#### Other Information:

Honor Code: <http://www.chem.ufl.edu/~itl/honor.html>

Disabilities: <http://www.chem.ufl.edu/~itl/disabilities.html>

Counseling: <http://www.chem.ufl.edu/~itl/counseling.html>

## **Schedule (subject to changes according to class progress):**

### **Week 1: Jan 7, 9 and 11**

Course overview and introduction; Pragmatic vs. semantic definition of modality

**Read:** Palmer (1986) or (2001), Chapter 1.

### **Week 2: Jan 14, 16 and 18**

The modal operators

### **Week 3: Jan 23 and 25 Note: Jan 21 is MLK Day - no classes**

Kinds of Modality: Logical, Epistemic and Deontic

Read Kearns (2011), sections 5.1

**HW1 (F)**

### **Week 4: Jan 28 and 30, Feb 2**

Modality and Possible Worlds

Read Kearns (2011), sections 5.2

**HW2 (F)**

### **Week 5: Feb 4, 6, 8**

Counterfactuals

Read Kearns (2011), section 5.3

**HW3 (F)**

### **Week 6: Feb 11, 13, 15**

Conditionals

Read Heim (1982), Pp. 91-9, 168-95.

**HW4 (F)**

### **Week 7: Feb 18, 20, 22**

The Future

Read McCawley (1993 [1981]), Section 11.3, mainly pp. 342-44.

**HW5 (F)**

### **Week 8: Feb 25, 27, March 1**

Generics and Habituals

Read: Dahl (1975)

**HW6 (F)**

### **Week 9: March 4, 6, 8: Spring Break – No classes**

### **Week 10: March 11, 13, 15**

Generics and Habituals (cont.)

Read: Boneh & Doron (2013)

**HW7 (F)**

### **Week 11: March 18, 20, 22**

**Review (W) In-Class Test (F)**

### **Week 12: March 25, 27, 29**

**The second part of the course starting. Topics depend on class decision.**

Read

### **Week 13: April 1, 3, 5**

Read

### **Week 14: April 8, 10, 12**

Read

### **Week 15: April 15, 17 (Note: April 19 is Passover Eve – class cancelled)**

Read

### **Week 16: April 22 and 24**

**4/22: Review and Take-home Test**

The test sheet will be given by instructor on 4/22 at the end of the class and be submitted by students at the beginning of the class on 4/24.

## COMPLEMENTARY READING

- Aristotle. *The Organon: On Interpretation*. Chapter 9.
- Boneh, N. and E. Doron. 2008a. 'Habituality and the habitual aspect', in S. Rothstein (ed.), *Theoretical and Crosslinguistic Approaches to the Semantics of Aspect*. (Amsterdam). 321-347.
- 2008b. 'Deux Concepts d'Habitualité' *Recherches Linguistiques de Vincennes* 37, 113-138. (Saint-Denis)
- 2010. 'Modal and Temporal Aspects of Habituality', in M. Rappaport-Hovav, E. Doron, and I. Sichel (eds.), *Syntax, Lexical Semantics, and Event Structure*. (Oxford). 338-362.
- 2013. 'Hab and Gen in the Expression of Habituality', in C. Beyssade, M. Alda. And F. del Prete (eds.), *Genericity*. (Oxford). 176-91.
- Carlson, G. N. 1980. Reference to kinds in English. Rev. version of author's thesis, U. of Mass., Amherst, 1977, New York and London: Garland Pub. Pp. 1-5, 33-55, 57-103.
- Dahl, Östen. 1975. "On Generics." In: E. Keenan (ed.), *Formal Semantics of natural language*. Pp. 99-111.
- Davidson, Donald & Gilbert Harman. 1972. *Semantics of Natural Language*. Dordrecht: Reidel. Pp. 253-355.
- Dowty, David, Robert E. Wall & Stanley Peters. 1981. *Introduction to Montague Semantics*. Dordrecht; Reidel. Chapter 5.
- Enç, Mürvet. 1996. "Tense and Modality." In: Shalom Lappin (ed.), *The handbook of Contemporary Semantic Theory*. Oxford and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell.
- Fintel, Kai von & Heim, Irene. *Intensional Semantics; Lecture Notes*. MIT Spring 2005/2007.
- Heim, Irene. 1982. *The Semantics of Definite and Indefinite Noun Phrases*. Thesis (Ph.D.)--University of Massachusetts.
- Huges, G. & M. J. Cresswell. 1968. *Introduction to Modal Logic*. London: Methuen.
- Kearns, Kate. *Semantics*. 2000. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Chapter 5.
- Kratzer, A.** 1977. 'What "Must" and "Can" Must and Can Mean', *Linguistics and Philosophy* 1, 337-55. Reprinted with introduction in Kratzer (2013 [2012]). 1-26
- 1981a. 'Blurred Conditionals', in W. Klein and W. Levelt (eds), *Crossing the Boundaries in Linguistics* (Dordrecht). 201-9
- 1981b. 'The Notional Category of Modality', in H. J. Eikmeyer, and H. Reiser (eds.), *Words, Worlds and Context* (Berlin and New York). 38-74. Reprinted with introduction in Kratzer (2013 [2012]). 27-69
- 1981c. 'Partition and Revision: The Semantics of Counterfactuals', *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 10, 201-216. Reprinted with introduction in Kratzer (2013 [2012]). 70-84
- 1991. 'Conditionals', in A. con Stechow and D. Wunderlich (eds.), *Handbuch Semantik/Handout Semantics*. (Berlin and New York). 651-6. Reprinted with introduction in Kratzer (2013 [2012]). 85-108
- 2013 [2012]. *Modals and Conditionals*. (Oxford)
- 1995. 'Stage-level and Individual-level predicates.' In: Carlson G.N. and F. J. Pelletier (eds.), *The generic book*, Chicago and London: The university of Chicago press. Pp. 125-175.
- Krifka, Manfred, Francis Jeffry Pelletier, Gregory N. Carlson, Alice ter Meulen, Godhard Link, and Gennaro Chierchia. 1995. "Generic: An Introduction." In: Carlson, G. N. & F. J. Pelletier (eds.), *The generic Book*. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago press. Pp. 1-124.
- Kripke, Saul. 1972. *Naming and Necessity*. Pp. 15-20. Appears also in (11) below.
- Lewis, David. 1973/2005. *Counterfactuals*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP.
- Lyons, John. 1977. *Semantics*. Cambridge: CUP. Section 6.5 and Chapters 16-17.
- McCawley, James D. 1993 [1981]. *Everything that linguists have always wanted to know about logic but were ashamed to ask*. Chicago, university of Chicago press. Chapter 10; Section 11.3, p. 342; Section 14.3, pp. 442-7.
- Palmer, F. R. 1986. *Mood and Modality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Palmer, F. R. 1990. *Modality and the English Modals*. New York: Longman.
- Palmer, F. R. 2001. *Mood and Modality*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Platteau, Frank. 1979. "Definite and Indefinite Generics." In: Johan der Auwera (ed.), *The semantics of Determiners*. Pp. 112-123.
- Portner, Paul. 2009. *Modality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Portner, Paul. 2018. *Mood*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Prior, Arthur. 1967. *Past, Present and Future*. Oxford; OUP. Pp. 27-29.
- Thomason, R. H. 1970. "Intermediate Time and Truth Value Gaps." *Theoria* 18:3, 265-81.
- Thomason, R. H. 1983. "Conditionals, Time and Causal Independence." (ms.)