



## LING 53 Semantics I

Tue & Thu 1:00 – 4:30 PM

Engineering 2 Room 194

Syllabus, updated on Aug 7th, 2024

**Description** The course is an introduction to the study of meaning in natural language. We will focus on *semantics*, a speaker’s knowledge of sentence meaning and how it is formed. 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.

There are no prerequisites for this course. The main work for the class involves weekly assignments and a final exam. There is no textbook.

**Objectives** By the end of this course, we expect you to be able to

- identify different types of meaning and how they work together in communication
- identify the model-theoretic meaning of individual parts of a sentence
- Use formal language tools to describe natural language meaning

### Instruction team & office hours

Instructor *Yaqing Cao* Fri 10 -11 AM (Office Hour)

Teaching Assistants *Yağmur Kiper* Wed 9 – 10 AM (Office Hour)

### Grade components

Homework x 7 70%

Final Exam 20%

Participation 10%

### Homework (70%)

- There are 7 homework assignments.
- All assignments are due on **Tuesdays/Thursdays** and will be made available after class roughly a week before their due dates.

### Final Exam (20%)

- A take-home final exam will be made available on Canvas in Week 10.
- It will be due in the Exam Week, Sunday, September 1st at 6:00 pm on Canvas.

### **Late-work Policies**

We plan on providing feedback on every homework assignment. To help us do that, please make sure to submit your assignments on time.

If there are unforeseeable emergencies, you must get in touch with the instructor as soon as possible to request an extension of any deadline to avoid the late penalty. In general, we advocate that you submit something, however imperfect, over nothing.

### **Weekly schedule**

#### *Weeks 1 Tuesday:*

1. Intro
2. Fundamental Meaning Questions
3. Truth Conditions

#### *Weeks 1 Thursday:*

4. Sets
5. Propositional Logic
6. Constituency Tests

#### *Weeks 2 Tuesday:*

7. Composition and Function I
8. Composition and Function II

#### *Weeks 2 Thursday:*

9. Model and Type
10. Review I

#### *Weeks 3 Tuesday:*

11. Definite Expressions
12. Plural I

*Weeks 3 Thursday:*

13. Plural II

*Weeks 4 Tuesday:*

14. Numerals and counting

*Weeks 4 Thursday:*

15. Quantifier I
16. Quantifier II

*Weeks 5 Tuesday:*

1. Scope
2. Scope ambiguity

*Weeks 5 Thursday:*

3. Presupposition
4. Scalar Implicature
5. Quantifiers Revisited