

Ling 802: Semantics
Fall 2011
Syllabus

<u>Instructor</u>	Nancy Hedberg
<u>Office</u>	RCB 9211.
<u>Telephone</u>	778-782-3479; email: hedberg@sfu.ca , website: www.sfu.ca/~hedberg
<u>Office Hours</u>	Wednesday, Friday: 11:30-12:20
<u>Lectures</u>	Wednesday, Friday: 12:30-2:20. RCB 7201
<u>Prerequisites</u>	NONE

Course Description

This will be a course that teaches the foundations of formal, compositional, logical, truth-conditional semantics, covering topics such as predicate-argument structure, relative clauses, quantification, bound-variable and e-type anaphora, presuppositions associated with definite descriptions and universal quantifier phrases, and intensional semantics. Formal pragmatics will also be touched upon.

At the same time, however, we will compare this approach with other approaches to semantics in current linguistics, notably cognitive semantics. To that end, we will read papers by Goldberg, van Hoek, and Fauconnier, which fit into the topics of the formal semantics work. Papers by Adele Goldberg and Gregory Ward will prepare students for the WECOL conference that SFU is hosting in November. Attendance at that conference will be mandatory. Students should strive to listen to the lectures by Gregory Ward and Adele Goldberg since we will be reading works by those authors during class.

Finally, as a third approach, sharing aspects of each of the other two, we will look at the internalist approach to semantics advocated by followers of Noam Chomsky. This biolinguistics approach advocates compositional semantics as well as a modular account of the relation between syntax and semantics, but rejects the externalist point of view. We will compare all three approaches with regard to how they view the role of truth and reference in explaining linguistic semantics.

Students will be free to write their papers within any of the approaches.

Required Reading

Textbook: Heim, Irena and Angelika Kratzer (1998). *Semantics in Generative Grammar*. Blackwell.

Readings: In addition a number of readings will be made available on the web or by email.

Course Web Site:

Students are responsible for checking the instructor's website for announcements and information. Copies of the overhead slides will be available on the instructor's website.

SFU Policies:

SFU standards for academic honesty must be followed at all times. See the following SFU code of academic honesty, and academic dishonesty and misconduct procedures:
<http://www.sfu.ca/policies/teaching/index.htm>

SFU standards for ethical conduct of research must be followed. See the following SFU ethics review of research involving human subjects policy:
<http://www.sfu.ca/policies/research/r20-01.htm>.

Grading

Assignments	40%
Critical presentation of a reading	15%
Final paper (15-20 page double-spaced)	45%

Students will be evaluate partly on the basis of frequent assignments to be turned in and graded. In addition, each student will be responsible for teaching a half-hour segment of the course, on topics related to cognitive semantics. This will take place on days that the instructor is traveling and won't be in class (Sept. 23, Nov. 23, and Nov. 25). Students will turn in their slides and write up a 4-5 double-spaced report on what they taught, how the other students reacted and what they themselves think of the reading.

Grades on reports, exams and presentations will be based on objective criteria guided by qualitative judgment, according to the following scale. Letter grades will be assigned to each project along with a percentage score, with the basic percentage for a given letter grade constituting the middle percentage in the percentage range. It is expected that written work (including presentation audio-visual aids) will exhibit clear, concise, and logical argumentation in proper academic English. Final course letter grades will be computed from total percentage scores on the basis of the same scale.

96-100	A+	66-70	C+
91-95	A <i>Excellent</i>	61-65	C <i>Satisfactory</i>
86-90	A-	56-60	C-
81-85	B+	51-55	D <i>Poor</i>
76-80	B <i>Good</i>	0-50	F <i>Fail</i>
71-75	B-		

Students requiring accommodations as a result of a disability must contact the Centre for Students with Disabilities (778-782-3112 or email to csdo@sfu.ca).