

# LING 3505 A / PHIL 3506 A

## Semantics

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<b>Office hours:</b>	T 15:00-16:00	<b>Office:</b>	
<b>Class time:</b>	Th 18:05 - 20:55	<b>Classroom:</b>	C264 Loeb Building

## 1 Course outline

This is an introductory course in formal semantics. We will examine how natural languages encode meaning and how we as speakers use them to convey it. We will analyze a wide variety of empirical phenomena that modern theories of semantics are designed to model. Here are some of the questions we will be addressing throughout the course:

- What is natural language meaning?
- How do meanings of sentences come about?
- How do we analyze the meaning of words?
- What kinds of meanings are there?
- How can we model what we know when we know “meaning” in a language?

By the end of this course, you will:

- have an understanding of the complexities of natural language meaning;
- be able to provide a basic compositional analysis of the meaning of natural linguistic expressions;
- have a basic understanding of the lexical semantics of verbs, adjectives, nouns, and adverbs;
- have an understanding of the different ways in which we can think about “meaning”.

This is a high-engagement class that aims to expand students' problem solving skills and logical reasoning strategies. Students are expected to actively engage in class discussions. You will learn semantics by *doing* semantics: you will discover semantic puzzles and analyze them as a class. You will benefit most in this class by engaging in the logical steps taken to reach the conclusion, not by just memorizing the conclusion. This also means that you will not be simply replicating class material on homework assignments and exams: you will be expected to apply the knowledge from class to new problems and produce novel analyses.

## 2 Prerequisites and preclusions

- This course precludes additional credit for LALS 3505 (no longer offered ).
- The prerequisites for this class are: third-year standing, and one of LING 1001, PHIL 2001, PHIL 2504/LING 2504/COMM 2504 or PHIL 3504/LING 3504, or permission of the Department of Philosophy or School of Linguistics and Language Studies.

## 3 Textbook

Here's the required textbook:

Kearns, Kate (2011). *Semantics*. Palgrave, 2nd edition.

It's available at the Carleton bookstore. As a general rule you don't have to bring it to class; I'll let you know if you'll need it for a particular lecture.

Note that reading the textbook is NOT a substitute for coming to class. Reading the textbook is definitely not a substitute for coming to class. Lecture will sometimes cover material that is not in the textbook. While attendance is not taken, it is still integral to your success in this class.

The following is a recommended book for this class. You don't have to get it, but I personally think it's a nice little introduction to formal semantics:

Bach, E. (1989). *Informal lectures on formal semantics*. Suny Press.

It's unfortunately out of print so you won't find a crap ton of copies on Amazon or anything, but you can find used copies.

## 4 Evaluation

You will be graded on the accuracy of your analyses, the logicalness of the reasoning in your argumentation, and the depth and thoughtfulness of your discussion of data/analyses. You will be assessed via problem sets (homework) and exams. Here is the weight of each type of assessment for grade calculation purposes, as well as the scale used for assigning grades.

4 Problem Sets	(10% each)	40%	90-100	A+	67-69	C+
1 Midterm Exam		30%	85-89	A	63-66	C
1 Final Exam		30%	80-84	A-	60-62	C-
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TOTAL		100%				
			77-79	B+	57-59	D+
			73-76	B	53-56	D
			70-72	B-	50-52	D-
					0-49	F

Excepting the final exam, you will get graded assessments back in class or receive feedback via cuLearn. You are not graded on attendance or participation, but participating in class discussions will be integral to your success in this class.

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

## 5 Course Policies

### 5.1 General guidelines

- Homework is due on the due date indicated on the schedule. No exceptions.
- Late work is not accepted. No exceptions.
- Academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, is not tolerated. Carleton University's academic integrity policy, including definitions and potential penalties, can be found at: <http://www2.carleton.ca/studentaffairs/academic-integrity>. See "Plagiarism" below.
- Make-up exams will be allowed only for university-approved reasons. You must let me know any exam conflicts as soon as possible. See "Requests for academic accommodations" below.

### 5.2 Plagiarism

The University Senate defines plagiarism as "presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own." This can include, but is not limited to:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgement in any academic assignment;
- using another's data for research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs."

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course. Note that willingly allowing someone to plagiarize your answers is also considered a form of cheating, and will have equally serious consequences.

### 5.3 Requests for academic accommodations

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

- *Pregnancy obligation:* write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the Student Guide at <http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/academic/students/>.
- *Religious obligation:* write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the Student Guide at <http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/academic/students/>.
- *Academic accommodations for students with disabilities:* The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

### 5.4 Homework

- Homework assignments will be posted on cuLearn as a PDF file. Please print it and handwrite your answers on it. Please do not type answers or turn in answers on a separate sheet of paper.
- Homework assignments are always due at the beginning of class on the due date indicated on the schedule. No exceptions.
- There are 4 (four) assignments total. Each one is worth 10% of your entire grade.
- Homework is individual work. Discussion of problems with your classmates is fine, but copying answers from a classmate and letting a classmate copy your answers are both forms of cheating. Don't cheat. Please submit your own work.

## 5.5 Exams

There will be 2 (two) exams: a midterm exam and a final exam. The midterm will cover material from the first half of the course, and the final will cover material from the entire course (i.e., it's cumulative). Each exam is worth 30% of your grade.

## 5.6 cuLearn

Here are the things you will find on cuLearn:

- Class announcements (sometimes includes HW tips)
- Syllabus
- Homework assignments
- Class handouts (handouts will be posted AFTER class)
- Extra practice/exercises (with answer key)

Class handouts are to be used for personal studying purposes only, and they are NOT to be distributed or shared with individuals outside of this course.

## 5.7 Office hours and communication

- E-mail correspondence and office visits (with both the TA and the instructor) are very strongly encouraged. If the office hours listed above do not work for your schedule, please make an appointment via e-mail.
- You can generally e-mail the TA or the instructor with questions about the course (including questions about the class content or homework), but “bureaucratic” type questions (e.g., about emergencies, exam deferrals, enrolment issues, attendance, etc.) should be addressed to the course instructor.
- Check your Carleton e-mail often. Important announcements, including deadline reminders and HW hints, will be sent to your Carleton e-mail via cuLearn.
- You are encouraged to ask questions in class. If you do not understand something, please ask! You should of course ask if you're confused about the lecture content, but please also tell me if I say something in American English and you don't understand what I mean. In fact, please proactively point it out if I say something that Canadian English speakers don't say, even if you understand me!
- If you are struggling to keep up with the class content or are otherwise having issues (e.g., emergencies beyond your control), you need to let me (Ai) know AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. Don't wait until after a due date to do this, and definitely don't wait until the end of the term to do this! I'm happy to help, but you need to let me know in a timely manner.

## 6 Schedule

✓ = Assignment posted on cuLearn

⊖ = Assignment due

△ = Exam

Note: The listed readings are readings to be discussed in class, that day. Make sure you do the readings *before* coming to class. The only exception is the first week of classes; make sure you read Chapter 1 by the end of that week.

CLASS	READINGS
1/11 Modeling natural language meaning Extensions Pragmatics ✓ Assignment 1 posted	Chapter 1
1/18 Propositional Logic Predicate Logic	Chapter 2
1/25 Logical quantifiers ✓ Assignment 2 posted ⊖ Assignment 1 DUE	Chapter 3
2/1 Functions, types, and lambda calculus	Chapter 4
2/8 More lambdas Modification ⊖ Assignment 2 DUE	Chapter 4
2/15 Quantifiers in lambda calculus Review and exercises	
2/22 NO CLASS - WINTER BREAK	

CLASS	READINGS
3/1  <div style="text-align: center;">             △ MIDTERM              ✓ Assignment 3 posted           </div>	
3/8 Quantification	Chapter 6
3/15 Events  <div style="text-align: center;">             ⊕ Assignment 3 DUE              ✓ Assignment 4 posted           </div>	Chapter 8
3/22 Tense and aspect	Chapter 9
3/29 Modality and possible worlds  <div style="text-align: center;">             ⊕ Assignment 4 DUE           </div>	Chapter 5
4/5 Definite descriptions Review and exercises	Chapter 7

△ **FINAL EXAM:** Date, location, and time TBA (it will be during scheduled exam period)