

Syllabus: LING-UA 4 Introduction to Semantics

New York University, Fall 2017

Up to date as of February 8, 2018

Course

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11AM-12:15PM
Room 104, Department of Linguistics, 10 Washington Place

Professor Lucas Champollion

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Office hours: by appointment (room 404, 10 Washington Place)

Recitations

LING-UA 4.001

Thursdays, 4:55PM–6:10PM

Room 403, Silver Center for Arts and Science (31 Washington Pl)

Masha Esipova

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Office hours: Thursdays, 12:30–2:30PM and by appointment (room 407, 10 Washington Place)

Required textbook

What is meaning, 3rd edition, by Paul Portner, ISBN: 978-1405109185

We will occasionally assign readings from other sources, which will be uploaded to NYU Classes.

Course description

Focuses on the compositional semantics of sentences. Introduces basic set theory and logic. Investigates the empirical linguistic issues of predicates, modifiers, reference, quantifiers, intensionality, tense, aspect, modality, propositional attitudes, presuppositions, implicatures, topic, focus, and indexicals.

Prerequisites

Language (LING-UA 1), or Language and Mind (LING-UA 28), or Logic (PHIL-UA 70), or permission of the instructor.

Workload and grade calculation

60% Homework. There will be a small homework assignment due almost every week. The homeworks will be submitted and returned electronically via NYU Classes. The homeworks must be typed and in pdf format. **Late submissions will not be accepted** except due to religious holidays (see below). The two lowest homework grades will be dropped.

20% Midterm. Tests are in-class. The dates for both the midterm and the final are fixed (see below). Please schedule your other obligations around these dates, because **there will be no make-up tests** except if necessitated by religious holidays (see below).

20% Final. See “Midterm” above.

Your letter grade for the class will be assigned on the following scale.

A	95–100%	B	83–86%	C	73–76%	D	63–66%
A–	90–94%	B–	80–82%	C–	70–72%	F	0–62%
B+	87–89%	C+	77–79%	D+	67–69%		

Fractional grades will be truncated down to the nearest integer (e.g. 94.7 is truncated to 94).

Policies and other remarks

Attendance policy. We know that you are serious students but that you are also adults who budget time between coursework, jobs, personal/family commitments, and unforeseen circumstances. Because of this, you are not required to attend class, and there is no participation component of the grade. However, as in any course, you will do best if you come to class every time and on time.

Extra credit. Midterm and final may or may not include some extra credit questions, worth up to an additional 5% of each test grade. Homework assignments may or may not occasionally have extra credit questions. There may or may not be an entire homework towards the end of the course that is more challenging than the others and that counts as extra credit in its entirety. Extra credit is an equal opportunity for everyone in the class to improve their grades, so it will not be issued to individual students upon request. If you want some grade security, we suggest doing all the homework assignments and not missing class.

How to contact us. The best way is by e-mail (see above for our e-mail addresses), or talk to us right before or right after class. We will also be happy to meet you by appointment.

Personal situations. If anything arises during the semester that may affect your classroom performance, please come talk to us. If you wait until the end of the semester, we won't be able to help you. We're more likely to be able to address the situation if you speak to us when it happens. If something catastrophic happens in your life that prevents you from continuing your studies for an extended period of time, you should talk to the Dean of Students (currently Dean Kalb, richard.kalb@nyu.edu).

Special needs. If you have a diagnosed disability that requires special accommodations, please bring your paperwork to class and talk to us.

Religious observance. Whenever feasible, we will avoid scheduling exams and deadlines on religious holidays (please let us know if we have overlooked one). If you anticipate being absent because of any religious observance, you should tell us in advance whenever possible. If you are unable to attend class because of your documented religious beliefs, you will not be penalized for any class, recitation, exam, or assignment deadline missed on that day or days, and you will be given a make-up exam or an assignment deadline extension.

Academic Honesty Policy. Cheating will not be tolerated and may cost you your grade and have repercussions in your career (for example, having a cheating record will all but negate your chances of getting into a decent law school). Collaboration on homework assignments is allowed and encouraged, but we expect that the work you turn in is your own and that you understand the answers you are giving. *If you collaborate on a homework assignment, you must indicate the names of the students you collaborated with on the solution you hand in; you must also write up your own solution and different group members cannot hand in identical solutions.* If you use any resource other than the textbook and lecture notes as you prepare your homework assignment, you must provide a scholarly citation for the resource and explain the extent to which you have used it. The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of what counts as cheating in this course: (i) copying a homework or exam from another student, with or without the student's knowledge; (ii) plagiarism, that is: reproducing data or ideas from a scholarly source, website, or other resource (other than the textbook and lecture slides) without attributing authorship where it is due; (iii) including solutions obtained from answer keys or similar sources into one's homework submission. Please read the University policies on Academic Integrity, which are described on <http://cas.nyu.edu/page/academicintegrity> for CAS and on <http://tinyurl.com/nyu-policy> for NYU (also via <http://www.nyu.edu> > About NYU > Policies and Guidelines > University Policies and Guidelines > Academic Affairs & Faculty > Academic Integrity for Students at NYU).

You will fail any homework on which you have cheated, even if you have only cheated on a part of it. You will fail the course and be reported to the University if you cheat repeatedly or if you cheat on a test.

Schedule

The following is a preliminary schedule of topics. Changes to it will be announced in class.

Week	Date	Away	Topics	Homeworks
1	Sep 5 Sep 7	ME ME	Organizational issues, bird's eye view Truth-conditional compositional semantics: Portner 1–2; Zimmermann & Sternefeld 2 (optional) (no recitation this week)	
2	Sep 12 Sep 14		Set theory: Coppock & Champollion 2.1–2 Predicates: Portner 3.1–2, 3.6.1	HW1 released
3	Sep 19 Sep 21		Logic: Coppock & Champollion 3.1–3 Logic: Coppock & Champollion 3.1–3	HW1 due, HW2 released
4	Sep 26 Sep 28		Nominal modifiers: Portner 4.1–3, 3.3 Verbal modifiers and events: Portner 3.5, 4.4	HW2 due, HW3 released
5	Oct 3 Oct 5		Referential expressions: Portner 5 Referential expressions: Portner 5	HW3 due, HW4 released
6	Oct 10 Oct 12		Referential expressions: Portner 5 Quantifiers: Portner 6.1–2, 6.4	HW4 due, HW5 released
7	Oct 17 Oct 19		Quantifiers: Portner 6.1–2, 6.4 Intensionality: Portner 7	HW5 due, HW6 released
8	Oct 24 Oct 26	both	Tense: Portner 8.1 (no class, no recitation — both away)	HW6 due, HW7 released
9	Oct 31 Nov 2	LC	Midterm review; in-class recitation Midterm	
10	Nov 7 Nov 9		Aspect: Portner 8.2 Modality: Portner 8.3	HW7 due, HW8 released
11	Nov 14 Nov 16		Propositional attitudes: Portner 9 Propositional attitudes: Portner 9	HW8 due, HW9 released
12	Nov 21 Nov 23		buffer (no class — Thanksgiving)	HW9 due, HW10 released
13	Nov 28 Nov 30		Presuppositions: Portner 10.2; Schlenker 22.3 (optional) Implicatures: Portner 11; Schlenker 22.1, 22.2.1 (optional)	
14	Dec 5 Dec 7		Topic and focus: Portner 10.4 Indexicals: Portner 10.1	HW10 due, HW11 released HW12 (extra credit) released
15	Dec 12 Dec 14		(no class — Monday schedule) Final review	HW11 due
16	Dec 19		Final exam — 10am to 11:50am	HW12 due