

Philosophy 20721/30721 // Linguistics 20721/30721

Dynamic Semantics

Autumn 2012

TTH 10:30-11:50

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Office hours: TH 1-3
Office: Stuart 231-D

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An introduction to the foundations and applications of dynamic approaches to natural language semantics. We will study the formal details and empirical motivations of various major dynamic semantic frameworks such as File Change Semantics, Discourse Representation Theory, Dynamic Predicate Logic, and Update Semantics, and see how they address a number of puzzling natural language phenomena such as donkey anaphora and presupposition projection. In parallel to the formal component, the empirical and theoretical advantages and drawbacks of dynamic semantics will come under scrutiny, and we will also pay close attention to the philosophical repercussions of a dynamic approach to discourse and reasoning.

BOOKS

All course readings will be available through the course's Chalk website. The following anthologies contain several of the course readings in addition to a wide range of useful secondary material:

- Davis and Gillon, *Semantics: A Reader*, New York: Oxford University Press (2004)
- Portner and Partee, *Formal Semantics: The Essential Readings*, Oxford: Blackwell (2002)

The following book offers a very useful introduction to the basics of classical natural language semantics:

- Heim and Kratzer, *Semantics in Generative Grammar*, Oxford: Blackwell (1998)

All of the above books as well as some other useful material are on reserve at Regenstein.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Undergraduates are required to write a short midterm (4-5 pages) and one final paper (7-8 pages). All papers are due by 5pm on the assigned day in Professor Willer's mailbox in Stuart 202.

Midterm	due November 5 th	worth 30%
Final Paper	due December 11 th	worth 40%

Paper topics will be uploaded to the Chalk site in advance of the due dates. Students may, if they wish, design their own paper topics after consultation with the instructor. Late papers will be docked a grade per day (e.g., B+ to B) unless you have received approval ahead of time. There will be no final exam.

Graduate students are required to write a short midterm (4-5 pages, due November 5th, worth 25%) and a substantial term paper (15+ pages, due December 11th, worth 50%). Topics must be approved ahead of time, concern an issue discussed in the class, and make significant use of course readings as well as additional recommended material.

In addition, there will be biweekly homework assignments (worth 30% for undergraduates, worth 25% for graduates).

Attendance of lectures and discussion sections is expected unless you have a reasonable excuse. Class participation will play a decisive role in determining the final grade of borderline cases.

ROADMAP

The following schedule provides an overview over the topics that we will address during this semester as well as the assigned readings. Additional recommended readings will be announced in class and be made available online if possible. Readings may change as the semester goes on. Updated versions of this syllabus will be posted on Chalk as changes are made.

Date	Topic	Readings
Week 1	Introduction	(no reading)
Week 2	Dynamic Pragmatics	Stalnaker, "Assertion" Lewis, "Scorekeeping in a Language Game"
Week 3	Update Semantics	Veltman, "Defaults in Update Semantics" von Stechow & Gillies, "An Opinionated Guide to Epistemic Modality" Yalcin, "Epistemic Modals"
Week 4	File Change Semantics	Karttunen, "Discourse Referents" Heim, "File Change Semantics and the Familiarity Theory of Definites"
Week 5	DRT	Kamp, "A Theory of Discourse and Semantic Representation"
Week 6	DPL	Groenendijk & Stokhof, "Dynamic Predicate Logic"
Week 7	E-type Analyses	Heim, "E-type Pronouns and Donkey Anaphora" Neale, <i>Descriptions</i> , ch. 5 & 6
Week 8	Presupposition	Karttunen, "Presuppositions of Compound Sentences" Heim, "On the Projection Problem for Presuppositions" Heim, "Presupposition Projection"
Week 9	Accommodation	van der Sandt, "Presupposition Projection as Anaphora Resolution"
Week 10	Conclusion & Outlook	Schlenker, "Anti-Dynamics"