Formal Semantics (Linguistics 121, Berkeley) Fall Semester 2020

INSTRUCTOR	Prerna Nadathur (pnadathur@berkeley.edu)
OFFICE HOURS	Fridays, 1.00-2.30pm and by appointment
CLASS SCHEDULE	MWF 12.00–12.59pm
GSI	Madeline Bossi (madeline_bossi@berkeley.edu)
SECTIONS	M 2.00-2.59pm, Tu 8.00–8.59am, Tu 9.00–9.59am
GSI OH	M 5.00-6.00pm, F 10.00-11.00am
COURSE WEBSITE	https://bcourses.berkeley.edu/courses/1496746
	All course materials will be posted on the website.

DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to the ideas and tools of formal compositional semantics. We focus on the compositional semantics of (declarative) sentences. On the formal side, we introduce set theory and basic ideas from logic. On the empirical side, we will cover distinctions in communicated and conveyed information (entailment, presupposition, implicature), as well as issues in the interpretation of predicates, modifiers, referring expressions, quantifiers, tense, aspect, and modal expressions.

POLICIES

(i) **Readings.** All readings will be available on the course page. You will get the most out of the reading if you at least start it before the class(es) in which the relevant material is discussed. Readings will primarily be from:

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

   We will also read some sections of the draft textbook *Invitation to formal semantics* by Elizabeth Coppock & Lucas Champollion. The book is available at http://eecoppock.info/semantics-boot-camp.pdf.

(ii) **Homework.** Homework is worth 50% of your grade in this class. There will be a small homework assignment due almost every week. They are due by midnight on the due date, and should be submitted via bCourses, in PDF format. Late homework will only be accepted with approval from the instructor (in cases of emergency, religious holidays, etc – we're happy to work with you if you communicate with us). Your two lowest homework grades will be dropped.

(iii) **Participation.** Participation is worth 10% of your grade. The easiest way to get these points is by attending section and lecture and participating in the discussions, and we strongly recommend this (you don't have to attend every single session to get the points)! Many of the class handouts will have sections that you can fill in during class discussions, so you will get the most out of the course by attending. (If you are unable to participate in synchronous class

sessions, let us know and we will figure out an alternative method of assessing participation.) In general, we recommend that you participate in synchronous sessions with your video on; however, be aware that course sessions will be recorded for the benefit of those students who are in a time zone/location that makes synchronous participation difficult.

(iv) **Exams.** There will be two time-limited exams, a midterm and a final, each worth 20% of your grade. The final will cover material from the second half of the course. Further details to be provided.

(v) **Grades.** The baseline for grades is as follows.

A	94–100%	B	83–87%	C	73–77%	D	60–67%
A-	90–93%	B-	80–83%	C-	70–73%	F	0–60%
B+	87–90%	C+	77–80%	D+	67–70%		

(vi) **Emergencies and personal situations.** If something comes up during the semester that affects your ability to participate or will affect your performance, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us. We want you to succeed in this (and your other classes), and we understand that issues arise (especially now!). The earlier you talk to us, the more likely we are to be able to work with you to find a solution. If you have a major life emergency, you should contact the office of the Dean of Students (`https://deanofstudents.berkeley.edu/`).

(vii) **Special needs.** If you have a diagnosed disability and require special accommodations, you can arrange for services through the Disabled Students' Program (`https://dsp.berkeley.edu/home`). You are also welcome to get in touch with us directly.

(viii) **Academic integrity.** Academic dishonesty and plagiarism are strictly prohibited. You are welcome to use the library, textbooks, journal articles, and other resources in completing the assignments, but you *must* cite any sources that you use (other than course notes and readings). Quoted material from any source must be attributed, including page numbers where possible. You are welcome and encouraged to discuss the homework problems with other students, but you must write up your solutions independently, in your own words; we expect that you fully understand and can explain the answers you provide on your homework assignments. It is generally a good practice to indicate the names of students you worked with on your assignments. Further information about Berkeley's policies on academic integrity can be found here: `https://sa.berkeley.edu/conduct/integrity`

COURSE PLAN (subject to revision)

Week		Date	Topics	Reading	Homework
1	W	Aug 26	Introduction		
	F	Aug 28	Truth-conditional semantics	Portner 1–2	HW1 released
2	M	Aug 31	Truth-conditional semantics		
	W	Sept 2	Types of meaning		
	F	Sept 4	Types of meaning (entailment)		HW2 released, HW1 due

Week		Date	Topics	Reading	Homework
3	M	Sept 7	Labour Day (no class)		
	W	Sept 9	Presuppositions	C&C 1.1.2	
	F	Sept 11	Presuppositions		
4	M	Sept 14	Implicature	C&C 1.1.1, Grice	HW3 released
	W	Sept 16	Sets, functions, relations	C&C 2.1–2.4	
	F	Sept 18	Sets, functions, relations		HW2 due
5	M	Sept 21	Sets & predicates	Portner 3.1–2, 3.6	HW4 released
	W	Sept 23	Predicates		
	F	Sept 25	Propositional logic	old C&C 4.1	HW3 due
6	M	Sept 28	Propositional logic		
	W	Sept 30	Predicate logic	old C&C 4.2–4.3.1	HW 5 released
	F	Oct 2	Predicate logic		HW 4 due
7	M	Oct 5	Lambdas and types	Portner 3.6, C&C 4	
	W	Oct 7	Lambdas and types		
	F	Oct 9	Types and composition	C&C 5–5.2	HW5 due
8	M	Oct 12	Types and composition		
	W	Oct 14	Midterm review		
	F	Oct 16	**MIDTERM** (no class)		HW6 released
9	M	Oct 19	Nominal modifiers	Portner 4.1–3	
	W	Oct 21	Nominal modifiers		HW7 released
	F	Oct 23	Verbal modifiers & events	Portner 3.5, 4.4	HW6 due
10	M	Oct 26	Verbal modifiers & events		
	W	Oct 28	Referring expressions	Portner 5	HW8 released
	F	Oct 30	Referring expressions		HW7 due
11	M	Nov 2	Referring expressons		
	W	Nov 4	Referring expressions	Portner 6.1–2, 6.4	
	F	Nov 6	Quantifiers		HW9 released
12	M	Nov 9	Quantifiers		
	W	Nov 11	Administrative holiday (no class)		HW8 due
	F	Nov 13	NPIs	Portner 6.3	HW10 released
13	M	Nov 16	Intensionality	Portner 7	
	W	Nov 18	Tense & aspect	Portner 8.1–2	HW9 due
	F	Nov 20	Tense & aspect		
14	M	Nov 23	Modality	Portner 8.3	HW10 due **Tu 11/24**
	W	Nov 25	Thanksgiving (no class)		HW11 released
	F	Nov 27	Thanksgiving (no class)		
15	M	Nov 30	Modality		
	W	Dec 2	Propositional attitudes	Portner 9	
	F	Dec 4	Propositional attitudes		HW11 due
	M	Dec 7	Review (schedule TBD)		
	W	Dec 9	Review (schedule TBD)		HW11 EC due
	F	Dec 11	Review (schedule TBD)		Make-up work due
	F	Dec 18	**FINAL EXAM**		