LING 130a. Semantics: truth, meaning, and language

Course Website: [http://www.cs.brandeis.edu/~ling130](http://www.cs.brandeis.edu/~ling130)

Syllabus: Spring 2015

Course Overview

Linguistic semantics is the study of meaning as conveyed through language. The utterances made by speakers of a language are expressions of intentional and mindful activity. Communication through language is a reflection of our modeling of the environment and our attempt to understand reality with an innate logical machinery for reasoning and inference. We begin with the study of logic (natural deduction) and show how propositional and first-order logical systems provide a natural means for the formal interpretation of linguistic expressions. We then examine the semantics of logical inference in terms of model theory and semantic types. The major subject areas of semantics are covered, including quantification and plurality, lexical semantics, and the interfaces with syntax and pragmatics.

Time:
Tuesday & Thursday 2:00 - 3:20

Location:
Volcn 119

Textbook:
- *Semantics: An Introduction to Meaning in Language*
  Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics, Paperback, 2009
  by Ronnie Cann, Ruth Kempson, Eleni Gregoromichelaki
- Additional readings will be distributed through LATTE.

Professor

Sophia A. Malamud

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Office: Volcn 137
Office Hours: Mondays 2-3pm
OR email me for appointment

Grading

In computing your grade, I will use the following weights:

- class participation [5 percent]
- homework [60 percent]
- midterm [15 percent]
• final [20 percent].

Lowest homework grade will be dropped, and improvement in the course of the semester will be taken into account.

**Honour code and homework policy:**

I encourage you to discuss the problem sets with your colleagues in the class, and to work collaboratively, particularly on difficult problems. Such collaboration must be mentioned explicitly in handed-in solutions, and each student is responsible for writing up and handing in individual problem sets.

On the other hand, you are not permitted to discuss midterm and final exams with ANYONE except the instructor and the TA.

Submission protocol: Answers on multiple pieces of paper need to be stapled together! Write neatly. Think about what it must be like to read your own writing!

Honour code: Cheating is a very serious business and will not be tolerated at all. We will make every attempt to be reasonable about assignments, due dates, etc., but infractions of the honour code will be dealt with severely.

**Additional information**

Throughout the semester, we will use this website to make any course announcements, so please check in frequently. There is also a latte page for this course that you can access by logging in at http://latte.brandeis.edu/. You must be officially registered for the course in order to access the latte page. Course readings and Handouts will be posted through latte.

If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see the professor immediately. Retroactive accommodation cannot be provided.