

LIND12 Semantics 2

Winter 2023
University of Toronto Scarborough

Instructor: Dr. Curt Anderson (he/him/his)
Class time: Mondays 15:00–17:00
Classroom: MW 160
Office hours: W 14:30 to 15:30, R 11:00 to 12:00,
and by appointment
Course webpage: Quercus (<http://q.utoronto.ca>)
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1 Course Overview and Objectives

This course focuses on the study of natural language semantics and the relation between the interpretation of a sentence and the structure of a sentence. Some topics we'll encounter might include compositionality, the semantics of times and events, quantifiers, possible world semantics, modality, questions, and dynamic semantics. Along the way, you'll get an introduction to the methods and techniques used in current formal semantics and practice in reasoning about semantic problems.

2 Relation to Other Courses

Prerequisite: LINC12, LINB06
Exclusions: LIN341H1
Breadth Requirements: History, Philosophy and Cultural Studies

3 Readings and Textbook

The following freely available textbook is a general resource for this course.

- Coppock, Elizabeth & Lucas Champollion. 2022. Invitation to formal semantics. Draft January 18th, 2022. <https://eecoppock.info/bootcamp/semantics-boot-camp.pdf>

A lot of what we learn won't have direct correlates in this book, and when there is overlap, the way the authors of the textbook come to their conclusions won't necessarily be the same as the way we did in lecture. This means that the textbook is not a substitute for attending class. I'll occasionally summarize our progress with handouts, but you should anticipate attending class regularly and taking (light) notes.

4 Requirements

The requirements for this course are as follows:

Assessment	Weight
Problem Sets (5)	25%
Midterm	20%
Quizzes (3)	25%
Squib (Final paper)	30%

Late assignments: In general, late assignments will not be accepted, except under special circumstances. If you anticipate not making a deadline, please talk to me as soon as possible so that we can figure out the next step (such as consulting with AccessAbility Services) to get you back on track in the course.

Grace period: For every problem set, I'll accept it for **24 hours after the official due date with no penalty** (known as the Grace Period). Use this in case of last minute issues with your internet connection, you overslept, you were in a different timezone and miscalculated the time, your solution blew up on you at the last minute, and so on. You can alternatively use the Grace Period as a general automatic one day extension on an assignment, and privately consider it the absolute final deadline. Use it in whatever way is best for you, but the late penalty after the Grace Period is 100%.

Submission: Assignments must be submitted via the submission page on Crowdmark. No email submissions will be accepted without my approval first. Please check that you've uploaded the correct file and that it has uploaded correctly. Submissions will be marked as is.

5 Course Policies

Make sure you study! Make sure you stay on top of the course material, and that you make a plan for staying on top of it. Formal semantics is an area of linguistics you might not have had much exposure to, and draws heavily on math-like tools from philosophy and mathematics. If you haven't had much mathematical background, you may find the notation and the way of speaking a bit unfamiliar.

Formatting assignments: Your assignments should be neatly formatted so that it is easy to see which question is being answered, and answers should include no work that doesn't relate to the solution. When submitting on Crowdmark, you should make sure that your answer to each question includes no part of any other question or any notes, calculations, practice figures, doodles, and the like. Points may be deducted on assignments that are particularly difficult to follow. You're welcome to use the assignment itself as a template to format your response, but it's not required.

Communication: Make sure you check your University of Toronto email and Quercus Messages and Announcements regularly, as I occasionally make important announcements. I check my own email regularly, but if I don't get back to you within 36 hours (excluding weekends), it's ok to send me a reminder. For privacy reasons, make sure you use your UofT email address or Quercus to message me.

In the "Subject" line of messages to me, put the course number plus a short descriptor of what the email is about (e.g, LIND12 Question about lambdas). When you sign your email, use your full name, and make sure you mention the course at some point in the email. I teach many students, and these two things will help me stay organized with this course and get a reply back to you faster.

Preference on names and pronouns: If you want me to refer to you with a particular name or pronouns, please let me know at a time that works best for you. If I make a mistake, please don't hesitate to politely correct me after class, in office hours, or via email.

Regrades: If you got a mark off for an answer and believe it was in error, we can revisit the mark. To do this, you must provide the following: which specific question to look at, what your

answer was, why your answer is correct, and why you think it was marked incorrectly. I will only consider regrade requests if there is a specific question you think was marked incorrectly and you state why you think it was marked incorrectly.

Office hours and appointments: No appointment is necessary to attend office hours—just click the Zoom link on Quercus during my scheduled **office hour** times. You might have to sit in the waiting room for a bit while I talk to students in line before you, but I do get a notification that you're in the waiting room, and I will get to you eventually. If you have a **virtual appointment** with me, use the office hours link on Quercus at your scheduled time, and I'll let you in from the waiting room once I'm ready. For **in person appointments**, come to my office in MW311. My door will be open; if it isn't, come back in a few minutes, since I'm either with someone or away from my office. If I'm with another student, just hang out in the waiting area until we're finished.

Accessibility: Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the AccessAbility Services Office as soon as possible. AccessAbility Services staff (located in AA142) are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. Call 416-287-7560 or email ability@utsc.utoronto.ca. The sooner you let them know your needs the sooner they can help give you the proper accommodations so that you can achieve your learning goals in this course. I'll do my best to remember what accommodations you require, but please remind me as necessary as well. It's not a bother to me at all.

Academic misconduct: “The University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University of Toronto’s Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters¹ outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences. Potential offences include using someone else’s ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement, submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor, making up sources or facts, obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment, using or possessing unauthorized aids, looking at someone else’s answers during an exam or test, misrepresenting your identity, or falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) doctor’s notes.”

The university’s academic misconduct code is very general, but it applies to looking up answers, code, suggestions, hints, tips, tricks, and the like for any assessment; collaborating on and discussing assignments with colleagues, friends, tutors, and answering services; using group chats to discuss aspects of an assessment that is still open; getting direct or indirect advice from someone on how to answer a question; using AI to help complete an assessment in part or in whole; and generally circumvent or helping others to circumvent University of Toronto academic misconduct standards of behavior.

¹<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>

6 Schedule

This is a tentative overview of the topics we'll address, in roughly the order we'll address them, along with what assignment will be due around that time. Depending on how quickly or slowly we go through some topics, this particular sequence might change as the semester progresses.

LECTURE SCHEDULE	
Jan 9th Introduction to semantics; truth-conditions and entailment	Week 1
16th Compositionality; type-driven interpretation	Week 2
23rd Definite descriptions; presuppositions	Week 3
30th Tense and aspect 1	Week 4
Feb 6th Tense and aspect 2	Week 5
13th Midterm	Week 6
20th Reading week (no lecture)	
27th Events and thematic roles	Week 7
Mar 6th Quantificational adverbs; quantificational determiners	Week 8
13th Movement and variable binding; generalized quantifiers	Week 9
20th Monotonicity; polar sensitivity; negative polarity items	Week 10
27th Embedding verbs; intensionality and modality	Week 11
Apr 3rd Conclusion: Putting the pieces together	Week 12

Last update: January 27, 2023