ENG 257: Formal Semantics

Spring Semester 2020
Location: $X\Omega\Delta$ *01, Room 003*
Mon/Thur (6:00pm-7:30pm)

Instructor:	Natalia Pavlou	**Office hours:**
Email:	pavlou.natalia@ucy.ac.cy	Thursday 4pm-6pm & by appt.
		Location: Caffé Nero UCY

Course Description

Overview:
This course introduces students to the formal study of the human capacity of our cognitive system which computes the meanings of complex linguistic expressions. Throughout the semester, students will be trained in the tools and techniques of semantic theory, as well as certain basic results of the field. Students will also develop the skills to use a particular formal semantic system. Through the development of this formal system, students will gain a better understanding of how the human mind is able, through language, to express a variety of thoughts and experiences.

Course Objectives
At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Define the technical terms required to describe meaning

- Have an enhanced knowledge of the semantic structure of sentences

- Provide an overview of the field that enables them to seek answers to further questions about semantics

Course Details

Grade Distribution

Homework.. 30%
Midterm Exam... 20%
Final Exam... 50%

Homework
There will be two problem sets that will be assigned on Thursday and are due the following Thursday. No late assignments will be accepted without valid reasons.

Each homework set will include an advanced question that students are allowed to discuss in groups of maximum 4 persons. **However, each person must write up their own work themselves, using their own words**. In addition, students who work together should make a note on each of their submitted solutions of who they worked with.

Problem sets are to be typed up, printed out, and submitted before the start of class on the Thursday that they are due. If you cannot make it to class, you can e-mail the assignment to me.

Midterm exam

The midterm exam will be in class on the designated day in the schedule below.

Final exam

The final exam will be on the assigned day during the exam period. You will be asked to apply the knowledge gained in class to empirical and analytical problems.

Attendance/Participation

Attendance in lectures is obligatory and regular attendance and participation is taken into consideration for passing the course.

Classroom Etiquette

Students have an obligation to their classmates and instructor to behave in such a manner as to enhance the learning environment. Please do not engage in behavior which disrupts class or otherwise detracts from the ability of your fellow students to learn. Such behaviors include arriving at class late, leaving before class is dismissed, speaking while others are speaking, reading magazines in class, cell-phones ringing etc.

Textbook

The textbook required for the class is: **Kearns, K. 2011. Semantics. New York: Palgrave Macmillan (2nd edition)**. We will also have some readings from **Heim, I. and A. Kratzer. 1998. Semantics in Generative Grammar. Blackwell Textbooks in Linguistics**, which is available online. Additional readings will also be posted during the course.

Additional recommended reading:

[a] Formal semantics : the essential readings / edited by Paul Portner and Barbara H. Partee. Oxford : Blackwell, 2002.
[b] Semantics and Pragmatics: Drawing a Line [electronic resource] / edited by Ilse Depraetere, Raphael Salkie. Cham : Springer International Publishing : Imprint: Springer, 2017.
[c] Elements of Formal Semantics : an Introduction to the Mathematical Theory of Meaning in Natural Language. Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press, 2016.
[d] Semantics/ Saeed, John I.. Oxford : Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

Tentative Schedule

The schedule on the syllabus is subject to change. Changes, if any, will be announced in class.

Tentative Schedule

	Wk.	*Monday/Thursday*
1	13/1-17/1	Kinds of meaning Chapter 1
2	20/1-24/1	Contextual Meaning Chapter 1
3	27/1-31/1	Propositional and Predicate Logic Chapter 2
4	3/2-7/2	The Logical Quantifiers Chapter 3
5	10/2-14/2	Truth-Conditional Semantics, Sets and Functions Heim & Kratzer 1998, Chapter 1
6	17/2-21/2	Formal Composition Chapter 4
7	24/2-28/2	Modality and Possible Worlds Chapter 5
8	2/3-6/3	MIDTERM (5/3) (no class on 2/3)
9	9/3-13/3	Generalized Quantifiers Chapter 6
10	16/3-20/3	Formal Composition of Generalized Quantifiers Chapter 6
11	23/3-27/3	Aktionsarten Chapter 8
12	30/3-3/4	Tense and Aspect Chapter 9
13	6/4-10/4	Thematic Roles Chapter 10
14	27/4-30/4	Wrap-up & Review