Semantics at NYU

March 10, 2016

Overview

The goal of this handout is to give you a sense for what it will be like to be a semantics student at NYU. Below we list:

– The classes you will take, including examples of past topics of advanced seminars
– The semanticists that students can work with
– The kind of work current/recent students have been doing
– The qualifying papers, working papers, and dissertations this work has led to
– The sorts of events that take place here
– The professional presentations students have given in semantics

Semantics Requirements and Courses

Semantics I is a required course for all graduate students in the department. Students specializing in semantics or in syntax are required to take Semantics I-II and Syntax I-II. Two to four semantics seminars are offered every year, and we are in the process of introducing Semantics III (not a required course).

Here are some of the recent advanced seminars:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anna Szabolcsi and Richard Kayne</td>
<td>Spring 2016</td>
<td>Primitive Functional Elements (seminar in syntax and semantics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucas Champollion</td>
<td>Spring 2016</td>
<td>The interaction of compositional semantics and event semantics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippe Schlenker</td>
<td>Fall 2015</td>
<td>The Semantics/Pragmatics Interface</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anna Szabolcsi</td>
<td>Spring 2015</td>
<td>Questions, Contrastive Topics, Indefinites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Barker and Jim Pryor</td>
<td>Spring 2015</td>
<td>What philosophers and linguists can learn from theoretical computer science, v2.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philippe Schlenker</td>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
<td>Cross-Modal Semantics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucas Champollion</td>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
<td>Algebraic Semantics: Linguistic Applications of Mereology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Barker</td>
<td>Spring 2014</td>
<td>De Re / De Se</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucas Champollion and Kit Fine</td>
<td>Spring 2014</td>
<td>Minimal Entities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippe Schlenker</td>
<td>Fall 2013</td>
<td>Primate Linguistics (and Beyond)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Topic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chris Barker</td>
<td>Spring 2013</td>
<td>Weird Adjectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lucas Champollion</td>
<td>Spring 2013</td>
<td>Algebraic Semantics: Linguistic Applications of Mereology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liina Pylkkanan</td>
<td>Spring 2013</td>
<td>Cognitive Neuroscience of Combinatory Semantics: State of the Art and Future Directions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philippe Schlenker</td>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
<td>Sign language and the foundations of semantics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anna Szabolcsi</td>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
<td>Compositionality in quantifier words</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chris Barker</td>
<td>Spring 2012</td>
<td>Building fragments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kit Fine</td>
<td>Spring 2012</td>
<td>Truthmaker semantics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippe Schlenker</td>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
<td>Literal vs. non-literal meaning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anna Szabolcsi</td>
<td>Spring 2011</td>
<td>Multiple topics: De se readings, superlatives. Craige Roberts lecture series</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chris Barker and Jim Pryor</td>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
<td>Philosophy of language, or: What philosophers and linguists can learn from theoretical computer science</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philippe Schlenker</td>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
<td>Lean semantics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna Szabolcsi</td>
<td>Spring 2010</td>
<td>Infinitives and subjunctives</td>
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**Semantics Faculty**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Semantics Faculty</th>
<th>Research Interests</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chris Barker</strong></td>
<td>Semantics of natural language; philosophy of language; theory of computation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lucas Champollion</strong></td>
<td>Formal semantics of natural language (esp. algebraic semantics); formal language theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Philippe Schlenker, Global Distinguished Professor, NYU; IJN Paris</strong></td>
<td>Semantics, pragmatics; philosophy of language; philosophical logic; syntax, morphology; sign language (ASL and LSF); gestures; music semantics; primate vocalizations and gestures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anna Szabolcsi</td>
<td>Formal semantics; Hungarian syntax; syntax/semantics interface</td>
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**Other Faculty with Interest in Semantics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mark Baltin</th>
<th>Syntax, syntax-semantics interface, ellipsis, A/A’ distinction, lexical representation</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liina Pylkkänen</td>
<td>Neurolinguistics, psycholinguistics, semantics, syntax, lexicon</td>
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**Affiliated Faculty in Other Departments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kit Fine (philosophy)</th>
<th>Metaphysics, logic, philosophy of language</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James Pryor (philosophy)</td>
<td>Epistemology, philosophy of language, philosophy of mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Schiffer (philosophy)</td>
<td>Philosophy of language, philosophy of mind, metaphysics</td>
</tr>
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**The Inter-University Doctoral Consortium**

NYU students can, and do, take classes for credit at members of the Inter-University Doctoral Consortium, in semantics and philosophy of language especially at Rutgers University. Other consortium members include Columbia, Princeton, the CUNY Graduate Center, Fordham, and Stony Brook.
Semantics Graduate Students

Dylan Bumford
Songhee Kim
WooJin Chung
Haoze Li
Sonia Kasyanenko
Jeff Lin
Masha Esipova
Linmin Zhang
Adina Williams
Paloma Jeretič

Recent Visiting Scholars

Hannah Rohde       Spring 2016
Sophia Malamud     Fall 2015
Maria Aloni        Spring 2015
Heather Burnett    Spring 2014
Orin Percus        Fall 2013 – Spring 2014
Dag Westerståhl    Fall 2012
Sophia Malamud     Spring 2010

The Latest from the Faculty


Schlenker, Philippe. To appear. Formual Monkey Linguistics. To appear as a target article in *Theoretical Linguistics.* (with Emmanuel Chemla, Anne Schel, James Fuller, Jean-Pierre Gautier, Jeremy Kuhn, Dunja Veselinovic, Kate Arnold, Cristiane Cäsar, Sumir Keenan, Alban Lemasson, Karim Ouattara, Robin Ryder, Klaus Zuberbühler)


**Recent Dissertations**

Zhang, Linmin. In progress. Computing complex meaning word by word: the temporal progression of left anterior temporal lobe activity.
Leffel, Tim. 2014. The semantics of modification: Adjectives, nouns, and order.
Mascarenhas, Salvador. 2014. Formal semantics and the psychology of reasoning.
Irwin, Patricia. 2012. Unaccusativity at the Interfaces.
Rimell, Laura. 2012. Nominal Roots as Event Predicates in English Denominal Conversion Verbs.

**Recent Qualifying Papers**

Esipova, Masha. In progress. Contrast and distributivity in alternation-inducing coordinate constructions (working title).
Kim, Songhee. 2015. A loosened distributivity marker in Korean: The case of *tul* in comparison with all.
Williams, Adina. 2015. Relationality or Eventivity? MEG Evidence for the LIPL in Processing Nominal Argument Structure.
Kasyanenko, Sonia. 2014. Comitative Coordination as Group Coordination.
Zhang, Linmin. 2014. Mandarin Chinese particle *hai*.
Recurring Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colloquia</td>
<td>At least two major semantics talks each year. Speakers in the last few years include Pranav Anand, Roger Schwarzschild, Sarah Murray, Ezra Keshet, Michael Frank, Richard Larson, Manfred Krifka, Martin Hackl, Rajesh Bhatt, Valentine Hacquard, and Chris Potts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Semantics group meetings</td>
<td>Members of the department’s semantics community, philosophers, and out-of-town colleagues present their ongoing or recent work, followed by intense discussion. Also serves as a conference practice talk forum. Website: nyusemantics.github.io</td>
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<tr>
<td>MACSIM</td>
<td>Mid-Atlantic graduate student conference on meaning</td>
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<tr>
<td>SYNC</td>
<td>SUNY-YALE-NYU-CUNY graduate students’ miniconference</td>
</tr>
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Publications by Current Students and Recent Alumni

2016


2015


Zhang, Linmin. 2015. Comparatives revisited: Downward-entailing differentials do not threaten encapsulation

Zhang, Linmin. 2015. Decomposing English particles *and* and *or*. In *NELS 45: Proceedings of the 45th Meeting of the North East Linguistic Society* (3), 261-270.


2014


Charlow, Simon. 2014. Bound ‘de re’ pronouns and the LFs of attitude reports. *Semantics & Pragmatics* 7(3), 1-43. (with Yael Sharvit)


2013


Rimell, Laura. 2013. Approaches to Verb Subcategorization for Biomedicine. *Journal of Biomedical Informatics* 46(2), 212-227. (with Thomas Lippincott, Laura Rimell, Karin Verspoor, and Anna Korhonen)


2012


on African Linguistics, 221-230.

2011

2010

Student Presentations on Semantics and Its Interfaces

The following is a list of semantics-related presentations that students and very recent alumni have given while they were students at NYU in the past few years. We omitted some presentations that already appear as conference proceedings publications in the previous list.

2016
Zu, Vera. 2016. Representing the seat of knowledge at the left periphery in Newari. The 90th Annual Meeting of the Linguistic Society of America (LSA). Washington, DC.

2015
Esipova, Masha. 2015. Alternating conjuncts: the to... to construction in Russian and its crosslinguistic counterparts. MACSIM: Mid-Atlantic Colloquium of Studies in Meaning 5, University of Delaware.
Kuhn, Jeremy. 2015. Iconicity in the grammar: pluractionality in French Sign Language. LSA 89. (with V. Aristodemo)
Kuhn, Jeremy. 2015. On the /­oo/ suffix of Campbells monkeys (C. campbelli). Invited talk given to the Penn primatology group.
Li, Haoze. 2015. Fragment questions: Deleting question items. Presented at NELS 46, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada.
Li, Haoze. 2015. At least some distributive operators are not distributive operators. Poster presented at NELS 46, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada. (with Jess Law)
Williams, Adina. 2015. Relationality in the Angular Gyrus: Evidence from MEG. Poster Presentation at the 7th Meeting of the Society for the Neurobiology of Language Conference. (with Liina Pylkkänen)
Zhang, Linmin. 2015. Scaling up to a sentence: The temporal unfolding of conceptual specificity and sentential polarity effects in left anterior temporal and medial prefrontal cortex. Poster at the Seventh Annual Meeting of the Society for the Neurobiology of Language (SNL 7). (with Liina Pylkkänen)
Zhang, Linmin. 2015. External same and internal same: a unified account motivated by attitude reports. Poster at the 20th Sinn und Bedeutung Conference (SuB 20).
Zu, Vera. 2015. Discourse participants, attitude holders, and pronoun binding. MACSIM: Mid-Atlantic Colloquium of Studies in Meaning 4, Rutgers University.

2014
Zu, Vera. 2014. Discourse participants, attitude holders, and pronoun binding. MACSIM: Mid-Atlantic Colloquium of Studies in Meaning 4, Rutgers University.

2013
Bumford, Dylan. 2013. Quantifier-internal anaphora and generalized association with distributivity. Poster presentation at Semantics and Linguistic Theory 23 (with Chris Barker)
2012

Bauman, C., Holliday, N., Lin, K-C.J., LaFave, N., Martin, S., & A. Shapp. 2012. Every sentence has how many quantifiers each? Binominal each in English. Poster presentation at MACSIM, University of Maryland, College Park, MD.


2011


2010


Livitz, Inna. 2010. Singular Complexity: MEG evidence that plurals are semantically unmarked. Poster presented at 23rd CUNY Sentence Processing Conference, New York University. (with Liina Pylkkänen)