

# Introduction to Formal Semantics

## BMA-ANGD17-CNy17a.55

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### When & where:

Wednesday 13:30–15:00, R326, DELG

## 1 Overview

This course aims to provide a general introduction to formal semantics and its interfaces with syntax and (towards the end of the course) pragmatics.

On the menu are the following topics: (a) the subject–predicate relation and the different ways (syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic) in which it can be approached; predication and modification; (b) the Compositionality Principle and its detractors (incl. idioms, ‘expletives’, and semantics ex nihilo); (c) type-theoretic semantics; (d) event semantics, Tense and Aspect; (e) quantifiers and type-theoretic compositionality (type shifting and Quantifier Raising), and quantifier scope ambiguity; (f) upward and downward entailment, and the licensing of polarity-sensitive expressions; (g) modality; (h) conventional and conversational implicatures; (i) information structure, focus and the exhaustiveness implicature; (i) the semantics of silence: silent arguments, silent verbs, silent operators.

Students are expected to be familiar with the fundamentals of syntactic structure (the material covered in the Syntax lecture course and the Syntax seminar).

## 2 Schedule

This is a **preliminary** schedule of the course. Changes to it will be announced in class in advance.

Date	Topic
14/09	Introduction
21/09	Subject-predicate relation
28/09	Predication and modification
05/10	Compositionality Principle
12/10	Type-theoretic semantics
19/10	Event semantics, Tense and Aspect
26/10	Quantifiers
02/11	Upward and downward entailment
09/11	Modality
16/11	Implicatures
23/11	Information structure
30/11	Silent arguments, verbs, operators
07/12	Summary, the final test
14/12	Autumn break (no classes)

### 3 Assessment

A final test.

Students are also expected to participate in in-class discussions and to do occasional non-grade exercises.

**Attendance:** No more than three absences will be tolerated. If you need to skip more than three classes, notify us about this via email.

### 4 Readings

- Heim, Irene & Angelika Kratzer. 1998. *Semantics in Generative Grammar*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Portner, Paul. 2005. *What is Meaning? Fundamentals of Formal Semantics*. Oxford: Blackwell.

The **handouts/slides** will be uploaded to the SEAS website:

<http://seas3.elte.hu/coursematerial/denDikkenMarcel/index.html>

and

<http://seas3.elte.hu/coursematerial/BurukinaIrina/index.html>

### 5 Other

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Dr. Marcel den Dikken. Contact e-mail address: [marcel.den.dikken@nytud.hu](mailto:marcel.den.dikken@nytud.hu)

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us. We could also schedule an appointment (via email), either at ELTE or on Zoom.