

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:



Anna Szabolcsi and Richard Kayne	Spring 2016	Primitive Functional Elements (seminar in syntax and semantics)
Lucas Champollion	Spring 2016	The interaction of compositional semantics and event semantics
Philippe Schlenker	Fall 2015	The Semantics/Pragmatics Interface
Anna Szabolcsi	Spring 2015	Questions, Contrastive Topics, Indefinites
Chris Barker and Jim Pryor	Spring 2015	What philosophers and linguists can learn from theoretical computer science, v2.0
Philippe Schlenker	Fall 2014	Cross-Modal Semantics
Lucas Champollion	Fall 2014	Algebraic Semantics: Linguistic Applications of Mereology
Chris Barker	Spring 2014	De Re / De Se
Lucas Champollion and Kit Fine	Spring 2014	Minimal Entities
Philippe Schlenker	Fall 2013	Primate Linguistics (and Beyond)




Chris Barker	Spring 2013	Weird Adjectives
Lucas Champollion	Spring 2013	Algebraic Semantics: Linguistic Applications of Mereology
Liina Pylkkanen	Spring 2013	Cognitive Neuroscience of Combinatory Semantics: State of the Art and Future Directions
Philippe Schlenker	Fall 2012	Sign language and the foundations of semantics
Anna Szabolcsi	Fall 2012	Compositionality in quantifier words
Chris Barker	Spring 2012	Building fragments
Kit Fine	Spring 2012	Truthmaker semantics
Philippe Schlenker	Fall 2011	Literal vs. non-literal meaning
Anna Szabolcsi	Spring 2011	Multiple topics: De se readings, superlatives. Craige Roberts lecture series
Chris Barker and Jim Pryor	Fall 2010	Philosophy of language, or: What philosophers and linguists can learn from theoretical computer science
Philippe Schlenker	Fall 2010	Lean semantics
Anna Szabolcsi	Spring 2010	Infinitives and subjunctives

Semantics Faculty

Core Semantics Faculty	Research Interests
Chris Barker 	Semantics of natural language; philosophy of language; theory of computation
Lucas Champollion 	Formal semantics of natural language (esp. algebraic semantics); formal language theory
Philippe Schlenker, Global Distinguished Professor, NYU; IJN Paris 	Semantics, pragmatics; philosophy of language; philosophical logic; syntax, morphology; sign language (ASL and LSF); gestures; music semantics; primate vocalizations and gestures

Anna Szabolcsi		Formal semantics; Hungarian syntax; syntax/semantics interface
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Other Faculty with Interest in Semantics	Research Interests
Mark Baltin	 Syntax, syntax-semantics interface, ellipsis, A/A' distinction, lexical representation
Liina Pykkänen	 Neurolinguistics, psycholinguistics, semantics, syntax, lexicon

Affiliated Faculty in Other Departments	Research Interests
Kit Fine (philosophy)	 Metaphysics, logic, philosophy of language
James Pryor (philosophy)	 Epistemology, philosophy of language, philosophy of mind
Stephen Schiffer (philosophy)	 Philosophy of language, philosophy of mind, metaphysics

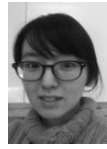
The Inter-University Doctoral Consortium

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

Barker, Chris. In press. Why relational nominals make good concealed questions. *Lingua*.

Schlenker, Philippe. To appear. The Unity of Focus: Evidence from Sign Language. *Linguistic Inquiry*. (with Valentina Aristodemo, Ludovic Ducasse, Jonathan Lamberton, Mirko Santoro)

Schlenker, Philippe. To appear. Formal 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 Căsar, Sumir Keenan, Alban Lemasson, Karim Ouattara, Robin Ryder, Klaus Zuberbühler)

Champollion, Lucas 2015. Stratified reference: The common core of distributivity, aspect, and measurement. *Theoretical Linguistics* 41(3-4), p. 109-149 (target article).

Champollion, Lucas. 2015. The interaction of compositional semantics and event semantics. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 38(1), 31-66.

Champollion, Lucas. 2015. Ten men and women got married today: noun coordination and the intersective theory of conjunction. *Journal of Semantics*. Published online 31 Jul 2015. Estimated print publication in 2016.

Szabolcsi, Anna. 2015. What do quantifier particles do? *Linguistics and Philosophy* 38(2), 159-204.

- Barker, Chris. 2014. *Continuations and natural language*. Oxford University Press. (with Chung-Chieh Shan).
- Barker, Chris. 2014. Scope. *Handbook of Contemporary Semantics, second edition*, Shalom Lappin and Chris Fox (eds.). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Schlenker, Philippe. 2014. Iconic features. *Natural Language Semantics* 22(4), 299-356.
- Schlenker, Philippe. 2014. Monkey semantics: Two ‘dialects’ of Campbell’s monkey alarm calls. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 37(6), 439-501. (with Emmanuel Chemla, Kate Arnold, Alban Lemasson, Karim Ouattara, Sumir Keenan, Claudia Stephan, Robin Ryder, Klaus Zuberbühler)
- Szabolcsi, Anna. 2014. Quantifier words and their multi-functional(?) parts. *Language and Linguistics* 15(1), 115-155. (with James Doh Whang and Vera Zu)
- Szabolcsi, Anna. 2014. Quantification and ACD: What is evidence from real-time processing evidence for? A response to Hackl et al. (2012). *Journal of Semantics* 31, 135-145.

Recent Dissertations

- Bumford, Dylan. In progress. Split-scope effects in definite descriptions.
- Zhang, Linmin. In progress. Computing complex meaning word by word: the temporal progression of left anterior temporal lobe activity.
- Zu, Vera. In progress. Discourse Participants and the Structural Representation of the Context.
- Kuhn, Jeremy. 2015. Cross-categorial singular and plural reference in sign language.
- Leffel, Tim. 2014. The semantics of modification: Adjectives, nouns, and order.
- Charlow, Simon. 2014. On the semantics of exceptional scope.
- Mascarenhas, Salvador. 2014. Formal semantics and the psychology of reasoning.
- Livitz, Inna. 2013. Deriving Silence and Dependent Reference: Focus on Pronouns.
- Irwin, Patricia. 2012. Unaccusativity at the Interfaces.
- Rimell, Laura. 2012. Nominal Roots as Event Predicates in English Denominal Conversion Verbs.
- Vázquez-Rojas, Violeta. 2012. The Syntax and Semantics of Purépecha Noun Phrases and the Mass/Count Distinction.
- Lassiter, Daniel. 2011. Measurement and Modality: The Scalar Basis of Modal Semantics.

Recent Qualifying Papers

- Chung, WooJin. In progress. Deontic Reduction in Natural Language (working title).
- Esipova, Masha. In progress. Contrast and distributivity in alternation-inducing coordinate constructions (working title).
- Williams, Adina. In progress. Nominalization and the Predicative Locative Construction in Mandarin Chinese.
- Laternus, Rebecca. 2015. Verbal Argument Structure Processing in the Left Angular Gyrus.
- Lin, S.-Y. Jeff. 2015. Informativeness, Inquisitiveness, and Particles in Chinese Questions.
- 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*.
- Bumford, Dylan. 2013. Incremental Quantification.

- Jeremy Kuhn. 2013. ASL Loci: Variables or Features?
- Hwang, Sangjin. 2012. Semantics of Measure Phrases, Measure Phrase Split, and *-ssik* in Korean.
- Mascarenhas, Salvador. 2011. Positive Polarity Items As Alternative Generators.
- Leffel, Tim. 2011. Nonrestrictive adjectives and the theory of scalar implicature.
- Solomon, Mike. 2011. True Distributivity and the Functional Interpretation of Indefinites.
- Charlow, Simon. 2010. *De Re* Anaphors.

Recurring Events

Colloquia	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.
Semantics group meetings	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
MACSIM	Mid-Atlantic graduate student conference on meaning
SYNC	SUNY-YALE-NYU-CUNY graduate students' miniconference

Publications by Current Students and Recent Alumni

2016

- Zhang, Linmin. 2016. Motivating a Symmetric Copula *Be* in Attitude Reports. In *U. Penn Working Papers in Linguistics*, 22(1), 313-322.
- Zu, Vera. To appear. Competition and obviation from French to Newari. *Proceedings of the 46th annual meeting of the North East Linguistics Society*.

2015

- Bumford, Dylan. 2015. Incremental quantification and the dynamics of pair-list phenomena. *Semantics & Pragmatics* 8(9), 1-70.
- Kastner, Itamar. 2015. Factivity Mirrors Interpretation: The Selectional Requirements of Presuppositional Verbs *Lingua* 164, 156-188.
- Kuhn, Jeremy. 2015. ASL Loci: Variables or Features? *Journal of Semantics*. DOI: 10.1093/jos/ffv005
- Lin, S.-Y. Jeff. 2015. An Inquisitive Semantics Analysis for Chinese Polar Question Particle. In Proceedings of 20th Amsterdam Colloquium, ed. T. Brochhagen, F. Roelofsen, and N. Theiler. Online Publication hosted by the University of Amsterdam.
- Zhang, Linmin. 2015. The interplay of composition and concept specificity in the left anterior temporal lobe: An MEG study. *NeuroImage* 111, 228-240. (with Liina Pyykkänen)
- Zhang, Linmin. 2015. Comparatives revisited: Downward-entailing differentials do not threaten encapsulation

theories. In *The Proceedings of the 20th Amsterdam Colloquium*, 478-487. (with Jia Ling)

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.

Zu, Vera. 2015. A two-tiered theory of the discourse. *Proceedings of the Poster Session of the 33rd West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics*, 151-160.

2014

Bumford, Dylan. 2014. Universal quantification as iterated conjunction. In Maria Aloni, Michael Franke & Floris Roelofsen (eds.), *Logic, Language and Meaning: 19th Amsterdam Colloquium*, 67-74.

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

Kuhn, Jeremy. 2014. Gather-type predicates: Massiness over participants. *Proceedings of the 45th Annual Meeting of the North East Linguistics Society*.

Leffel, Timothy. 2014. Restrictive vs. non-restrictive composition: a magnetoencephalography study. *Language, Cognition and Neuroscience* 29(10), 1191-1204 (with Miriam Lauter, Masha Westerlund, and Liina Pylkkänen)

Wood, Jim. 2014. Reflexive *-st* verbs in Icelandic. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 32(4), 1387-1425.

2013

Bumford, Dylan. 2013. Association with distributivity and the problem of multiple antecedents for singular *different*. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 36(5), 355-369. (with Chris Barker)

Kastner, Itamar. 2013. The LATL as locus of composition: MEG evidence from English and Arabic. *Brain and Language* 141, 124-134. (with Masha Westerlund, Meera Al Kaabi, and Liina Pylkkänen)

Leffel, Timothy. 2013. Pronominal F-markers in Basa'a. In *Proceedings of the 43rd Annual Meeting of the North East Linguistic Society*. (with Radek Simik and Marta Wierzba)

Mascarenhas, Salvador. 2013. The erotetic theory of reasoning: bridges between formal semantics and the psychology of deductive inference. *Philosophical Perspectives* 27, 312-365. (with Philipp Koralus)

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)

Zu, Vera. 2013. Probing for conversation participants: The case of Jingpo. *Proceedings of The 49th Annual Regional Meeting of Chicago Linguistic Society* 49(1).

2012

Bumford, Dylan. 2012. It-clefts are IT (inquiry terminating) constructions. *Proceedings of Semantics and Linguistic Theory* 22. (with Dan Velleman, David Beaver, Emilie Destruel, Edgar Onea, and Liz Coppock)

Charlow, Simon. 2012. Cross-categorial donkeys. In Maria Aloni (ed.), *Logic, Language and Meaning: 18th Amsterdam Colloquium*, 261-270.

Lassiter, Dan. 2012. Presuppositions, provisos, and probability. *Semantics & Pragmatics* 5(2), 1-37.

Lassiter, Dan. 2012. Quantificational and modal interveners in degree constructions. Talk given at *Semantics and Linguistic Theory* 22, 565-583.

Laternus, Rebecca. 2012. Ktunaxa Future Modals. *Proceedings of SULA 7: The Semantics of Under-Represented Languages of the Americas*. GLSA: Amherst.

Leffel, Timothy. 2012. Modality and future reference in Masalit. In *Proceedings of the 42nd Annual Conference*

on *African Linguistics*, 221-230.

Livitz, Inna. 2012. Modal Possessive Constructions: Evidence from Russian. *Lingua* 122, 714–747.

Mascarenhas, Salvador. 2012. Licensing by modification: the case of positive polarity pronouns. In *Proceedings of Sinn und Bedeutung 16*, 417-430.

2011

Irwin, Tricia. 2011. Intransitive sentences, argument structure, and the syntax-prosody interface. In Mary Byram Washburn et al. (eds.) *Proceedings of the 28th West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics*, 275-28.

Lassiter, Dan. 2011. Nouwen's puzzle and a scalar semantics for obligations, needs, and desires. Talk given at *Semantics and Linguistic Theory 21*, 694-711.

Lassiter, Dan. 2011. Vagueness as probabilistic linguistic knowledge. In R. Nouwen, U. Sauerland, H.-C. Schmidt, and R. van Rooij (eds.), *Vagueness in Communication*, 197-215.

Leffel, Tim. 2011. English proximal/distal non-deictic demonstratives align with hearer-new/hearer-old information status. *Snippets* 23:9-10.

2010

Charlow, Simon. 2010. Can DP be a scope island? In Thomas Icard & Reinhard Muskens (eds.), *Interfaces: Explorations in Logic, Language and Computation*, 1-12.

Lassiter, Dan. 2010. Gradable epistemic modals, probability, and scale structure. *Semantics and Linguistic Theory 20*, 197-215

Lassiter, Dan. 2010. The Algebraic Structure of Amounts: Evidence from Comparatives. In T. Icard & R. Muskens (eds.), *Interfaces: Explorations in Logic, Language, and Computation*, 38-56.

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

Williams, Adina. 2016. Modification and Predicative Uses of the Mandarin Locative Preposition ZAI. Presentation at ConSOLE XXIV. York St. John & York University.

Zhang, Linmin. 2016. Additive particles with a built-in Gricean pragmatics. The 90th Annual Meeting of the Linguistic Society of America (LSA 2016). (with Jia Ling)

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.

Jeretic, Paloma. 2015. Toward a unified semantics of Russian imperfective. *SYNC*, New York University.

Kuhn, Jeremy. 2015. Iconicity in the grammar: pluractionality in French Sign Language. *LSA* 89. (with V. Aristodemo)

- Kuhn, Jeremy. 2015. Meaning in space: singulars, plurals, and functions in American Sign Language. Invited talk given at Penn's *Linguistics Thursday Thoughts*.
- Kuhn, Jeremy. 2015. On the /-oo/ suffix of Campbells monkeys (*C. campbelli*). Invited talk given to the Penn primatology group.
- Kim, Songhee. 2015. Korean *tul* as a loosened distributivity marker. Poster at *MACSIM: Mid-Atlantic Colloquium of Studies in Meaning 5*, University of Delaware.
- 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 Pylkkanen)
- 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. Bound pronouns in matrix clauses and the structure of speech acts. *The 33rd West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics (WCCFL 33)*. Simon Fraser University.

2014

- Bumford, Dylan. 2014. Incremental quantification and the dynamics of pair-list phenomena. Invited talk given at Stanford's *Construction of Meaning Workshop*.
- Kuhn, Jeremy. 2014. Functional reference in American Sign Language. *MACSIM: Mid-Atlantic Colloquium of Studies in Meaning 4*.
- Kuhn, Jeremy. 2014. Scope and domain of indefinites in American Sign Language. *FEAST 3*.
- Zhang, Linmin. 2014. The Role of the Left Temporal Pole in Language Processing: A MEG Investigation into the Interaction between Combination and Concept Specificity Effects. Poster at *the 21st Annual Meeting of Cognitive Neuroscience Society (CNS 21)*. (with Liina Pylkkänen)
- 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)
- Leffel, Timothy. 2013. A syntactically conservative approach to Bolinger effects. Talk given at *MACSIM: Mid-Atlantic Colloquium of Studies in Meaning 3*.
- Veselinovic, Dunja. 2013. Distributivity with group terms: Semantics or Pragmatics? Poster presentation at *MACSIM: Mid-Atlantic Colloquium of Studies in Meaning 3*.
- Williams, Adina. 2013. On the semantics and pragmatics of English anarthrous singulars. Talk given at *SYNC 2013*.
- Zhang, Linmin. 2013. A ratio analysis of binominal *each*. Poster at *MACSIM: Mid-Atlantic Colloquium of Studies in Meaning 3*.

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.
- Irwin, Tricia. 2012. Presentational unaccusativity: Argument structure and information status. Paper presented at the LSA special session, "Information Structure and Discourse: In memory of Ellen F. Prince." *LSA Annual Meeting*. Portland, OR.
- Laternus, Rebecca. 2012. Reflexives and the Middle Voice in Ktunaxa. Talk given at the *Forty-seventh International Conference on Salish and Neighbouring Languages*.
- Leffel, Timothy. 2012. Nonrestrictive adjectives and the theory of scalar implicature. Poster presentation at *GLOW 35 (Generative Linguistics in the Old World)*.
- Livitz, Inna. 2012. The effect of focus on the interpretation and expression of embedded pronominal subjects. Paper presented at *LSA Annual Meeting* in Portland, OR.
- Mascarenhas, Salvador. 2013. An interpretation-based account of illusory inferences from disjunction. Talk given at *Sinn und Bedeutung 18*.
- Mascarenhas, Salvador. 2012. Toward an interpretation-based account of some reasoning failures. Talk given at MIT's *LF Reading Group*.

2011

- Charlow, Simon. 2011. More on the LFs of Attitude Reports. Invited session at Rich Thomason's *Workshop in Philosophy and Linguistics*. (with Yael Sharvit)
- Irwin, Tricia. 2011. Totally high: Drama SO and the distribution of a speaker-oriented adverb. *Syntax Colloquium Series*, Yale University Linguistics Department.
- Vázquez-Rojas, Violeta. 2011. Purépecha Classifiers are Distributive Predicates. Talk given at the *29th West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics*.

2010

- Charlow, Simon. 2010. *De re* anaphors. Poster presentation at *Semantics and Linguistic Theory 20*.
- 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 Pyllkkänen)
- Mascarenhas, Salvador. 2010. Contextual givenness vs. existential quantification. Talk given at *MACSIM: Mid-Atlantic Colloquium of Studies in Meaning*.