

Conditionals

Linguistics 472
Cresap 110 (Semantics Lab)
M/W 11:00–12:20

Prof. Stefan Kaufmann (kaufmann@northwestern.edu)
Linguistics Department (2016 Sheridan Rd.), Rm. 32
Telephone: 491-5779
Office hours: M/W 3:30–4:30 or by appointment

Course Description

We will study the semantics of conditionals, focusing on English ‘*if . . . then . . .*’-sentences. Starting with a discussion of their classification, we will explore the semantic issues arising with each of the major types and study in depth a number of formal approaches designed to address them. The core topics will be centered around inference patterns, truth conditions, model theory, and context dependence. In their own contributions, students are encouraged to venture into related areas, such as conditional interpretations of other constructions, conditional speech acts and metalinguistic conditionals, and the applicability of the formal apparatus across languages.

Prerequisites: Graduate status or permission of the instructor.

Teaching method: Lectures, student presentations, and discussions.

Readings: Selected readings from the primary literature.

Evaluation: Completion of readings, regular attendance and involvement in discussions are expected of all participants. All students are expected to present one of the readings (to be chosen by October 07) in class. In addition, students taking the course for credit are required to write a paper on a topic of their choice, for which they must have my approval by the end of October. The paper is due on Monday, Dec 09. Late papers will not be accepted.

Notice to students with disabilities: In compliance with Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, Northwestern University is committed to providing equal access to all programming. Students with disabilities seeking accommodations are encouraged to contact the office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 847-467-5530 or ssd@northwestern.edu. SSD is located in the basement of Scott Hall. Additionally, I am available to discuss disability-related needs during office hours or by appointment.

Syllabus

This schedule may be altered during the quarter to suit students' interests. Any changes will be announced in class and via email. An up-to-date version of the syllabus will always be available upon request and through the Course Management System (under "External Links") at

<http://courses.northwestern.edu/>

Right-aligned readings in brackets are recommended; all others are required.

Introduction, basics, taxonomy: Sep 25

Quirk *et al.* (1985); Comrie (1986)

Classics: Sep 30–Oct 30

Counterfactuals: Sep 30–Oct 14

- Ordering semantics: Sep 30/Oct 02
Stalnaker (1968), Lewis (1973, Chapter 1); [Stalnaker (1981)]
- Cotenability, Premise semantics: Oct 07/09
Goodman (1947); Kratzer (1981); Lewis (1981)
- Lumping: Oct 14 (Kristen Syrett)
Kratzer (1989)

☛ Brute-force assignment of leftover in-class presentations on Oct 07!

Indicatives: Oct 16–30

- Gricean pragmatics: Oct 16/21
Grice (1989, Chapter 4); Jackson (1979)
- Quantification I: Oct 23 (Lewis Gebhardt)
Lewis (1975); von Stechow and Iatridou (2002)
- Quantification II: Oct 28
Kratzer (1991) [Zvolenszky (2002)]
- Data semantics: Oct 30 (James German)
Veltman (1986)

☛ Consultations on paper topics by the end of October!

Topics: Nov 04–Nov 27

Time and counterfactuals: Nov 04–13

- Determinism and miracles: Nov 04
Lewis (1979) [Nute (1984)]
- Branching time: Nov 06/11
Thomason (1970, 1984)
- Causality: Nov 13 (Amber Bloomfield)
Bennett (1984) [Mårtensson (1999)]

Meaning and form: Nov 18–27

- “Counterfactuality”: Nov 18 (Joshua Viau)
Stalnaker (1975); von Fintel (1998) [Karttunen and Peters (1979)]
- Tense in counterfactuals: Nov 20
Dahl (1997); Iatridou (2000) [Dancygier (1998); Fleischman (1989)]
- Tense in indicatives: Nov 25/27
Crouch (1993, Chapter 2); Kaufmann (2002)

Student presentations: Dec 02/05

- Presentations of students’ term projects
Time per student: $160/n - 10$ minutes, where n is the number of students taking the course for credit
- Papers due by 5pm on Monday, Dec 09!

Readings

Aristotelian Society (1991). *The Symposia Read at the Joint Session of the Aristotelian Society and the Mind Association at the University of Durham*. The Aristotelian Society. Supplementary Volume 65.

Athanasiadou, A. and Dirven, R., editors (1997). *On Conditionals Again*, volume 143 of *Amsterdam Studies in the Theory and History of Linguistic Science*. John Benjamins, Amsterdam / Philadelphia.

Bennett, J. (1984). Counterfactuals and temporal direction. *The Philosophical Review*, **93**(1), 57–91.

- Comrie, B. (1986). Conditionals: A typology. In Traugott *et al.* (1986), pages 77–99.
- Crouch, R. (1993). *The Temporal Properties of English Conditionals and Modals*. Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge.
- Dahl, O. (1997). The relation between past time reference and counterfactuality: A new look. In Athanasiadou and Dirven (1997), pages 97–112.
- Dancygier, B. (1998). *Conditionals and Prediction*. Cambridge University Press.
- von Stechow, K. (1998). The presupposition of subjunctive conditionals. In U. Sauerland and O. Percus, editors, *The Interpretive Tract*, volume 25 of *MIT Working Papers in Linguistics*. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.
- von Stechow, K. and Iatridou, S. (2002). If and when *If*-clauses can restrict quantifiers. ms, MIT.
- Fleischman, S. (1989). Temporal distance: A basic linguistic metaphor. *Studies in Language*, **13**(1), 1–50.
- Gabbay, D. and Guenther, F., editors (1984). *Extensions of Classical Logic*, volume 2 of *Handbook of Philosophical Logic*. D. Reidel.
- Goodman, N. (1947). The problem of counterfactual conditionals. *The Journal of Philosophy*, **44**, 113–128. Reprinted in Goodman (1983:3–27); Jackson (1991:9–27).
- Goodman, N. (1983). *Fact, Fiction and Forecast*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Grice, H. P. (1989). *Studies in the Way of Words*. Harvard University Press.
- Harper, W. L., Stalnaker, R., and Pearce, G., editors (1981). *Ifs: Conditionals, Belief, Decision, Chance, and Time*. Reidel.
- Iatridou, S. (2000). The grammatical ingredients of counterfactuality. *Linguistic Inquiry*, **31**(2), 231–270.
- Jackson, F. (1979). On assertion and indicative conditionals. *Philosophical Review*, **88**, 565–589. Reprinted in Jackson (1991:111–135).
- Jackson, F., editor (1991). *Conditionals*. Oxford University Press.
- Karttunen, L. and Peters, S. (1979). Conventional implicature. In C.-K. Oh and D. Dinneen, editors, *Presupposition*, volume 11 of *Syntax and Semantics*, pages 1–56. Academic Press, New York.
- Kaufmann, S. (2002). The presumption of settledness. To appear in *Proceedings of CLS 38*.

- Kratzer, A. (1981). Partition and revision: The semantics of counterfactuals. *Journal of Philosophical Logic*, **10**, 201–216.
- Kratzer, A. (1989). An investigation of the lumps of thought. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, **12**, 607–653.
- Kratzer, A. (1991). Modality. In von Stechow and Wunderlich (1991), pages 639–650.
- Lewis, D. (1973). *Counterfactuals*. Harvard University Press.
- Lewis, D. (1975). Adverbs of quantification. In E. Keenan, editor, *Formal Semantics of Natural Language*, pages 3–15. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.
- Lewis, D. (1979). Counterfactual dependence and time's arrow. *Noûs*, **13**, 455–476. Reprinted with Postscripts in Lewis (Lewis (1986):32–66); Jackson (1991:46–75). Page numbers refer to Lewis (1986).
- Lewis, D. (1981). Ordering semantics and premise semantics for counterfactuals. *Journal of Philosophical Logic*, **10**(2), 217–234. Reprinted in Lewis (1998:77–96). Page numbers refer to Lewis (1998).
- Lewis, D. (1986). *Philosophical Papers*, volume 2. Oxford University Press.
- Lewis, D. (1998). *Papers in Philosophical Logic*. Cambridge University Press.
- Mårtensson, J. (1999). *Subjunctive Conditionals and Time: A Defense of the Classical Approach*. Number 10 in Acta Philosophica Gothoburgensia. Department of Philosophy, University of Göteborg.
- Nute, D. (1984). Conditional logic. In Gabbay and Guenther (1984), pages 387–439.
- Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., and Svartvik, J. (1985). *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. Longman, London / New York.
- Sosa, E., editor (1975). *Causation and Conditionals*. Oxford University Press.
- Stalnaker, R. (1968). A theory of conditionals. In *Studies in Logical Theory, American Philosophical Quarterly, Monograph: 2*, pages 98–112. Blackwell. Reprinted in Sosa (1975:165–179); Harper *et al.* (1981:41–55); Jackson (1991:28–45). Page numbers refer to Harper *et al.* (1981).
- Stalnaker, R. (1975). Indicative conditionals. *Philosophia*, **5**, 269–286. Reprinted in Jackson (1991:136–154); Stalnaker (1999:63–77). Page numbers refer to Stalnaker (1999).
- Stalnaker, R. (1981). A defense of conditional excluded middle. In Harper *et al.* (1981), pages 87–104.

- Stalnaker, R. (1999). *Context and Content*. Oxford Cognitive Science Series. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- von Stechow, A. and Wunderlich, D., editors (1991). *Semantik: Ein internationales Handbuch der zeitgenössischen Forschung*. [= *Semantics*]. Walter de Gruyter.
- Thomason, R. H. (1970). Indeterminist time and truth value gaps. *Theoria*, **36**, 264–281.
- Thomason, R. H. (1984). Combinations of tense and modality. In Gabbay and Guenther (1984), pages 135–165.
- Thomason, R. H. and Gupta, A. (1981). A theory of conditionals in the context of branching time. In Harper *et al.* (1981), pages 299–322.
- Traugott, E. C., ter Meulen, A., Snitzer Reilly, J., and Ferguson, C. A., editors (1986). *On Conditionals*. Cambridge University Press.
- Veltman, F. (1986). Data semantics and the pragmatics of indicative conditionals. In Traugott *et al.* (1986), pages 147–168.
- Zvolenszky, Z. (2002). Is a possible-worlds semantics of modality possible? A problem for Kratzer's semantics. To appear in *Proceedings of SALT 12*.