

LIN6049 Advanced Semantics: Puzzles in Meaning

Sem B 2024-2025

Time and place Thursdays 9-11am, Bancroft 2.41

Module organiser Luisa Martí (luisa.marti@qmul.ac.uk)
Office: Arts One 1.24

Office hours Tuesdays (Teams) & Wednesdays (in person) 10-11am (book via QM+)

This module is about description, analysis and argumentation in semantics. You will learn how to investigate and argue about the semantics of natural languages using data from English and a variety of other languages (you don't need to speak any language other than English to do well in the module, but you will learn about other languages, and English, in it). Some knowledge of semantics (from Introduction to Semantics) is presupposed.

Optional and obligatory reading assignments are available on QM+.

Assessment: 100% coursework, divided into **3 puzzles** and **1 final assignment**:

3 puzzles (50% together, 2000 words total, due on Monday **28 April 2025** 1pm via QM+)

Every week I will hand out a puzzle or problem set, for a total of 9 puzzles. 3 of these puzzles are due for assessment on 28 April, as follows:

- 1 puzzle out of puzzles 1, 2 and 3, and
- 1 puzzle out of puzzles 4, 5 and 6, and
- 1 puzzle out of puzzles 7, 8 and 9

You should complete puzzles as they are handed out and continue working on them as you learn more semantics. **You will receive personalised feedback from me if you submit your answer on QM+ the week after the puzzle is handed out (see schedule overleaf).** You should take into account any and all feedback when you submit these puzzles for assessment. Submitting every puzzle in time for feedback will improve your chances of doing well in the module. I will provide general feedback on puzzles and discuss expectations in detail, to be taken on board as well.

Final assignment (50%, 2000 words, due on Monday **12 May 2025** 1pm via QM+).

You have several options for this assignment, including coming up with your own puzzle or problem and solving it (or trying to), taking one or more puzzles that you don't turn in as part of the puzzle assignment and developing it/them, perhaps relating it/them to a new data set, from English or from another language. **Your choice needs my approval in all cases.** More details about the final assignment will be provided later in the module.

Every student must attend **two individual meetings** with me, in weeks 6 and 13, to discuss choices for assignments and other issues. See QM+ to sign up and for guidelines. **There will be no class those weeks.** Your choice of final assignment **needs my approval.**

You are encouraged to **discuss** puzzles and problems together. If you do that, please write the names of the people you worked with at the top of your submission. I do require that you **write up** your work independently, so that what you submit really is your own work only.

See the Student Handbook for a full description of the marking criteria. Attendance is expected and subject to School policy. Late assessed work is subject to School policy.

To do well in the module, attend class, ask questions, come to office hours, submit all puzzles for feedback, take all feedback on board, do all the readings, and work carefully and thoroughly. Semantics puzzles can be a lot of work, but they can also be a lot of fun!

Schedule: TOPICS

Week	Topic	Notes
Week 1	Introduction	No class. See asynchronous materials on QM+
Week 2	Definites	
Week 3		
Week 4		
Week 5	Bare nouns	
Week 6	Individual meeting 1	No class. See QM+ to sign up and for meeting guidelines
Week 7	Reading week	No class
Week 8	Bare nouns	
Week 9	Demonstratives	
Week 10		
Week 11	Quantifiers	
Week 12		
Week 13	Individual meeting 2	No class. See QM+ to sign up and for meeting guidelines

Schedule: submitting work for FEEDBACK

Week	Available on QM+	Submitted by you for feedback on QM+	Returned to you with feedback on QM+
Week 1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Week 2	Puzzle 1	N/A	N/A
Week 3	Puzzle 2	Puzzle 1	N/A
Week 4	Puzzle 3	Puzzle 2	Puzzle 1
Week 5	Puzzle 4	Puzzle 3	Puzzle 2
Week 6	No class		
Week 7	Reading week		
Week 8	Puzzle 5	Puzzle 4	Puzzle 3
Week 9	Puzzle 6	Puzzle 5	Puzzle 4
Week 10	Puzzle 7	Puzzle 6	Puzzle 5
Week 11	Puzzle 8	Puzzle 7	Puzzle 6
Week 12	Puzzle 9	Puzzle 8	Puzzle 7
Week 13	No class	Puzzle 9	Puzzles 8, 9

Schedule: submitting work for ASSESSMENT

Due	What you need to submit
28 April 2025 by 1pm via QM+	3 puzzles. Choose: 1 puzzle out of puzzles 1, 2 and 3, and 1 puzzle out of puzzles 4, 5 and 6, and 1 puzzle out of puzzles 7, 8 and 9
12 May 2025 by 1pm via QM+	Final assignment Developed from (a) puzzle(s)/topic of your choice NEEDS APPROVAL!