GHENT UNIVERSITY

Course Specifications

Valid as from the academic year 2026-2027

Semantics and Typology (A006747)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 5.0 **Study time 150 h**

Course offerings in academic year 2026-2027

A (semester 1) Dutch Gent

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Willems, Klaas LW06 lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027	crdts	offering
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - English)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - French)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - German)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - Greek)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - Italian)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - Latin)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - Scandinavian Studies)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - Spanish)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - German)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Greek)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Italian)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Latin)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Scandinavian Studies)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Spanish)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - English)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - German)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - Greek)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - Italian)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - Latin)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - Scandinavian Studies)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - Spanish)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject German)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject German - Greek)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject German - Italian)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject German - Scandinavian Studies)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject German - Spanish)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Greek)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Iberian-Romance Languages)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Latin)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Latin - Greek)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Latin - Italian)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Latin - Scandinavian Studies)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Latin - Spanish)	5	A

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

Language theory, linguistic methodology, syntax/semantics interface, linguistic typology, theories of meaning, linguistic epistemology.

Position of the course

– To gain insight, from the point of view of general linguistics, into several important linguistic disciplines and into the methods and concepts they use.
– To be able to evaluate the relative achievements as well as restrictions of different linguistic models.
- To gain insight into typologically diverse language data.

Contents

This course deals with several linguistic disciplines from the point of view of general linguistics and language theory, with an emphasis on synchronic language studies, in particular semantics (psycholinguistic, cognitive, functional and generative approaches, including their relation with pragmatics) and syntax (viz. current trends in the study of sentence hierarchy: case theory, syntactic typology). The classes revolve around the critical analysis of various methods and hypotheses found in some of the prominent theories and models in current linguistics, which are applied from a comparative perspective to typologically diverse language data.

Initial competences

Students are familiar with general linguistic concepts (cf. General linguistics: Theories and methods or General linguistics: History of the language sciences in the Bachelor programme)

Final competences

1 Students have excellent knowledge of linguistic disciplines, methods and concepts, including theoretical linguistics (Ghent University Competence Model: 1.1),
2 have developed the scientific skill to evaluate and discuss different linguistic theories and methodologies from a general linguistics perspective (1.1),
3 are trained in comparing structuralist, functional and cognitive theories and methods in linguistics (1.1, 1.5),
4 have developed the skill to analyse and interpret data from an array of typologically diverse languages by means of present-day linguistic concepts (2.3),
5 are well-versed in contextualising and explaining important current linguistic concepts such as meaning, underspecification, reference, sense, categorisation, sentence hierarchy, construction, case, valency, ergativity, referential hierarchies, implicature, compositionality, etc. (2.3, 2.4, 2.5).

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'

Conditions for exam contract

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

Teaching methods

Seminar, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

Seminar, with weekly readings of linguistic articles, based on written guiding questions, and discussions in class.
No lecture recordings are provided for this course (interactive teaching format).
This course assumes the responsible use of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI). During the lessons, what this means will be explained.

Study material

Type: Reader

Name: Articles Semantics and typology
Indicative price: € 8
Optional: no
Language : English
Number of Pages : 120
Available on Ufora : Yes
Online Available : Yes
Available in the Library : No
Available through Student Association : No

Type: Handouts

Name: Introduction to Semantics and typology
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: no
Language : Dutch
Number of Pages : 15
Online Available : Yes
Available in the Library : No
Available through Student Association : No
Usability and Lifetime within the Course Unit : one-time
Usability and Lifetime within the Study Programme : one-time

References

(A selection of articles for reading.)

- Carston, R. (2012). Word meaning and concept expressed. *The Linguistic Review* **29**, 607-623.
- Comrie, B. (2013). "Alignment of Case Marking of Full Noun Phrases". In: M. Dryer & M. Haspelmath (eds.). *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online* (WALS, 2013), § 98.
- Dixon, R. (1994), "Syntactically based and semantically based marking". In: R. Dixon, *Ergativity*, Cambridge University Press (1994), 23-35.
- Evans, N. (2005). Some distinctive characteristics of the vocabulary of Australian languages. In: David Alan Cruse, Franz Hundsnurscher, Michael Job & Peter Rolf Lutzeier, *Lexikologie/Lexicology*. Vol. 2 (Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissen-schaft 21). Berlin & New York: W. de Gruyter, 1076-1083.
- Ferreira, F. et al. (2002), "Good-enough representations in language comprehension". In: *Current Directions in Psychological Science* **11**, 11-15.
- Frisson, S. (2009). "Semantic underspecification in language processing". *Language and Linguistic Compass* **3**, 111-127.
- Glucksberg, H. (2003), "The Psycholinguistics of Metaphor". In: *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* **7**, 92-96.
- Haspelmath, M. (2003). "The geometry of grammatical meaning: semantic maps and cross-linguistic comparison". In: Tomasello, Michael (ed.) *The New Psychology of Language*, vol. 2. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 211-243.
- Hopper, P. & S. A. Thompson (1980). "Transitivity in Grammar and Discourse". *Language* **56**, 251-299.
- Levinson, S. (2000). "On the notion of a Generalized Conversational Implicature". In: S. Levinson. *Presumptive Meanings. The Theory of Generalized Conversational Implicature*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 12-42.
- Pustejovsky, J. (2002). "Syntagmatic processes". In: David Alan Cruse, Franz Hundsnurscher, Michael Job & Peter Rolf Lutzeier, *Lexikologie/Lexicology*. Vol. 1 (Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissen-schaft 21). Berlin & New York: W. de Gruyter, 565-570.
- Sanford, A. and P. Sturt (2002), "Depth of processing in language comprehension". In: *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* **6**, 382-386.
- Taylor, J. (2002), "Compositionality". In: J. Taylor, *Cognitive Grammar*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2002), pp. 97-109.

Course content-related study coaching

This course is conceived as a Seminar. The lecturer introduces topics to be discussed in class. The discussions have the form of tutorial work in class and

students can also speak to the lecturer on weekly office hours.

Assessment moments

end-of-term assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Oral assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Oral assessment

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

not applicable

Extra information on the examination methods

The oral exam takes 30 minutes. There are eight open questions; the oral exam takes places after a written preparation for 30 minutes in an annex room. The exam is an opportunity for studentes to demonstrate theoretical knowledge and to conduct empirical analyses.

Calculation of the examination mark

100% end-of-term evaluation

Facilities for Working Students

Facilities:

1 Possible rescheduling of an oral examination to a different time in the same academic year
2 Feedback can be given by email

Extra information:

In case of exemption from educational activities, notes of fellow students are considered to be essential to fully understand the subjects treated in the classes and the reading material.

For more information contact the monitoring service of the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy: https://www.ugent.be/lw/nl/student/studiestudentenbegeleiding/trajectbegeleiding.htm