

This course will focus on modal expressions, i.e. expressions conveying possibility and necessity. We will address some of the core questions that such expressions give rise to, such as:

- It seems that we get different ‘flavors’ of necessity and possibility (compare, for instance, *John must do his homework now* to *John must be in jail*). How do we capture these ‘flavours’ semantically and what kind of representations do they relate to (e.g. a set of rules, common knowledge, ...)? Are these different ‘flavours’ tied to formal properties of the expressions, such as their syntactic position?
- One of the ‘flavors’ of possibility/necessity seems to make reference to internal states of the speaker. Are these internal states limited to epistemic states (knowledge/belief)? And is it really always the speaker whose internal states are considered?
- We find that some modals display hallmarks of ‘gradability’ (e.g. *John is more likely to be in jail than Peter*)? How do we model this in terms of possibility and necessity? And why do modals differ w.r.t. which forms reflect ‘gradability’ (e.g. *more* vs. *rather* vs. *better*)?

This is just a selection– I am happy to cover whatever issues we come up with during the course.