

NYU Semantics Group 09/18/25
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Title. A variably strict truthmaker semantics for modals and conditionals

Abstract. This talk presents a novel approach to modals and conditionals by integrating two independently well-known frameworks: variably strict semantics and truthmaker semantics. I demonstrate how this combination preserves the insights of the original variably strict framework for modals and conditionals due to David Lewis and Angelika Kratzer while combining it with the advantages of truthmaker semantics known from Kit Fine's work. This combination overcomes problems concerning the interaction of conditionals, disjunctions, and negated conjunctions. In particular, it addresses separate challenges to the standard Lewis-Kratzer semantics for counterfactuals posed by free choice disjunction and by the "Two switches" experiment previously discussed in Ciardelli, Zhang, and Champollion (2018, L&P). This talk is based on joint work with Timothée Bernard (Université Paris Cité).