<u>**Name of the course:**</u> **Generics and Habituals**

<u>**Lecturer name:**</u>   **Ariel Cohen**

<u>**Course number:**</u>   132.1.0129

<u>**Office hours:**</u>

<u>**Short course description (5-10 lines**</u>) **with key words at the end of the paragraph**
We will discuss the meaning of generic sentences, such as *Birds fly*, and habituals, such as *John smokes*. Although such sentences are prevalent in language, it is far from clear exactly what they mean. We will consider a number of theories, from a variety of points of view.

<u>**Course requirements**</u>**:**

Attendance required	**no**
Papers:	**80%**
Exams:	**20%**

1 Course description

In this course we are going to discuss the semantics of generics and habituals, exemplified by sentences such as the following:

(1) a. Dogs are mammals.

b. Birds y.

c. The platypus lays eggs.

d. The Frenchman eats horsemeat.

e. Bulgarians are good weightlifters.

f. The giant panda is an endangered species.

g. Bees are sexually sterile.

h. Prime numbers are odd.

i. John jogs in the park.

j. Mary smokes.

What is it that makes such sentences true or false? Sentence (1.a) seems to hold for all dogs, (1.b) for most birds, (1.c) for most female platypuses (presumably less than half the total number of platypuses), (1.d) for rather few Frenchmen, (1.e) for very few Bulgarians, and (1.f) for no individual giant panda. On the other hand, the majority of bees are sexually sterile, and, except for the number 2, all primes are odd, yet (1.g) and (1.h) are false. Sentences (1.i) and (1.j) appear to be about events; how often does John have to jog, and how often does Mary have to smoke, for these sentences to be true?
In this class we will examine a number of approaches to the problem of generics.

2 Readings

The course will be structured around my paper, Genericity, which you will have available on Moodle. Additional readings be assigned from time to time for class discussion.
Two very useful books are: G. N. Carlson and F. J. Pelletier (1995) The Generic Book; A. Cohen (1999) Think Generic!. Both will be available in the "shmurim" section of the library.