Section I – Semantics – the Study of Meaning

Week 1. Basic distinctions

1st class: Propositions. Lexical semantics vs. function words. Notations for coding meaning contrasts.
Homework: Read Lawler on Semantics, Cruse Chapter 1.

Week 2. Basics of sentential (first-order) and modal logic

3rd class: Basic connectives: and, or, not, if, possible, necessary
4th class: DeMorgan’s Law and truth tables. Modus ponens.
Homework: Read Cruse Chapter 2, Grice.

Week 3. Interpropositional relations

5th class: Presupposition and entailment. Factives.
Homework: Read Cruse Chapters 3 & 20.

Week 4. Basic tools for lexical analysis

8th class: Polysemy and homonymy. Etymology.
Homework: Read Cruse Chapters 4 & 5.

Week 5. Semantic change

9th class: Dictionaries. Etymology.
10th class: Grammaticalization. Universal pathways of change.
Homework: Read Cruse Chapter 6, Hopper.

Week 6. Markedness

11th class: Center / periphery (a.k.a. unmarked / marked)
Homework: Read Cruse Chapter 7, Greenberg, Ross on paths.

Week 7. World order

13th class: Squishes and non-discrete linguistics.
14th class: Freezes. Sounding.
Homework: Cruse Chapter 8, Cooper and Ross, Ross on sounding.
Lakoff and Johnson Chapters 1-16

Week 8. Metaphor and other tropes

15th class: Unmetaphoring. Seeing the world into pages.
16th class: Coexisting metaphorical structurings in a domain.
Homework: Read Cruse Chapter 9, Lakoff and Johnson Chapters 17-30, Lakoff on the contemporary theory of metaphor.

Midterm.

Week 9. Syntax “and” semantics

17th class: Generative semantics / Interpretive semantics.
Auxiliaries as verbs. The remote structure of actions.
Predicate Raising. What was wrong with Generative Semantics (2).
18th class: Logical categories and deep syntactic categories. What nouns are for, what verbs are for, what adjectives are for.
Homework: Read Cruse Chapter 10, Postal, Huck & Goldsmith.

Section II – Pragmatics – How we use language

Week 10. Speech acts

19th class: Austin. The performative hypothesis.
20th class: Derived force rules. Pragmantax.
Homework: Read Cruse Chapters 10-12, 18, Ross on declaratives, Ross on where to do things with words.

Week 11. Information flow.

21st class: Given/New. Functional sentence perspective.
Topic continuity. Pragmatic presupposition.
22nd class: Questions and answers. Conjunctive and disjunctive wh-clauses
Homework: Read Cruse Chapters 13-14, Givón, Ross on wh-clauses
Week 12. The architecture of emphasis

23rd class: Cleft and pseudocleft sentences.
24th class: Left and right dislocation. Left and right deictic dislocation.
Homework: Read Cruse Chapter 15-16, Prince, Ross on frozenness.

Week 13. Interpersonal relations

25th class: Politeness. Gender.
26th class: The N-word. “Correctness.”
Homework: Read Cruse Chapters 17 & 19, Robin Lakoff on Women’s language, Labov on African-American English.

Week 14. Poetics and ineffability

27th class: The art of fusion. The space of creation.
28th class: The great Roman Jakobson.
Homework: Read Jakobson on verbal art, Ross on hologramming & languages as poems, Becker on silence

Week 15. Review, summary, prospects.

29th class: The Great Pete Becker. Language and world view.
30th class: What we have learned so far. So what? Next steps?

TAKE-HOME FINAL.