Official Semantics & Pragmatics syllabus  
LINGUISTICS 4090.  
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General.

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Some poetics and syntax and deep learning papers are at: http://www-personal.umich.edu/~jlawler/hajpapers.html  
Squibnet is at: http://www-personal.umich.edu/~jlawler/haj/Squibnet/  


George Lakoff and Mark Johnson: Metaphors We Live By  


The good news: Any tests will be open book – any books or other materials may be brought to the tests. More likely, they will be take-home. You will be able to consult more there than you can carry.  

The bad news: None of your materials will help much, if you have not learned to think for yourself about the course. This course is not about memorization of a set of concepts and definitions. Rather, what is required is a general openness of mind, and the exercise of intelligence and creativity. What is not required, but is fervently hoped for, is that you become fascinated with language in general and meaning in particular, and find that you cannot live without it. [BTW: you can't]
Grading policy: To be discussed in class. Unreasonable numbers of unexcused absences may result in grade deflation.

Disabilities: In accordance with the terms and spirit of Public Law 101-336 (Americans with Disabilities Act) and Section 504, Rehabilitation Act, I will cooperate with the Office of Disability Accommodation to make reasonable special arrangements for students with disabilities. If you have a disability which will require some accommodation under the terms of these acts, please come to me and discuss your individual needs, or give me a written statement. If you have not registered yet with the Office of Disability Accommodation, I encourage you to do so. Their telephone number is (940) 565-4323; TDD access (940) 565 2958.

General: Insofar as this is possible, nothing is written in stone. No significant learning is possible in contexts which are not as kind and flexible as possible. We are all humans, trying to learn from each other. If there are special problems for you, come and talk to me about them.

It is in fact nothing short of a miracle that modern methods of instruction have not yet entirely strangled the holy curiosity of inquiry; for this delicate little plant, aside from stimulation, stands warmly in need of freedom; without this, it goes to wrack and ruin without fail.

Albert Einstein

The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion that stands at the cradle of true art and true science.

Albert Einstein
The World As I See It

I never try to teach my students anything. I only try to create an environment in which they can learn.”

Albert Einstein
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. Hurford pp. 1-35.

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. Hurford pp. 36-64.

Week 3. Interpropositional relations

5th class: Presupposition and entailment. Factivs.


Week 4. Basic tools for lexical analysis


8th class: Polysemy and homonymy. Etymology.

Homework: Read Cruse Chapters 4 & 5. Elbourne, Chapters 1 & 2. Hurford pp. 105-140.

Week 5. Semantic change

9th class: Dictionaries. Etymology.

10th class: Grammaticalization. Universal pathways of change.

Homework: Read Cruse Chapter 6, Hopper. Hurford pp. 141-179.

Week 6. Markedness

11th class: Center / periphery (a.k.a. unmarked / marked)


Week 7. World order
13th class: Squishes and non-discrete linguistics.
14th class: Freezes. Sounding.
Homework: Cruse Chapter 8, Hurford pp. 218-243. 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, Hurford pp. 244-280. 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 (?)
18th class: Logical categories and deep syntactic categories. What nouns are for, what verbs are for, what adjectives are for.

Section II – Pragmatics – How we use language

Week 10. Speech acts

19th class: Austin. The performative hypothesis.
20th class: Derived force rules. Pragmantax.

Week 11. Information flow.

21st class: Given/New. Functional sentence perspective.
22nd class: Topic continuity. Pragmatic presupposition.
Questions and answers. Conjunctive and disjunctive
wh-clauses
Homework: Read Cruse Chapters 13-14, Hurford pp. 327-346. 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.
Week 13.  Interpersonal relations

25th class:  Politeness. Gender.
26th class:  The N-word. “Correctness.”
Homework:  Read Cruse Chapters 17 & 19, Robin Lakoff 1975.
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 & Ross 1986, Becker on silence

Week 15.  Review, summary, prospects.

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

Readings