English 719 Contemporary Semantics

Time/Place (Th 4:10-6:55)
Instructor: Jenny Lederer
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Office: HUM 430, (415) 338-3094
Office Hours: Tues. 11-12; Thurs. 11-1; or by appointment. (Please sign up on the Google Doc if you plan to attend office hours. Telephone and/or Skype communication easy to arrange as well.)

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0Aho9XFckMu8IdGR6ZW5uSHR2bS1FNlNNSlp3UE5hN Hc

Course Description:
This course will introduce basic topics within contemporary semantics through a combination of readings in both formal and cognitive semantic theory. Each topic covered will be investigated through analysis inspired by formal logic and analysis stemming from research in language and cognition. The goal of this hybrid approach is to expose students to multiple, distinct perspectives within semantic research and provide students with a repertoire of tools for use in their own analyses. In-class discussion will include hands-on activities analyzing data through the various theoretical frameworks presented in the readings.

Workload and Grading:

Weekly Readings
Readings are to be completed prior to class discussion on topic.

Class Participation- 10%
Please participate in class discussion –your opinions and questions matter, and a good seminar is only possible with active participation from everyone.

One literature search with accompanying presentation- 15% (credit/no credit)
Each week, starting Sept 19th, two class participants will be asked to perform a mini-literature review to find an article of interest related to the topic of discussion for that week. (Will explain more details in class). It will be your job to find the article, post it to iLearn and then bring in a **one-page handout** that summarizes the article and finding. The first goal of these presentations is to expose the class to discrete research topics within the broad areas of semantics we cover in class. The second goal is to sample research to inspire your choice of a final research topic. Presentations should be ten minutes in length.

Three take-home problems sets- 15% each (Graded on scale 1-10)
Spread throughout the semester, you will be asked to complete three homework assignments, each 2-3 pages in length. Homework assignments are posted to iLearn. Working in homework groups is encouraged, but final HW write-ups must be carried out individually.

Final Paper – 30% (Graded on scale 1-10)

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A final research squib on a topic of your choosing will be carried out in stages throughout the semester. You may work with a partner on the final research project if you choose, but group work is not required.

- Stage 1- In-class discussion of student interests and potential paper topics
- Stage 2- Written précis of proposed paper topic submitted–including five references on the topic.
- Stage 3- Data presentation –In-class small group presentations of collected data and initial analyses.
- Stage 4 - Peer editing of rough draft of final paper
- Stage 5 – Presentation of Final Paper –Ungraded
- Stage 6 – Final paper submitted. Paper should be 10-12 pages in length; one-and-a-half or double-spaced; follow standard guidelines for linguistics papers (guidelines are available on iLearn).

Required Texts:
Semantics 3rd edition. 2003. John Saeed. Blackwell Publishing.
Mappings in Thought and Language. 1997. Gilles Fauconnier.

Virtual Course Reader: Articles posted to iLearn. Please print and bring to class discussion.

Teaching Method:
Class instruction will include guided discussion and an emphasis on data analysis and small group work.

Schedule:

Date	Discussion Topic	Readings (to be completed for class on date to the left)	Assignments	In Class Discussion
Th 8/29	Introduction to Semantics	Saeed Ch.1		
Th 9/5	Formal Semantics and Cognitive Semantics	Talmy (to appear) Lappin 2002 (Optional –difficult read)		
Th 9/12	Word Sense; Polysemy	Saeed Ch.2; Saeed Ch. 3 Sweetser 1999		
Th 9/19	Predicates, Arguments, Verbal Semantics	(Saeed Ch. 10.1-10.6) Petruck 1996	Homework 1- Frame Semantics Posted	Article Presentations
Th	Predicates, Arguments,	Saeed Ch. 4 Fillmore and Baker 2001		

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9/26	Verbal Semantics			Article Presentations
Th 10/3	Thematic Roles –	Saeed Ch. 6 Kövecses Ch.1; Ch.2	Homework 1 Due	Article Presentations
Th 10/10	An alternative to thematic roles - Figure/Ground relations	Talmy 2001-Chapter 5		Article Presentations
Th 10/17	Modality, Conditionals, Counterfactuals	Saeed Ch. 5	Homework 2- Mental Spaces posted Paper topic discussion	Article Presentations
Th 10/24	Modality, Conditionals, Counterfactuals- a cognitive approach – Mental Spaces	Fauconnier Ch.1; Ch2; Ch.4	Précis of Final paper (with references) Due 10/24	Article Presentations
Th 10/31	Mental Spaces		Homework 2 due	Article Presentations
Th 11/7	Tense and Aspect	Saeed Ch.5	Homework 3- Aspect posted Bring project data to class	Data Discussion Article Presentations
Th 11/14	Aspectual Classes			Article Presentations
Th 11/21	Noun Phrases	Saeed Ch. 11 Kövecses Ch. 12 Langacker 1987	Homework 3 due	Article Presentations
Th 12/5	Class Presentations		Final Paper Rough Drafts Due (posted to iLearn). Presentation handouts due	Presentations
Th 12/12	Class Presentations		Presentation handouts due	Presentations

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			Final Paper Due	

A Brief List of Linguistics Journals relevant to the Study of Semantics:

Journal of Semantics   *Journal of Linguistics*
Linguistic Analysis   *Language*
Linguistics and Philosophy   *Linguistic Inquiry*
Natural Language Semantics   *Linguistics*
Semantics and Pragmatics   *Natural Language and Linguistic*
Studia Linguistica   *Theory*
Constructions and Frames   *Sign Language and Linguistics*
English Language and Linguistics   *Cognitive Linguistics*

SFSU POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Cheating and Plagiarism: Cheating is the actual or attempted practice of fraudulent or deceptive acts for the purpose of improving one's grade or obtaining course credit; such acts also include assisting another student to do so. Typically, such acts occur in relation to examinations. However, it is the intent of this definition that the term 'cheating' not be limited to examination situations only, but that it include any and all actions by a student that are intended to gain an unearned academic advantage by fraudulent or deceptive means.

Plagiarism is a specific form of cheating.   Plagiarism occurs when a student misrepresents the work of another as his or her own. Plagiarism may consist of using the ideas, sentences, paragraphs, or the whole test of another without appropriate acknowledgement, but it also includes employing or allowing another person to write or substantially alter work that a student then submits as her or his own. Any assignment found to be plagiarized will be given an "F" grade. All instances of plagiarism in the College of Humanities will be reported to the Dean of the College, and may be reported to the University Judicial Affairs Officer for further action. (Quotation taken from the College of Humanities Plagiarism Resources, www.sfsu.edu/~colhum/plagiarism.html)

Information on the University's policy regarding cheating and plagiarism, is located in the *Schedule of Courses* ('Legal Notices on Cheating and Plagiarism') or the *University Catalog* ('Policies and Regulations'). See also the student code of conduct at the following website: http://www.sfsu.edu/%7Ehelpdesk/docs/rules/conduct.htm

For help with plagiarism, see the following web-based resources:
        (1)http://online.sfsu.edu/~dcohler/stu_resource.html#plagiarism
        (2) http://www.sfsu.edu/~colhum/plagiarism.html
        (3) http://online.sfsu.edu/~rone/StudentHelp/Plagiarism.html

Accessibility: I wish to make this courses as accessible as possible to students with disabilities or medical conditions that may affect any aspect of course assignments or participation. You are invited to communicate with me at the outset of the course or at your discretion about accommodations that will improve your experience of or access to the course. Also contact the Disability Resource Center at 338-2472 (Voice/TDD).

Americans with Disabilities Act (AD) Accommodation: The University is committed to providing reasonable academic accommodation to students with disabilities. The Office of Services for Students with Disabilities provides university academic support services and specialized assistance to students with disabilities. Individuals with physical, perceptual, or learning disabilities as addressed by the Americans

with Disabilities Act should contact Service for Students with Disabilities for information regarding accommodations. Please notify your instructor so that reasonable efforts can be made to accommodate you. If you expect accommodation through the Act, you must make a formal request through Services for Students with Disabilities.

Computer/Internet Access Requirement: At SFSU, computers and communications links to remote resources are recognized as being integral to the education and research experience. Every student is required to a computer or have other personal access to a workstation (including modem and printer) and access to on-line educational resources.

Classroom Behavior: The classroom is a special environment in which students and faculty come together to promote learning and growth. It is essential to this learning environment that respect for the rights of others seeking to learn, respect for the professionalism of the instructor, and the general goals of academic freedom are maintained. Differences of viewpoint or concerns should be expressed in terms which are supportive of the learning process, creating an environment in which students and faculty may learn to reason with clarity and compassion, to share of themselves without losing their identities, and to develop an understanding of the community in which they live. Student conduct which disrupts the learning process shall not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action and/or removal from class.