

LING 5345

Semantics

Spring 2010

Professor:	Laurel Smith Stvan
Classroom:	218 Trimble Hall, Tues./Thur. 12:30-1:50 p.m.
Office Hours:	410 Hammond Hall Tuesday and Thursday 2:00-3:00 and Wed. 4:00-5:00 and by appointment Phone: (817) 272-3133 Email: <u>stvan@uta.edu</u> (preferred medium)

Course Description

This course introduces you to the field of semantics, focusing on the representation of meaning at the lexical level. This semester topics will include ways of describing meaning (reference and deixis, componential analysis and prototype theory), ways of organizing meaning (the mental lexicon, connotation and euphemism, linguistic relativity), and ways of applying these concepts to sort predicates by argument structure patterns.

The course fulfills a Meaning and Use requirement for Linguistics degrees, or can serve as an elective for work in TESOL or other graduate programs.

Course prerequisites: LING 3340 or permission of instructor.

This is a graduate-level course with three objectives for students:

- To obtain theoretical background with which to describe context-independent meaning at the word and phrase level.
- To practice analyzing the encoding of concepts in language and to learn to illuminate individual examples of lexical relations as well as patterns within a language.
- To practice reading and discussing primary source linguistic literature on semantics in order to gain insight into both theoretical aspects and practical applications of semantics as they may interact with other fields of linguistics.

Course Requirements

1. Read chapters from the textbook and articles distributed in class and be able to discuss them in class.
2. Submit four 3-page written exercises throughout the semester that involve practicing the concepts discussed in class.
3. Write a term project (12-15 pages) analyzing in depth one class of verbs with shared characteristics (to be approved ahead of time by the instructor). You will be asked to submit a 1-page abstract as your term paper proposal in conference abstract style (describing the problem, methodology, and hypothesis). The last two classes are reserved for student presentations on term paper research.

Required Course Material

There are two required texts:

One is the book *Understanding Semantics* (2002), by Sebastian Löbner. It is available at the UTA Bookstore, or through any bookseller of your choice. (ISBN: 0-340-73198-2).

The second is a set of required articles that will be available online shortly after class starts. A login code for these will be distributed in class. (See the reading list details on the last page of this document.)

Grading

Your course grade will be determined as follows:

Attendance, Oral Presentation, and Class Participation	10%
Written Homework Assignments (3 pages each) (4 X 13%)	52%
Term paper (12-15 pages)	<u>38%</u>
	100%

There will be no exam. Final oral presentations will receive a check to indicate that they are completed. Participation includes attendance and preparation for class discussion. Homework and the term papers will receive a letter grade (A, A-, B+, B, B-, etc.)

Course Policies

Class attendance is **required**. You are responsible for the material presented in class lectures and for any handouts passed out in class as well as for any group work done in class; for your own benefit, come to class. But if you must miss a lecture, do the reading and homework, get notes and information from another student, and then come in to talk to me as soon as possible.

Assignments are due on the day listed in the schedule, and no later. No late assignments will be accepted without PRIOR instructor approval. Even approved late submissions will receive a reduction in points.

Important Academic and Administrative Policies

Final Review Week: A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week unless specified in the course syllabus. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week.

Americans With Disabilities Act: The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation (Public Law 93112, The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended). With the passage of new federal legislation entitled the “Americans With Disabilities Act” (ADA), pursuant to section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens.

All members of the UTA faculty are required by law to provide “reasonable accommodation” to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. As a student, your responsibility rests with informing the instructor at the beginning of the semester (you must inform me in writing (e-mail is fine) no later than Tuesday, January 26, 2010) and in providing authorized documentation through designated administrative channels; for more information, contact UTA's Office of Students with Disabilities (located in the Lower Level of University Center).

According to Department of Linguistics and TESOL policy, "unofficial" or "informal" requests for accommodations (i.e., those not recorded by the Office of Students with Disabilities) cannot be honored.

Academic Dishonesty: At The University of Texas at Arlington, academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form. Students involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from UTA.

According the UT System *Regents' Rules and Regulations*, "Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts" (Part One, Chapter VI, Section 3, Subsection 3.2, Subdivision 3.22).

While the Department of Linguistics and TESOL hopes to foster a sense of community in which students can enhance their educational experience by conferring with each other about the lectures, readings, and assignments, all work submitted must be the product of each student's own effort. Students are expected to know and honor the standards of academic integrity followed by American universities; ignorance of these standards is not an excuse for committing an act of academic dishonesty (including plagiarism). If you have questions, please speak with your instructor, your academic advisor, or the department chair.

Student Support Services Available: The University of Texas at Arlington supports a variety of student success programs to help you connect with the University and achieve academic success. These programs include learning assistance, developmental education, advising and mentoring, admission and transition, and federally funded programs. Students requiring assistance academically, personally, or socially should contact the Office of Student Success Programs at 817-272-6107 for information and referrals.

Enrolling in / Withdrawing from this Course: Students are responsible for making all decisions regarding their enrollment status in UTA courses. Should you decide to withdraw from this course, you must either (1) drop via the MyMav online system or (2) complete an official "add/drop" and file it in the Linguistics and TESOL department office. Any student who stops attending class and/or fails to complete assigned work will not be "automatically" dropped; in such cases, unless you officially withdraw, you will receive a grade of F. (Note: Students enrolled in graduate courses may not "replace" a grade; all grades are permanent.)

A student dropping his/her last (only) course cannot withdraw as above. Rather, s/he must go in person to the UTA Registrar's Office (Davis Hall, First Floor) and complete a request to resign from the university.

Auditors: The Department of Linguistics and TESOL has a "no audit" policy. Students attending LING classes must be officially enrolled in those courses. Exception: Students who have already fulfilled a degree requirements and would like to sit in on a comparable course to prepare for their comprehensive / diagnostic examination may do so (with the permission of the professor).

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(Last Updated: January 16, 2010)

Readings to have prepared for class

Tasks or events to be aware of

1.	Tues. Jan 19 Thur. Jan 21	No readings for today: Introduction to the study of meaning Löbner, Ch. 1: Utterance meaning	
2.	Tues. Jan 26 Thur. Jan 28	Löbner, Ch. 2: Adding different levels to descriptive meaning Allan Ch. 5: Denotation, connotation and euphemism Brief examples: Callen; Willwerth; Renoff; Dickson	
3.	Tues. Feb 2 Tues. Feb 4	Algeo and Pyles Ch. 10: Semantic shift in words and meaning Löbner, Ch. 3: Meaning and meaning shift	Homework #1 due
4.	Thur. Feb 9 Thur. Feb 11	Aitchison, Ch. 4-7: Attempts to pin down meaning	
5.	Tues. Feb 16 Thur. Feb 18	Rosch, pp. 27-48: On categorization Löbner Ch. 9: Meaning and cognition	
6.	Tues. Feb 23 Thur. Feb 25	Löbner Ch. 5: Meaning relations More discussion of synonyms and opposites	Homework #2 due
7.	Tues. March 2 Thur. March 4	O'Grady (2 pages); Whorf; linguistic relativity AND Rosch, pp. 95-121: On linguistic relativity	
8.	Tues. March 9 Thur. March 11	Reddy, pp. 284-324: The conduit metaphor	

----Spring Break----

9.	Tues. March 23 Thur. March 25	Löbner Ch. 4: Meaning and logic Chierchia & McConnell-Ginet: pp. 377-388	Homework #3 due
10.	Tues. March 30 Thur. April 1	Löbner, Ch. 6: Predication Fillmore, Ch. 8: The Grammar of hitting and breaking	
11.	Tues. April 6 Thur. April 8	Levin and Hovav: Wiping the Slate Clean, pp. 123-151 Discussion of Levin—delineating verb classes	Homework #4 due
12.	Tues. April 13 Thur. April 15	Clark and Clark: When Nouns Surface as Verbs Elaboration of final paper projects (on a class of predicates)	
13.	Tues. April 20 Thur. April 22	Vendler: Verbs and times Meet with me today to discuss progress on your paper Scheduled meetings only, no meeting of the full class	Paper conferences; topic due
14.	Tues. April 27 Thur. April 29	Group meetings in class on finding relevant diagnostics Summary and review	Course evaluations
15.	Tues. May 4 Thur. May 6	No readings, we'll hear about your paper topics No readings, we'll hear about your paper topics	

Exam Thursday May 13

**Everyone's term paper is DUE
by 3:30 in my office**

Additional Semester Dates to Note

Wed. Feb. 3	Census Date
Fri. April 2	Last day to Drop a Course
Thur. May 20	Grades available: http://www.uta.edu/mymav

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Required Class Readings**

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ALLAN, KEITH. 2001. *Natural Language Semantics*: Blackwell Publishers.
Ch. 5. The Power of Words: Connotation and Jargon, pp.147-180.

CALLEN, MICHAEL. 1992. AIDS: The Linguistic Battlefield. *Exploring Language*, ed. by Gary Goshgarian, 133-40. New York: HarperCollins.

WILLWERTH, JAMES. 1993. It Hurts Like Crazy. *Time*, Feb. 15.53.

BRENOFF, ANN. 2006. House that is 'beautiful' sounds better to buyers. *Chicago Tribune*, December 17, 2006.

DICKSON, GORDON. 2008 Officials: 'Trans-Texas Corridor' a taboo, but need real. Fort worth Star Telegram. Wednesday, Apr 2, 2008.

ALGEO, JOHN and PYLES, THOMAS. 2004. *The Origins and Development of the English Language*. Boston: Thomson Wadsworth. Ch. 10. Words and Meanings. Pp. 227-244.

CHIERCHIA, GENNARO and MCCONNELL-GINET, SALLY. 1990. *Meaning and Grammar*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Ch. 8 Word Meaning, pp. 377-388.

AITCHISON, JEAN. 1987. *Words in the Mind: An Introduction to the Mental Lexicon*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. C. 4-7. Pp. 39-81.

ROSCH, ELEANOR. 1978. Principles of Categorization. *Cognition and Categorization*, ed. by Eleanor Rosch and Barbara B. Lloyd, 27-48. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

O'GRADY, WILLIAM, DOBROVOLSKY, MICHAEL and ARONOFF, MARK. 1991. *Contemporary Linguistics: An Introduction*. New York: St. Martin's Press. Pp. 242-243. [On Linguistic Relativity]

ROSCH, ELEANOR. 1974. Linguistic Relativity. *Human Communication: Theoretical Perspectives*, ed. by Albert Silverstein, 95-121. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Pp. 501-519.

REDDY, MICHAEL J. 1979. The Conduit Metaphor: A Case of Frame Conflict in our Language about Language. *Metaphor and Thought*, ed. by A. Ortony, 284-310 (+ appendix). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
(See a graphic for this at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/metanick/34771789/>)

FILLMORE, CHARLES J. 1967. The Grammar of *Hitting* and *Breaking*. Readings in English Transformational Grammar, ed. by R. Jacobs, 120-33. Waltham, MA: Ginn.

LEVIN, BETH and HOVAV, M. RAPPAPORT. 1991. Wiping the Slate Clean: A Lexical Semantic Exploration. *Cognition*, 41 123-151.

CLARK, EVE V. and CLARK, HERBERT H. 1979. When Nouns Surface as Verbs. *Language*, 55.767-811.

VENDLER, ZENO. 1967. Verbs and Times. *Linguistics in Philosophy*, ed. by Zeno Vendler, 97-121. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.