San José State University
Department of Linguistics and Language Development

LING 114: Introduction to Semantics & Discourse
Fall 2018

Course and Contact Information

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Class Days/Time:	M/W 4:30p-5:45p
Classroom:	Clark Hall (CL) 216
Prerequisites:	LING 101, LING 112 or instructor consent

Course Description

This course introduces the student to a variety of issues relating to meaning as it is studied by linguistic semantics and discourse pragmatics. It aims at providing the student with the necessary knowledge and tools for understanding the theoretical and practical problems involved in (a) the study of words as meaning units and as categorization units (including topics of reference and sense, sense relations, extension and intension, deixis, prototypes), (b) the study of larger meaning units such as sentences (propositional semantics), (c) the role of the speaker and context in the interpretation of discourse (speech acts, conversational implicature), and (d) the investigation of information structure in discourse.

Required Texts/Readings

Textbook

Saeed, John I. 2015. *Semantics* (4th edition). Oxford: Wiley Blackwell.

Online Resources

Electronic library

In addition to accessing course reading material, this resource can give you access to many e-books. http://site.ebrary.com.libaccess.sjlibrary.org/lib/sjsu/home.action?force=1

Linguistic terms

Do you have trouble deciphering a linguistic term? Check this site for definitions and clarifications. http://www-01.sil.org/linguistics/GlossaryOfLinguisticTerms/Index.htm

World Atlas of Language Structures

This site is a must-see for all linguists. Interfaced with Google Maps, it gives you a picture of the distribution of various linguistic phenomena in the world's languages. http://www.wals.info/

FrameNet

We will use this site to understand thematic roles and their relation to predicates. It's a very useful tool for linguists and natural language processing researchers. https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/fndrupal/framenet_search

Wordnet

A lexical database for English nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs grouped into cognitive synonyms and linked by means of other semantic and lexical relations. https://wordnet.princeton.edu

Course Website

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, assignments, notices, etc. can be found on Canvas. Students are responsible for regularly checking Canvas to learn of any updates.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

This course addresses the following broad goals and specific objectives of the Linguistics Program. (The complete set of BA Linguistics Program Goals and Student Learning Objectives can be found at http://www.sjsu.edu/linguistics/programs/linguistics/ba_linguistics/goals_ba_linguistics/index.htm.)

Goal 1: To transmit knowledge of the structure and function of language and its use and change in various cultural and social settings.

PLO 1E: Analyze the meaning of words and sentences, elaborate on the role of linguistic and pragmatic context in the interpretation of meaning, and understand the role of theories in the analysis of semantic data.

Goal 2: To help students develop critical thinking skills, analytical skills, and reading, writing and research skills.

PLO 2A: Analyze phonetic, phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, and historical linguistics data.

PLO 2B: Critically evaluate competing approaches to the analysis of linguistic data.

PLO 2C: Use library and electronic research sources effectively.

PLO 2D: Use English reading and writing skills effectively to report on research or problem analysis.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

The goals of this course are:

1. To provide the student with the necessary knowledge and tools for understanding the theoretical and practical problems involved in the study of words as meaning units and categorization units.
2. To provide the student with the necessary knowledge and tools for understanding the theoretical and practical problems involved in the study of larger meaning units, such as constructions and sentences.
3. To provide the student with the necessary knowledge to understand the role of the speaker and the context in the interpretation of discourse.
4. To provide opportunities for using writing skills effectively to report on problem analysis.

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

CLO1: Use acquired basic concepts to identify and explain lexical relations, such as synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, homonymy, ambiguity, polysemy.

CLO2: Use acquired basic concepts to identify and explain sentence relations such as entailment, presupposition, synonymy, and contradiction.

CLO3: Identify the role that semantic distinctions, such as situation type, tense, aspect, modality, and evidentiality play in the construction of sentence meaning and state their types.

CLO4: Identify thematic roles, discuss various theories of thematic roles, and evaluate their relation to grammatical relations.

CLO5: Analyze discourse in terms of the role context plays in its interpretation by identifying types of deixis, categories of information structure, and types of inference, including Gricean implicatures.

CLO6: Use elements of speech act theory to analyze discourse.

CLO7: Critically evaluate theories of meaning, such as referential versus conceptual approaches to lexical semantics, necessary and sufficient conditions versus prototype approaches and formal versus functional approaches.

CLO8: Report on the analysis of linguistic data using appropriate language.

Course assignments relate to the learning outcomes as follows:

Assignment	Learning Outcomes
Homework Problems 1	LO1, LO7, LO8
Homework Problems 2	LO7, LO8
Homework Problems 3	LO1, LO8
Homework Problems 4	LO2, LO8
Homework Problems 5	LO3, LO8
Homework Problems 6	LO4, LO8
Homework Problems 7	LO5, LO8
Homework Problems 8	LO6, LO8
Project 1	LO1, LO7, LO8
Project 2	LO5, LO6, LO8
Midterm Exam	LO1, LO2, LO3, LO7, LO8
Final Exam	LO4, LO5, LO6, LO7, LO8

Course Requirements and Assignments

Lectures and discussion based on readings - You are expected to complete the reading assignments ahead of time and contribute to the discussion on the topic of the day (See *Schedule* for reading assignments). Lecture slides and other supplemental material will be available on Canvas.

Weekly homework problems – These assignments will provide you with the practice you need to analyze the semantic structure of languages and with comprehending various semantic concepts. Written assignments must be *typewritten* and emailed to the instructor by the due date & time. (See *Schedule* for details.)

Projects – There will be two projects through which students will gather and analyze language data using the tools of semantics analysis we learn class. Written assignments must be *typewritten* and emailed to the instructor by the due date & time. (See *Schedule* for details.)

Midterm Exam – This in-class exam will test your knowledge of the basic semantic concepts and your ability to perform semantic analysis within the time constraints of the exam. It consists of short-answer questions, definitions, and short data analysis problems.

Final Examination – A final exam will test your knowledge of the basic semantic concepts required for the study of semantic structure in and out of context. It consists of short-answer questions, definitions, true/false questions, and short data analysis problems.

Grading Information

−   Assignments are due on or before the specified due date/time.
−   All work must be typed and submitted via email, unless otherwise specified.
−   Each assignment and exam is scored on a basis that allows for easy conversion to a percentage. These scores are then weighted as part of your final grade. For example, if you scored 100% on the first assignment, this would be weighted as 10 out of 10 points in the course's final 100-point total; if you got a 90, this would count as 90% of 10 (or 0.9 x 10 = 9 points towards the final 100).
−   Scores are made visible via Canvas as they are recorded. Students may check their cumulative scores with the instructor via email at any time.
−   Extra credit is not available for this course.
−   Late policy: Except in the case of a documented emergency, assignments submitted after the due date/time but within 24 hours of the due date/time will be assessed a 10% penalty. Those submitted after the first 24-hour period will be penalized an additional 10% for each late day.
−   Exams may not be taken at times other than their originally scheduled dates and times. Exceptions must be negotiated with the instructor well in advance of the stated exam time.
−   The table below provides the weighting of course tasks in the final grade:

Assignment	% of Final Grade
Homework (8 x 2%)	16%
Project 1	20%
Project 2	20%
Midterm Exam	22%
Final Exam	22%
Total	100%

−   Your final grade is based on the percentage of total points earned in the class. The table below gives the approximate expected point-values of each grade. Possible grades are A through F.

A+	98-100	B+	87-89.9	C+	77-79.9	D+	64-66.9
A	94-97.9	B	84-86.9	C	74-76.9	D	60-63.9
A-	90-93.9	B-	80-83.9	C-	70-73.9	F	< 60

Classroom Protocol

−   It is important to arrive in class on time, as late arrivals are disruptive to everyone.
−   Put your cell phone on silent or vibrate and don't text or take calls in class.
−   Personal computers may be used in class only to support activity directly related to the course, for example, to take class notes or follow a link suggested by the instructor.
−   Absolutely no access to electronic devices (phones, ipads, laptops, iwatches, et al.) will be allowed during exams.
−   Each assignment must be the original work of the student who turns it in. Students may discuss homework assignments with classmates, but everything you turn in must be your own original writing.
−   Bringing food or drink to class is discouraged.
−   If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to contact me or a fellow student to find out what you've missed.
−   No late-add petitions can be signed or approved by the instructor, chair or Dean of H & A.
−   The instructor reserves the right to reschedule lecture topics, assignments and exams with adequate advance notice.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo) at http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo. Students are strongly urged to read this information at the beginning of the semester.

LING 114: INTRODUCTION TO SEMANTICS & DISCOURSE
FALL 2018 COURSE SCHEDULE

*The schedule is subject to change with fair warning; changes will be announced
in class and posted on Canvas.*

Week	Date	Topics	Reading	Assignments
1	8/22 W	Course introduction		
2	8/27 M	Overview: semantics & discourse		
	8/29 W	What is meaning?	Ch. 1.1-1.5	
3	9/03 M	LABOR DAY HOLIDAY		
	9/05 W	Meaning: types, units, compositionality	Ch. 1.6-1.7	
4	9/10 M	Sense & reference in two models	Ch. 2.1 - 2.3	H1: 1.3, 1.4, 1.5
	9/12 W	Referential & representational theories	Ch. 2.4	
5	9/17 M	Words, concepts, & thinking: the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis	Ch. 2.5-2.6	
	9/19 W	Words & lexical items; lexical relations	Ch. 3.1-3.6	H2: 2.3, 2.4, 2.5
6	9/24 M	Polysemy & homonymy	Ch. 3.7-3.8	
	9/26 W	Sentence relations & truth analyticity, predicate logic	Ch. 4.1-4.3	H3: 3.2, 3.4, 3.10
7	10/01 M	Entailment, logical presupposition & contradiction	Ch. 4.4	
	10/03 W	Pragmatic presupposition	Ch. 4.5-4.6	*Project 1 Due*
8	10/08 M	Sentence semantics – situation types	Ch. 5.1-5.2.4	H4: 4.6, 4.7, 4.8
	10/10 W	Tense & aspect	Ch. 5.2.5-5.2.8	
9	10/15 M	Modality & evidentiality	Ch. 5.3-5.4	
	10/17 W	*Midterm Review*		
10	10/22 M	*Midterm Exam*		
	10/24 W	Sentence semantics – thematic roles	Ch. 6.1-6.6	H5: 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4
11	10/29 M	Causation & voice	Ch. 6.7-6.8	
	10/31 W	Context & inference	Ch. 7.1, 7.3-7.4	H6: 6.1, 6.6, 6.8
12	11/05 M	Deixis	Ch. 7.2	
	11/07 W	Information structure	Ch. 7.5	
13	11/12 M	VETERANS DAY HOLIDAY		
	11/14 W	Inference & conversational implicature	Ch. 7.6-7.7	
14	11/19 M	Speech act theory – performatives	Ch. 8.1-8.3	H7: 7.3, 7.5, 7.6
	11/21 W	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY		
15	11/26 M	Direct & indirect speech acts	Ch. 8.4-8.6	
	11/28 W	Cognitive Semantics; Metaphor, Metonymy	Ch. 11.1-11.3	H8: 8.2, 8.4, 8.8
16	12/03 M	Cognitive Semantics: Image schemas, mental spaces	Ch. 11.4-11.5	
	12/05 W	Blending basics	Ch. 11.6	*Project 2 Due*
17	12/10 M	*Final Exam Review*		
FINAL EXAM		TBC		