

The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages
First Term, 2020-2021

Course Title: LING2006 Semantics
Description: This course introduces students to the study of meaning in language and equips them with essential concepts to understand ways in which meaning can be analyzed in linguistics. It mainly consists of three parts: 1) meaning of words (how words relate to the world and to other words of a language); 2) meaning of sentences (how the meaning of sentences can be specified); 3) meaning of utterances in context (how people use language and with what effects).

Content, highlighting fundamental concepts

Topic	Contents/fundamental concepts
reference	denotation, reference, prototypes
sense	antonymy, hyponymy, synonymy
theories of word meaning	semantic networks, Componential Analysis
sentence semantics	truth-value, truth condition, compositionality, composition rules
inter-sentential relations	entailment, contradiction, synonymy
mathematical basics	set theory, propositional logic, predicate logic
quantification	meaning of quantifiers, ambiguity, quantifier scope
argument structure	n-place predicate, thematic roles
pragmatics	Cooperative principle, Gricean Maxims, implicatures, presuppositions

Learning outcomes

<p>Students are expected to have achieved the following through lectures, readings, tutorial discussions, writing assignments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. an appreciation of the complex ways in which meanings are expressed through linguistic forms and structures; b. a basic understanding of the concepts and basic approaches to analyze linguistic meaning c. an increased sensitivity to the subtle ways in which meaning is conveyed in various texts encountered in mass media and public life

Learning activities

Lecture (hr) in class	Interactive tutorial (hr) in class	Assignment (hr) out of class	Reading (hr) out of class
2	1	3	3
M	M	M	M

M: Mandatory activity in the course
O: Optional activity
NA: Not applicable

Assessment scheme

Task nature	Description	Weight
Homework assignments	<p>There will be three homework assignment in total. <i>Late submissions will be accepted, but 20% of the total grade will be taken off for each day late.</i></p> <p>Homework assignments will be graded by the TAs.</p> <p>Mode of assessment: take-home Backup plan for assessment: online exam</p>	45%
Mid-term exam	<p>There will be one mid-term exam, scheduled in the middle of the semester. <i>No makeup tests will be allowed unless you provide documentation of medical reasons or other special circumstances.</i></p> <p>Mid-term exams will be graded by the instructor and TAs.</p> <p>Mode of assessment: face-to-face Backup plan for assessment: online exam</p>	25%
Final exam	<p>The final examination will be a cumulative exam scheduled during the make-up class dates between 2 December 2019 (Mon) – 3 December 2019 (Tue). <i>No makeup tests will be allowed unless you provide documentation of medical reasons or other special circumstances.</i></p> <p>The final exam will be graded by the instructor and the TAs.</p> <p>Mode of assessment: face-to-face Backup plan for assessment: online exam</p>	30%

Learning resources for students

<p><i>Textbook</i> Saeed, John I. (2016) <i>Semantics</i>. 4th edition. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell. There will also be some supplementary readings available on Blackboard Learn.</p> <p><i>Useful References</i> (reserved at the University Library)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cruse, Alan. 2011. <i>Meaning in language: An introduction to semantics and pragmatics</i> (3rd edition). Oxford University Press. 2. Hurford, James, Brendan Heasley & Michael Smith. 2007. <i>Semantics: a course book</i>. Cambridge University Press. 3. Jaszczolt, K. 2002. <i>Semantics and pragmatics: Meaning in language and discourse</i>. Longman. (Peking University Press edition available on Taobao) 4. Lyons, Christopher. 1999. <i>Definiteness</i>. Cambridge University Press. (ebook available via lib) 5. Lyons, John. 1977. <i>Semantics. Vol I & II</i>. Cambridge University Press. 6. Lyons, John. 1995. <i>Linguistic semantics: an introduction</i>. Cambridge University Press. (Peking University Press edition available on Taobao as well) 7. Portner, Paul. 2005. <i>What is meaning?: Fundamentals of formal semantics</i>. Blackwell Publishing. 8. Riemer, Nick. 2010. <i>Introducing semantics</i>. Cambridge University Press.

Feedback for evaluation

Course evaluations will be conducted. We are happy to hear feedback and comments by emails, office hour discussion, or appointment meetings.

Grade Descriptors

Grade	Overall Course
A	The student shows excellent and thorough mastery of the course materials. Work demonstrates the ability to apply the theories or subject matter to familiar and novel bodies of linguistic data in a clear and cogent manner that would surpass the normal expectation at this level.
A-	The student shows substantial and very good mastery of the course materials. Work demonstrates the ability to apply the theories or subject matter to familiar and some novel bodies of linguistic data in a logical and clear manner.
B	The student shows general and sufficient mastery of the course materials. Work demonstrates the ability to apply the theories or subject matter to most (but not necessarily all) familiar and novel bodies of linguistic data in an accurate and comprehensive manner.
C	The student shows general mastery of the course materials. Work demonstrates the ability to apply the theories or subject matter to most (but not necessarily all) familiar and standard linguistic data, but with occasional errors.
D	The student shows partial mastery of the course materials. Work demonstrate the ability to state and apply the theories or subject matter to some simple linguistic data only.
F	The student shows little or no evidence of mastery of the course materials, or fails to meet specified assessment requirements.

Plan of teaching activities for each week:

Lecture: Mon 09:30-11:15am LSK514 & 515 (Combined rooms)

Tutorial: Mon 11:30am-12:15pm LSK514 & 515 (Combined rooms) & MMW 702

Activities for tutorial: problem sets and discussion of linguistic data using the concepts and theories discussed in lecture

For both the lecture and the tutorial, the ideal teaching mode is face-to-face teaching. In case this is not possible due to the pandemic, everything will be moved online.

Course schedule

Class/ week	Date	Topic	Requirements (*: optional readings)
1	Sep 7	Introduction	
2	Sep 14	Word semantics: sense and reference	Saeed 2.1-2.3 (p.22-31)
3	Sep 21	Word semantics: More on sense, lexical relations	Saeed 2.4.1-2.4.4 (p.31-36) Saeed 3.5 (p.59-67)
4	Sep 28	Word semantics: semantic network, componential analysis	Saeed 9.1-9.2 (p. 259-262) Homework 1 distributed
5	Oct 5	Sentence semantics: sentence relations and truth	Saeed 4.1. (p.85-86); *Saeed 4.4 (p.95-97) Homework 1 due
6	Oct 12	Sentence semantics: Compositionality	Supplementary materials available on Blackboard Learn
7	Oct 19	Mid-term exam Set theory basics	
8	Oct 26	Public holiday – The day following Chung Yeung Festival	
9	Nov 2	Set theory application Quantification	Homework 2 distributed Saeed 10.3 (p.308-p.314)
10	Nov 9	Quantifier scope	Homework 2 due
11	Nov 16	Argument structure, thematic roles	Saeed 6.1-6.2 (p.150-155)

12	Nov 23	Pragmatics: Cooperative Principle, implicature and presupposition	Saeed 4.5 (p.97-105) Homework 3 distributed
13	Nov 30	Pragmatics: TBD Wrapping up, review for the final exam	Homework 3 due

Teachers' or TA's contact details

Professor/Lecturer/Instructor:	
Name:	XU Ting
Office Location:	G18, Leung Kau Kui Building
Telephone:	3943-0523
Email:	tingxu@cuhk.edu.hk
Teaching Venue:	
Website:	Thursday 2:00-4:00pm or by appointment

Teaching Assistant/Tutor:		
Name:		
Office Location:	Leung Kau Kui Building	Leung Kau Kui Building
Telephone:		
Email:		
Teaching Venue:		
Office hour:		

A facility for posting course announcements

Announcements will be posted on the course Blackboard website. Course materials will also be posted on the Blackboard website.
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Academic honesty and plagiarism

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/ . With each assignment, students will be required to submit a statement that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures.
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