The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages
First Term, 2022-23

Course Title: LING2006 Semantics

Description:

Linguistics is a scientific field which studies human language. One of mankind's most distinctive and consequential cognitive capacities is our ability to form an unlimited number of novel, meaningful linguistic expressions. And one of the major subfields of linguistics is semantics, the study of language meaning. In this course, we will learn how to look at meaning of natural languages through a scientific lens.

Content, highlighting fundamental concepts

Topic	Contents/fundamental concepts
Reference	Reference, denotation
Lexical relations	Homonymy, polysemy, synonymy, opposites, hyponymy, meronymy
Thematic relations	Theta roles, verbs, theta grids
Sentence semantics	Truth-value, compositionality, entailment, presupposition, implicature
Speech acts	Direct and indirect speech acts

Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, you should:

- i) Master fundamental concepts of linguistic meaning
- ii) Understand the role of semantics in the grammar of natural language
- iii) Appreciate the importance of semantics in everyday experience
- iv) Assess data from English and various other languages with a critical mind
- v) Use different logic-based tools to represent the meaning of natural language sentences

Learning activities

Lecture (hr) in class	Interactive tutorial (hr) in class	Assignments (hr) out class	Reading (hr) out class
2	1	3	3
M	M	M	O

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

Assessment scheme

Task nature	Description	Weight
Homework assignments	There will be a total of **3 take-home** written homework assignments, graded by TAs. 20% will be taken off for each day late. You are expected to work on the assignments **by yourself**.	15% * 3 = 45%
Mid-term	There will be 1 **in-class** mid-term on Oct 21 (Week 7), graded by the instructor and TAs.	20%
Final exam	There will be 1 final exam. The final exam will be **cumulative**, graded by the instructor and TAs. It will be conducted on Dec 5, exact time and place TBA.	25%
Participation	**Active participation** in lectures and tutorials are required. For each missed class meeting without a documented family or medical emergence, 2% will be taken off.	10%

Learning resources for students

- Lecture handouts will be posted on the Blackboard website for download before class.
- They are based on *Semantics (Forth Edition)*, John I. Saeed. Wiley Blackwell. 2016 (*not* mandatory).
- The relevant concepts and techniques will be introduced and discussed in class. They include - but are not limited to - materials found in the textbook. Most students may find the textbook helpful. Disclaimer: In case of any conflict, in-class instructions always have precedence over the textbook.

Feedback for evaluation

- In addition to the standard final course evaluation, we will also set up **an anonymous Google form** for you to share things you like and dislike throughout the entire term. Your feedback will be incorporated accordingly.
- Meanwhile, you are more than welcome to contact either the instructor or the TAs about how you feel about this course at any point.
- Furthermore, you may share your thoughts and concerns by emailing your feedback or questions to us, or making appointments with us.
- If you feel that you are falling behind and have content questions, please also do not hesitate to ask us for help!
- When you contact us via emails, please kindly put "LING2006 Semantics" in the subject line and allow us **24 hours (on weekdays)** to respond.

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+ B 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+ C 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 demonstrates 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.

Course schedule (subject to change)

Class/ week	Date	Topic	Requirements
1	Sep 9	Introduction, what is meaning?	(Saeed2016, pp. 1-17)
2	Sep 16	Word meaning and sentence meaning. Denotation/reference.	(Saeed2016, pp. 1-17, 22-29)
3	Sep 23	Lexical relations (homonymy, polysemy, synonymy, opposites, hyponymy, meronymy)	(Saeed2016, pp. 51-67, 69-75)
4	Sep 30	Thematic relations I: Theta-roles and participants.	(Saeed2016, pp. 149-156)
5	Oct 7	Thematic relations II: Grammatical relations and theta-roles.	(Saeed2016, pp. 155-164)
6	Oct 14	Thematic relations III: Voice.	(Saeed2016, pp. 166-175)
7	Oct 21	Mid term	
8	Oct 28	Sentence semantics I: Truth	(Saeed2016, pp. 84-91)
9	Nov 4	Sentence semantics II: Entailment, presupposition	(Saeed2016, pp. 94-105)
10	Nov 11	Conversational implicature and Grice's maxims of conversation	(Saeed2016, pp. 210-217)
11	Nov 18	Speech acts I: Speech Act Theory	(Saeed2016, pp. 229-237)
12	Nov 25	Speech acts II: Direct speech acts	(Saeed2016, pp. 237-247)
13	Dec 3	Speech acts III: Indirect speech acts	(Saeed2016, pp. 237-247)

Teachers' and TA's contact details

Instructor:	
Name:	CHEN Zhuo
Office Location:	G18 Leung Kau Kui Building
Email:	zhuochen[AT]cuhk.edu.hk
Teaching Venue:	Lecture: Fri 09:30-11:15, William M W Mong Eng Bldg 803
Office hours:	By appointment

Teaching Assistant/Tutor:	
Name:	HUANG Zhixian, XIE Qian
Office Location:	G20 Leung Kau Kui Building
Email:	zhixianhuang[AT]cuhk.edu.hk, 1155167910[AT]link.cuhk.edu.hk
Teaching Venue:	Tutorial: Thu 13:30-14:15, Chen Kou Bun Bldg 108, Hui Yeung Shing Bldg 501
Office hours:	By appointment

A facility for posting course announcements

- We will use the course Blackboard website to post course materials (lecture handouts and optional readings), assignments, and announcements.
- We will also send out email reminders once we post assignments and make announcements, please make sure to check your email regularly.

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.
- With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign on the declaration.
- For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide (URL: https://veriguide2.cse.cuhk.edu.hk/cuhk/index.jsp), the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide

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