

University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus
Faculty of Humanities, English Department
Masters Program in English

Course Title: Semantics

Course Number: INGL 6505

Number of Class/Credit Hours: 45 Hours/3 Credits

Prerequisites, Corequisites, and Other Requirements: None.

Course Description:

Semantics is the study of language and meaning. This course will focus on how meaning is conventionally associated with words (lexical semantics) and grammatical constructions (grammatical semantics). We will also spend time doing practical semantic analysis and we will look at what happens to meanings -- how they are acquired, how they change. This will enable us to consider practical applications of these approaches to meaning.

The course is a survey course. We will look at different approaches to the study of meaning, rather than looking at one approach in depth. In this course we will study a variety of linguistic structures in their semantic, pragmatic and cognitive contexts. The theoretical emphasis of this course will be typological and functional. It will be typological in that we will look at ways in which languages and structures within languages fall into various 'types' according to well-defined structural criteria. It will be functional in that we will strive to understand the observed patterns in terms of their semantic, pragmatic and cognitive functions.

Course Objectives: By the end of the course, the students will be able:

- 1) To understand, manipulate, and critically question the basic concepts and categories used by semanticists in their work.
- 2) To identify and describe the different processes involved in relating meaning to the mind and to the world.
- 3) To recognize and understand how meaning is conventionally associated with words and with grammatical constructions.
- 4) To conduct theoretical and descriptive research on a wide variety of aspects of semantics.
- 5) To explain and question the principal theories of meaning proposed by linguists.
- 6) To recognize and utilize the principles of Componential Analysis, Formal Semantics, and Cognitive Semantics..
- 7) To contribute in an effective way to the integration of fellow students with special challenges and needs into the learning environment.

- 8) To participate in team work designed to make necessary adjustments for the inclusion of students with special challenges and needs.

Course Content and calendar (approximate, subject to adjustment):

Weeks 1 and 2 (6 Class Hours): What is Meaning? Language and meaning, meaning, mind and world, the place of semantics in linguistics theory, some assumptions.

Week 3 (3 Class Hours): Meaning, Thought, and Reality. Reference, reference as a theory of meaning, mental representations, necessary and sufficient conditions.

Week 4 (3 Class Hours): Meaning, Thought, and Reality. continued Reference, reference as a theory of meaning, mental representations, necessary and sufficient conditions.

Week 5 (3 Class Hours): Word Meaning. Words, grammatical categories, lexical relations, derivational relations.

Week 6 (3 Class Hours): Sentence Relations and Truth. Logic and truth, types of truth, entailment and presupposition.

Week 7 (3 Class Hours): Sentence Semantics 1: Situations. Situation types, aspect, modality.

Week 8 (3 Class Hours): Sentence Semantics 1 continued: Situations. Situation types, aspect, modality.

Week 9 (3 Class Hours): Sentence Semantics 2: Participants. Thematic roles, grammatical relations, verbs and thematic grids, voice.

Week 10 (3 Class Hours): Meaning Components. Componential analysis, lexical relations, Katz's semantic theory, grammatical rules and semantic components, conflation patterns, Jackendoff's conceptual structure.

Week 11 (3 Class Hours): Formal Semantics. Connectives, quantifiers in predicate logic, truth values of sentences, meaning postulates.

Week 12 (3 Class Hours): Formal Semantics continued. Connectives, quantifiers in predicate logic, truth values of sentences, meaning postulates.

Week 13 (3 Class Hours): Cognitive Semantics. Metaphor, image schemas, polysemy, mental space.

Week 14 (3 Class Hours): Cognitive Semantics continued. Metaphor, image schemas, polysemy, mental space.

Week 15 (3 Class Hours): World and Time. Time and tense, intension and extension, counterfactuals, world-creating predicates, modal auxiliaries and adverbs.

TOTAL for 15 Weeks: 45 Class Hours/3 Credit Hours

Teaching Strategies: As much as possible a participatory, student centered pedagogy will be used in this class, with students actively engaged in learning processes whereby they can use their existing knowledge to shed light on areas of understanding about language which they may not have previously explored, through the use of such methods as discussion, Socratic questioning, group work, fieldwork, active research, lectures, textual analysis, critical analysis of audio visual materials, etc.

Students with access to Vocational Rehabilitation Services should contact the professor at the beginning of the semester in order to plan any special arrangements and equipment necessary in accordance with the recommendations of the Office of Challenged Students' Affairs (OAPI) in the office of the Dean of Students. In addition, any students with special needs or who require any type of assistance or special arrangements should contact the professor.

Resources and Equipment Rerquired:

- 1) Richardson Seminar Room (English Department) for student research
- 2) Ferri Screening Room (English Department) for video presentations
- 3) English Department Laboratory for student access to computers and the internet.

Methods of Evaluation: Evaluation procedures will be adjusted for students with special needs.

Class participation	10%
2 Oral reports	20%
10 Response Papers	20%
1 Annotated Bibliography Project	20%
1 final seminar-length Research Project	30%

Grading System: A=90-100%; B=80-89%; C=70-79%; D=60-69%; F=0-59%

Bibliography:

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