1. Course Code: LING2006

2. Title in English: Semantics

3. Title in Chinese: 語義學

4. Course 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. In this course, we will explore how meaning is expressed in natural language and certain principles that lie behind the interpretation of utterances in specific situations. In particular, we will address topics such as how linguistic expressions relate to entities in the world, meaning relations between linguistic expressions, the relation between meaning and truth, and how context and pragmatic principles affect interpretation.

5. Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, you are expected to:

  i)   State and recognize fundamental concepts of linguistic meaning
  ii)   Describe the role of semantics in the grammar of natural language
  iii) Explain the importance of semantics in everyday experience
  iv)   Generalize analyses based on English data to various other languages with a critical mind

6. Course syllabus

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

7. Course components (Teaching modes and Learning activities)

Teaching Modes and Learning Activities	
On-site face-to-face	Percentage of time
Lectures (hybrid no)	22.22%
Interactive tutorial (hybrid no)	11.11%
Out-of-classroom	
Homework assignments	33.33%
Readings	33.33%

8. Assessment type, percentage and rubrics

Assessment type	Percentage
Homework assignments • There will be a total of 3 take-home written homework assignments. • 20% of your raw score will be taken off for each day overdue. • They are not group projects and you are expected to work on them individually.	15% * 3 = 45%
Mid-term exam • There will be 1 in-class mid-term on Mar 1 (Week 8).	20%
Final exam • There will be 1 final exam. • The final exam will be **cumulative**. • It will be conducted on 4-6pm, Tue, Apr 23, exact place TBA.	25%
Participation • Consistent and active participation in lectures and tutorials is required. • For each missed class meeting without a documented family or medical emergence, 2% will be taken off.	10%

Assessment rubrics	
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.

9. Required and recommended readings

- **Required readings**:
  Semantics (Forth Edition), John I. Saeed. Wiley Blackwell. 2016.

- **Recommended readings**:
  Analyzing meaning: An introduction to semantics and pragmatics (Second Edition), Paul R. Kroeger. Language Science Press. 2019.
  A Semantic Approach to English Grammar (Second Edition), R. M. W. Dixon, Oxford University Press. 2005.
  What is Meaning?: Fundamentals of Formal Semantics, Paul H. Portner. Wiley Blackwell. 2005.
  Semantics: An international handbook of natural language meaning, ed. by Maienborn, Claudia, Klaus von Heusinger, and Paul Portner, Walter de Gruyter, 2011, 2012. (Online access is here)
  The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Semantics, ed. by Daniel Gutzmann, Lisa Matthewson, Cécile Meier, Hotze Rullmann, and Thomas Ede Zimmermann. Wiley Blackwell. 2020. (Online access is here)
  《漢語語義學》賈彥德，北京大學出版社，1999.
  《形式語義學引論》蔣嚴、潘海華，中國社會科學出版社，2005.

- Lecture handouts will be posted on the Blackboard website for download before class.

- The relevant concepts and techniques will be introduced and discussed in class. They include - but are not limited to - materials found in the textbook. Disclaimer: In case of any conflict, in-class instructions always have precedence over the textbook.

10. Feedback for evaluation

- In addition to the standard final course evaluation, starting from Week 3, we will also set up **an anonymous Google form** for you to ask questions or make suggestions throughout the entire term. Your feedback will be incorporated accordingly.
- Meanwhile, you are also more than welcome to share your thoughts and concerns by emailing your feedback or questions to us, or making in-person/virtual appointments with us.
- Whenever 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.

11. Course schedule (subject to change)

Class/ week	Date	Topic	Requirements/comments
1	Jan 12	Introduction	Saeed2016, pp. 1-17
2	Jan 19	Meaning, denotation, reference	Saeed2016, pp. 1-17, 22-29
3	Jan 26	Lexical meaning I: Ambiguity, vagueness, indeterminacy	Saeed2016, pp. 51-67, 69-75
4	Feb 2	Lexical meaning II: Lexical sense relations	Saeed2016, pp. 51-67, 69-75
5	Feb 9	No class: Lunar New Year	
6	Feb 16	Thematic relations I: Theta-roles and participants	Saeed2016, pp. 149-156
7	Feb 23	Thematic relations II: Grammatical relations and theta-roles	Saeed2016, pp. 155-164
8	**Mar 1**	**Mid term**	
9	Mar 8	No class: Reading week	
10	Mar 15	Sentence semantics I: Truth	Saeed2016, pp. 84-91
11	Mar 22	Sentence semantics II: Entailment, presupposition	Saeed2016, pp. 94-105)
12	Mar 29	No class: Good Friday	
13	Apr 5	Conversational implicature and Grice's maxims of conversation	Saeed2016, pp. 210-217
14	Apr 12	Speech acts I: Performatives	Saeed2016, pp. 229-237
15	Apr 19	Speech acts II: (In)direct speech acts	Saeed2016, pp. 237-247
16	Apr 22	Make up class	9:30-11:15am, location TBA
	Apr 23	**Final exam**	**4-6pm, location TBA**

12. Teachers' and TA's contact details

Instructor:	
Name:	CHEN Zhuo
Office Location:	G27 Leung Kau Kui Building, https://cuhk.zoom.us/j/5652900145
Email:	zhuochen[AT]cuhk.edu.hk
Teaching Venue:	Lecture: Fri 09:30-11:15, LSK 306 Tutorial: Wed 09:30-10:15, LSK 208
Office hours:	1 hr before midterm, 2 hrs before final, otherwise by appointment

Teaching Assistant/Tutor:	
Name:	CHEN Yige, LI Xiangyu
Office Location:	G19 Leung Kau Kui Building
Email:	yigechen[AT]link.cuhk.edu.hk, lixy255[AT]link.cuhk.edu.hk
Office hours:	By appointment

13. Details of course website

- 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.

14. 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 signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures.

- In the case of group projects, all members of the group should be asked to sign the declaration, each of whom is responsible and liable to disciplinary actions, irrespective of whether he/she has signed the declaration and whether he/she has contributed, directly or indirectly, to the problematic contents.

- For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment.

- Students are fully aware that their work may be investigated by AI content detection software to determine originality.

- Students are fully aware of the AI approach(es) adopted in the course. In the case where some AI tools are allowed, students have made proper acknowledgment and citations as suggested by the course teacher.

Assignments without a properly signed declaration will not be graded by teachers.

Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.

The submission of a piece of work, or a part of a piece of work, for more than one purpose (e.g. to satisfy the requirements in two different courses) without declaration to this effect shall be regarded as having committed undeclared multiple submissions. It is common and acceptable to reuse a turn of phrase or a sentence or two from one's own work; but wholesale reuse is problematic. In any case, agreement from the course teacher(s) concerned should be obtained prior to the submission of the piece of work.

The copyright of the teaching materials, including lecture notes, assignments and examination questions, etc., produced by staff members/ teachers of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) belongs to CUHK. Students may download the teaching materials produced by the staff members/ teachers from the Learning Management Systems, e.g. Blackboard, adopted by CUHK for their own educational use, but shall not distribute/ share/ copy the materials to a third-party without seeking prior permission from the staff members/ teachers concerned.

15. Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools in Teaching, Learning and Assessment

All use of AI tools is prohibited in assignments and assessment tasks

For assignments and assessment tasks that count towards the final course grades, students are not allowed to submit work which is produced with the collaboration of or supported by the use of any generative AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT).

Any breach of the regulations will be considered an act of academic dishonesty and will be handled according to the University's *Procedures for Handling Cases of Academic Dishonesty.*

In case of queries, students should seek advice from the course teacher.

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