

Frame Semantics

GER 393K (38150) / LIN 393S (41290)

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T/Th, 3:30–5 p.m., BUR 232

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Course is taught in English

Course Description

This course provides extensive insights into the structure and analysis of word meanings. Introducing Charles Fillmore's theory of Frame Semantics, the first part of the course discusses the openness and richness of word meanings, reflecting the rich variety of human experiences. Consider words such as *Tuesday*, *barber*, and *alimony*. These words necessitate an understanding of concepts (or semantic frames) such as repeatable calendar events, grooming and hair, and marriage and divorce. By investigating the types of references to diverse practices, processes, and objects in the physical and social world, we learn how a theory of word meaning needs to include more than the small linguistically significant set of primitive concepts proposed by other linguists such as David Dowty, Ray Jackendoff, Beth Levin, James Pustejovsky, and Anna Wierzbicka.

The second part of the course presents the concept of a semantic frame as developed by Fillmore and his associates. Frames offer rich conceptual backgrounds against which word meanings are understood. Their primary role in an account of text understanding is to explain how our text interpretation can leap far beyond what the text literally says. They may be evoked by words such as *alimony*, or they may be introduced by patterns among the facts the text establishes. Consider the sentence *We never open our presents until morning*, which evokes the Christmas frame by describing a situation that matches salient facts of Christmas practice, even though no word in it is specific to Christmas. In this part of the course we learn (1) how frames are discovered and described, thereby providing an organizing principle for a rich open lexicon, (2) how they are distinguished from and linked to other frames (frame-to-frame relations), and (3) how frame-semantic information is syntactically relevant. More specifically, we apply Frame Semantics to discover (1) the kinds of syntactic constructions and valence patterns lexical meanings are compatible with, (2) the kinds of participants that become subjects and objects, (3) regular semantic patterns of oblique markings and valence alternations, and (4) Regular patterns of inference licensed by category, syntactic construction or closed class lexical item. Finally, we discover how semantic frames can be applied to cross-linguistic analysis.

The third part of the course employs the FrameNet database (<http://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu>) to analyze the meaning of a given word as a network of interrelated senses. Some of these senses are more central, or basic, and others are less central, or peripheral. In this approach, the processes of metaphor and metonymy are central in describing the full range of meanings which a particular word can evoke. Finally, we look at how Frame Semantics integrates with Construction Grammar and how results from research in Frame Semantics have been applied in a variety of computational applications.

This course is taught in English. No knowledge of German is required.

Required Texts

- (1) Levin, B. and M. Rappaport Hovav (2005). *Argument Realization*. Cambridge: CUP.
- (2) Class reader on electronic reserve.

Evaluation

(1) Homework: 10% (2) Two in-class presentations of book chapters / articles (15% each): 30% (3) Final paper: 60% (Consists of (a) 5% bibliography; (b) 5% conference-style abstract; (c) 10% in-class presentation of final paper; (d) 10% first draft of final paper (8–15 pages); (e) 30% final paper (25–30 pages))

Formatting of papers:

Papers need to be printed (clearly, preferably on a laser printer), in 12 pt. Times New Roman, 1.5 line, spaced, with 1" margins on top, bottom, left and right.

CLASS AND CLASSROOMS:

Cell phones must be turned off in class; computers may be used only for note-taking. If a student uses electronic devices for non-class related activities and creates a disturbance s/he will be asked to leave for the remainder of that class.

ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE

- Academic Assistance is provided by the UT Learning Center, in Jester Center, Room A332A. It offers help with college-level writing, reading, and learning strategies. It is free to all currently enrolled students.
- See: <<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/assistive/policy.html>> for requesting help you need in using the main library (PCL) or the Fine Arts Library (for films).

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The University of Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471-6441 TTY. Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact the Service for Students with Disabilities as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations. These letters must be given to your TAs to receive accommodations. See: <<http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/index.php>>.

SYLLABUS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

All requirements have been given to you in writing, in the package including this sheet. If you don't read it and miss something, it's not our problem. **NO LATE WORK ACCEPTED**; see the conditions for making up work for medical and other leaves are listed in the next section.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS AND OTHER ABSENCES

- Students can make up work missed because of a religious holiday as long as they provide the instructor with documentation **at least one week before** the holiday occurs.
- The same applies to official university obligations like Club or Varsity sports.
- Documentation from a physician is required for medical absence; arrangements for work to be made up must be made promptly, and in no case should the work be completed more than 2 weeks after the absence.
- Other absences (e.g. family events) must be arranged for at least **TWO WEEKS IN ADVANCE** and missed work must be turned in at the **NEXT CLASS SESSION** upon return.

CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

Cheating and other forms of scholastic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will be reported to the Dean of Students. Cheating on tests or plagiarism on papers is an F for the assignment, with no makeup possible. If you engage in any form of scholastic dishonesty more than once, you will receive an automatic F for the course.

If you are unsure about the exact **definition of scholastic dishonesty**, you should consult the information about academic integrity produced by the Dean of Students Office:
<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php>.

Plagiarism means using words or ideas that are not your own without citing your sources and without indicating explicitly what you have taken from those sources. If you are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism, consult: <<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/plagiarism/>>

What does "**citing your sources**" mean? It means providing appropriate footnotes and bibliographic entries. See <<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/citations/>>. To make correct citations, researchers often use bibliographic software like UT's "Noodlebib" <<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/noodlebib/>> or Zotero <<http://www.zotero.com>>.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON CHEATING:

The Student Judicial Services Website provides official definitions of plagiarism and cheating:

- Definitions of plagiarism and other forms of scholastic dishonesty, based on Section 11-802d of UT's *Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities*:

http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/scholdis_plagiarism.php

- The University's Standard of Academic Integrity and Student Honor Code (from Chapter 11 of the University's *Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities*):

http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php

- Consequences of scholastic dishonesty: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/scholdis_conseq.php

- Types of scholastic dishonesty: unauthorized collaboration, plagiarism, and multiple submissions: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/scholdis_whatish.php

Writing Center: I strongly encourage you to use the Undergraduate Writing Center, FAC 211, 471-6222: <http://uwc.utexas.edu/home>). The Undergraduate Writing Center offers free, individualized, expert help with writing for any UT undergraduate, by appointment or on a drop-in basis. Any undergraduate enrolled in a course at UT can visit the UWC for assistance with any writing project. They work with students from every department on campus, for both academic and non-academic writing. Whether you are writing a lab report, a resume, a term paper, a statement for an application, or your own poetry, UWC consultants will be happy to work with you. Their services are not just for writing with "problems." Getting feedback from an informed audience is a normal part of a successful writing project. Consultants help students develop strategies to improve their writing. The assistance they provide is intended to foster independence. Each student determines how to use the consultant's advice. The consultants are trained to help you work on your writing in ways that preserve the integrity of your work.

Class Schedule

(Subject to revision)

NB: It is your responsibility to keep current with the reading. Additional readings and homework will be announced in class and on the electronic reserves course page (<http://reserves.lib.utexas.edu>). Titles on the syllabus correspond with the titles on the electronic reserves page.

Underlined titles are articles for in-class presentation (20–30 minutes, including a 4–6 page long handout).

Week 1: 19–21 January

Tues: Introduction: What is Lexical Semantics?

Thurs: The Study of Meaning

Reading: Fillmore (2003b): Topics in lexical semantics, pp. 201–233.

Recommended: Goddard (1998), pp. 1–53.

- Week 2:** 26–28 January
Tues: Challenges for traditional theories of word meaning
Reading: Fillmore (2003b): Topics in lexical semantics, pp. 234–260 (Fillmore 2003a reading has the last page on it, sorry!).
Recommended: Snell-Hornby (1983), pp. 24–69.
- Thurs:** Lexical Relations
Reading: Cruse (1986), Ch. 4, pp. 84–111.
- Week 3:** 2–4 February
Tues: Polysemy
Reading: Croft & Cruse (2004), Ch. 5, pp. 109–140
- Thurs:** Lexical relations in WordNet
Reading: Fellbaum (1998): A Semantic Network of English Verbs, pp. 69–104.
Recommended: Fillmore (1991): Corpus and Arm-chair linguistics.
- Week 4:** 9–11 February
Tues: Contemporary Approaches – 1
Reading: Goddard (1998), pp. 56–85
- Thurs:** Contemporary Approaches – 2
Reading: Levin & Rappaport Hovav (2005), pp. 7–50.
- Week 5:** 16–18 February
Tues: Contemporary Approaches – 3
Reading: Levin & Rappaport Hovav (2005), pp. 51-77; 78–96.
- Thurs:** Contemporary Approaches – 4
Reading: Levin & Rappaport Hovav (2005), pp. 96–130.
- Week 6:** 23–25 February
Tues: Frame Semantics – 1
Reading: Croft & Cruse (2004), Ch. 2, pp. 7-39.
Recommended: Fillmore (1975): Alternatives to checklist theories of meaning. Fillmore (1982): Frame Semantics.
- Thurs:** Frame Semantics – 2
Reading: Fillmore (2003a): On the Organization of Semantic Information in the Lexicon
Recommended: Petruck (1996): Frame Semantics.
- Week 7:** 2–4 March
Tues: Frame Semantics – 3
Reading: Fillmore & Atkins (1992): The Semantics of Risk and its Neighbors
Recommended: Gawron (2008): Frame Semantics

- Thurs:** Frame Semantics – 4
Reading: Fillmore (2007): Valency issues in FrameNet.
Recommended: Herbst (2004): A valency dictionary of English – introduction. Fillmore (2009): A valency dictionary of English – review article.
- Week 8:** 9–11 March
Tues: FrameNet – 1
Reading: Fillmore et al. (2003): Background to FrameNet
Recommended: Boas (2005): From Theory to Practice: Frame Semantics and the Design of FrameNet; Fillmore & Petruck (2003): FrameNet Glossary.
- Thurs:** FrameNet – 2
Reading: Atkins et al. (2003): Lexicographic Relevance: Selecting Information from Corpus Evidence.
Recommended: Fillmore & Atkins (2000): Describing polysemy: The case of *crawl*
- Week 9:** 16–18 March – Spring Break – No Class
- Week 10:** 23–25 March
Tues: FrameNet – 3
Reading: Fillmore et al. (2003): FrameNet in Action: The Case of Attaching.
Recommended: Fillmore (1994): The Hard Road from Verbs to Nouns.
- Thurs:** FrameNet – 4
Reading: Ruppenhofer et al. (2006), pp. 11–64.
- Week 11:** 30 March; 1 April
Tues: Verb classes and alternations – 1
Reading: Levin & Rappaport Hovav (2005), pp. 131–153.
- Thurs:** Verb classes and alternations – 2
Reading: Levin (1993): Introduction. Selected verb classes and alternations; Baker & Ruppenhofer (2002): FrameNet’s Frames vs. Levin’s Verb Classes.
- Week 12:** 6–8 April
Tues: Extensions to Frame Semantics –1
Reading: Levin & Rappaport Hovav (2005: 186–234)
- Thurs:** Extensions of Frame Semantics – 2
Reading: Taylor (1996): On running and jogging. Boas (2008b): A frame-constructural approach to verb classification
- Week 13:** 13–15 April
Tues: Multilingual FrameNets
Reading: Boas (2009b): Semantic Frames as Interlingual Representations for Multilingual Lexical Databases
Recommended: Vossen (1998): Introduction to EuroWordNet
- **Hand in bibliography for final paper**

Thurs: A multilingual database of soccer language / how to write linguistics papers
Reading: Schmidt (2009): Kicktionary
Recommended: Boas (2009a): Recent trends in multilingual lexicography.

Week 14: 20–22 April

Tues: Frame Semantics and Construction Grammar

Reading: Fillmore (2008): Border Conflicts: FrameNet meets Construction Grammar.

Recommended: Boas (2008a): Determining the structure of lexical entries and grammatical constructions in Construction Grammar. Boas (forthcoming): The syntax-lexicon continuum in Construction Grammar.

→ **Hand in abstract for final paper**

Thurs: Alternative Theories – 1

Reading: Goddard (2006): Ethnopragsmatics: A new paradigm

Please email me the topic for the final paper by 10 a.m.

Week 15: 27–29 April

Tues: Alternative Theories – 2

Reading: Goddard (2009): Cultural Scripts.

→ **Hand in first draft of final paper**

Thurs: Presentation of Final Papers

Week 16: 4–6 May

Tues: Presentation of Final Papers

Thurs: Presentation of Final Papers

Final paper due: May 13th, 4p.m.

References

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