Semantics & Terminology

Course No: ٢٢٠١٣٢٤

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course introduces meaning in language. It defines semantics and discusses such concepts as reference, sense, word meaning, and interpersonal and non-literal meaning. It also examines how truth and falsehood emerge from the complexities of grammar.

Course Goals and Objectives

The course aims to

- Familiarize students with basic concepts in semantics
- Introduce them to the complexity of meaning
- Introduce them to the interrelatedness of linguistics, philosophy, and cognition

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of semester, students shall be able to

Knowledge and Understanding (Students should)
- Demonstrate sound understanding of the basic concepts in semantics
- Know the concepts of lexical relations, thematic roles, and derivational relations
- Understand the concepts of entailment and presupposition
- Appreciate the relationship between synonymy and paraphrase, on the one hand, and hyponymy and entailment, on the other
- Differentiate between deixis and reference
- Explain the major characteristics of componential analysis

Intellectual/Cognitive/Analytical Skills (Students should)
- Analyze the semantic features of words
- Represent sentences in logical notations
- Translate meaning postulates into natural language

- Identify semantic ambiguity

Subject-Specific Skills (Students should)
- Define a range of semantic and pragmatic concepts and terminology
- Assign semantic labels to linguistic constituents
- Establish the semantic relationship between linguistic terms
- Make inferences from statements
- Give lexicographic definitions of words

Transferable Skills (Students should be able)
- Make correct inferences
- Identify the influence of context on meaning
- Argue logically

SYLLABUS

W eek	Topic	Reference/ Assignment
١	About Semantics	Ch. ١
٢	Sentences, Utterances, and Propositions	Ch. ٢
٣	Referring Expressions; Predicates	Ch.٣, ٤, ٥
٤	Predicates, Referring Expressions, and Universe of Discourse	Ch. ٦
٥	Deixis and Definiteness; Extensions and Prototypes	Ch. ٧, ٨
٦	Sense Properties and Stereotypes; Sense Relations	Ch. ٩, ١٠, ١١
٧	Propositional Logic; Connectives	Ch. ١٣, ١٤
٨	Meaning Postulates; Properties of Predicates	Ch. ١٧, ١٨
٩	Word Derivation	Ch. ١٩
١٠	Participant Roles	Ch. ٢٠
١١	Speech Acts	Ch. ٢١, ٢٢
١٢	Felicity Conditions	Ch. ٢٣, ٢٤
١٣	Conversational Implicature	Ch. ٢٦
١٤	Non-Literal Meaning: Idioms, Metaphors, and Metonymy	Ch. ٢٧
١٥	Revision	

ASSESSMENT

Test ١	٢٠٪
Test ٢	٣٠٪
Final Exam	٥٠٪

TEXTBOOKS

Hurford, James R., Brendan Heasley, and Michael B. Smith. ٢٠٠٧. ***Semantics: A Coursebook***. Cambridge University Press. ISBN: ٩٧٨٠٥٢١٦٧١٨٧٣.

> This practical course book introduces all the basics of semantics in a simple, step-by-step fashion. Each unit includes short sections of explanation with examples, followed by stimulating practice exercises to complete in the book. Feedback and comment sections follow each exercise to enable students to monitor their progress. No previous background in semantics is assumed, as students begin by discovering the value and fascination of the subject and then move through all key topics in the field, including sense and reference, simple logic, word meaning and interpersonal meaning. New study guides and exercises have been added to the end of each unit to help reinforce and test learning. A completely new unit on non-literal language and metaphor, plus updates throughout the text significantly expand the scope of the original edition to bring it up-to-date with modern teaching of semantics for introductory courses in linguistics as well as intermediate students.

REFERENCES

Cruse, Alan. ٢٠٠٤. ***Meaning in Language: An Introduction to Semantics and Pragmatics***. Oxford University Press. ISBN: ٩٧٨٠١٩٩٢٦٣٠٦٦.

> A comprehensive introduction to the ways in which meaning is conveyed in language. Alan Cruse covers semantic matters, but also deals with topics that are usually considered to fall under pragmatics. A major aim is to highlight the richness and subtlety of meaning phenomena, rather than to expound any particular theory. Rich in examples and exercises, Meaning in Language provides an invaluable descriptive approach to this area of linguistics for undergraduates and postgraduates alike.

Saeed, John I. ٢٠٠٣. ***Semantics***. ٢nd Ed. Wiley-Blacwell. ISBN: ٩٧٨٠٦٣١٢٢٦٩٣٢.

> This second edition of Semantics provides an engaging introduction to semantics for students new to the field. It covers the basic concepts and methods of the field and discusses some of the most important contemporary lines of research. It contains exercises that familiarize the student with the practice of semantic description.
>
> This is a completely revised and updated edition with an extended discussion of theory.