

City University of Hong Kong

Information on a Course
offered by Department of Linguistics and Translation
with effect from Semester A in 2014/2015

Part I

Course Title:	Semantics and Discourse
Course Code:	LT5403
Course Duration:	1 semester
Credit Units:	3
Level:	P5
Medium of Instruction:	English
Prerequisites:	NIL
Precursors:	NIL
Equivalent Courses:	CTL5403 Semantics and Discourse
Exclusive Courses:	NIL

Part II

Course Aims

This course aims to introduce students to the study of meaning as it is realized at both the lexico-grammatical and discourse levels. The focus will be on how meaning is studied and analyzed from various perspectives, including semantics, pragmatics and discourse studies.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

No.	CILOs	Weighting (if applicable)
1.	Construe sense and reference in accordance with a theory of meaning. Discover and generate new ideas that are fundamental to the understanding of human language and world knowledge.	
2.	Identify word meaning and how word meaning is combined to give sentence meaning. Formulate and verify hypotheses that are descriptively and explanatorily adequate.	

3.	Identify sentence relations and truth values of sentences. Apply knowledge to generate solutions to find out relations between sentences in accordance with a theory of truth-conditional semantics.	
4.	Distinguish tense from aspect. Analyze and classify different situation types and discover and formulate hypotheses that are observationally, descriptively and explanatorily adequate.	
5.	Identify participants of sentences and relevant grammatical relations.	
6.	Describe speech act theory and conversational implicatures. Analyze texts by adopting different theories and analytic tools.	

Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

(Indicative of likely activities and tasks designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs. Final details will be provided to students in their first week of attendance in this course)

CILO No	TLAs	Hours/week (if applicable)
1,2,3,4,5,6	Lecture and Class Activities: Theoretical foundations and concepts related to the above learning outcomes are laid out in the lecture. Emphasis is put on how these theories can be applied to language data. Discussion and exercises are provided to familiarize students with the theoretical concepts acquired in the lecture and to use these concepts to generate new ideas.	
1,2,3,4,5,6	Independent learning: Materials are posted onto the blackboard from time to time, and students are advised to refer to these materials for independent learning.	
1,2,3,4,5,6	Assignments: Students are required to complete three assignments based on what they have learnt in class. Emphasis of assignments is placed on both theoretical aspect and data analysis.	

Assessment Tasks/Activities

(Indicative of likely activities and tasks designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs. Final details will be provided to students in their first week of attendance in this course)

Final details will be provided to students in their first week of attendance in this course.

CILO No	Type of assessment tasks/activities	Weighting (if applicable)	Remarks
1,2,3,4,5,6	Assignments: Students are required to complete three assignments during the semester. The first assignment constitutes 35%; the second assignment 35% and the third one 30%.	100%	

Grading of Student Achievement: Refer to Grading of Courses in the Academic Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Degrees.

Grading is based on student performance in the assessment tasks/activities.

Final details will be provided to students in their first week of attendance in this course.

Letter Grade	Grading criteria in relation to assessment activities
A+ A A-	Excellent ability to demonstrate in the following tasks. Tutorial participation on in-class assignments/exercises: Excellent ability to analyze; strong evidence of original thinking in formulating hypotheses; superior grasp of theoretical concepts related to the topics under discussion; zealous participation Take home assignment(s)/end-of-term assignment: Evidence of excellent knowledge in relevant topics; strong evidence of logical thinking, analyses with original thinking.
B+ B B-	Good ability to demonstrate in the following tasks. Tutorial participation on in-class assignments/exercises: Evidence of critical and analytical ability; evidence of ability to formulate hypotheses; good grasp of theoretical concepts related to the topics under discussion; active participation Take home assignment(s)/end-of-term assignment: Evidence of adequate knowledge in relevant topics; good and logical analyses.

C+ C C-	Adequate ability to demonstrate in the following tasks. Tutorial participation on in-class assignments/exercises: Evidence of satisfactory grasp of theoretical concepts related to the topics under discussion; satisfactory participation Take home assignment(s)/end-of-term assignment: Evidence of the ability to understand the relevant topics; satisfactory analyses.
D	Barely adequate ability to demonstrate in the following tasks. Tutorial participation on in-class assignments/exercises: Ability to follow the theoretical concepts related to the topics under discussion in spite of some difficulty; satisfactory participation Take home assignment(s)/end-of-term assignment: Ability to apply knowledge in the assignments in spite of difficulty; analyses with inaccuracy.
F	Tutorial participation on in-class assignments/exercises: Little or no evidence of familiarity with the theoretical concepts related to the topics under discussion; insufficient participation Take home assignment(s)/end-of-term assignment: Very limited knowledge of the topics in question; totally incorrect analyses.

Part III

Keyword Syllabus

Semantic structure and analysis: Semantic rules; sense and reference; meaning relations: synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, homonymy, meronymy, polysemy; semantic decomposition; collocation, lexical sets and semantic fields; idioms; presupposition.

Sentence relations and truth: logic and truth, propositional logic, necessary truth, a priori truth and analyticity, entailment and presupposition.

Sentence semantics: simple and relative tenses, situation types and aspect, thematic roles, thematic role grids.

Language as communication: context and inference; pragmatics and speech act theory; Gricean maxims; the cooperative principle; politeness strategies; implicature.

Text analysis: Functional-semantic analysis; rhetorical structure theory. Texture and textuality.

Recommended Readings

4.1 Textbook

Saeed, John I. (2009) *Semantics*. 3rd edition. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

4.2 Supplemental Readings

Cann, Ronnie. (1993) *Formal Semantics*. Cambridge: CUP.

Cann, Ronnie, Ruth Kempson and Eleni Gregoromichelaki. (2009) *Semantics: An Introduction to Meaning in Language*. Cambridge: CUP.

Chierchia, Chierchia and Sally McConnell-Ginet. (2000) *Meaning and Grammar*. 2nd edition. London: MIT Press.

Heim, Irene and Angelika Kratzer. (1998) *Semantics in Generative Grammar*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Hurford, James R., Brendan Heasley and Michael B. Smith. (2007) *Semantics: A Coursebook*. 2nd edition. Cambridge: CUP.

Johnstone, B. (2007) *Discourse Analysis*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Kearns, Kate. (2011) *Semantics*. 2nd edition. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kempson, Ruth M. (1977) *Semantic Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Portner, Paul H. (2005) *What is Meaning? Fundamentals of Formal Semantics*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

de Swart, Henriëtte. (1998) *Introduction to Natural Language Semantics*. Stanford: CSLI Publications.