LIN4820/6826 Meaning and use (Spring 2026)

T 10:40am-11:30pm; Th 10:40pm-12:35pm
Matherly Hall 0011

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Course objectives
Pragmatics is the study of how language users convey meaning. This course covers three general areas: (1) how meaning carried by linguistic expressions (e.g., sentences) interacts with meaning that arises from inferences about speakers intentions; (2) approaches to characterizing meaning, especially of linguistic expressions not easily studied in terms of traditional semantic tools; (3) the role of context in determining meaning. Topics to be discussed include the relation between semantics and pragmatics, representations of context, at-issue meaning, and other types of meaning, e.g., presupposition, implicature and Gricean reasoning.

The goal of this course is for you to gain an understanding of (i) linguists' assumptions about the relationship between literal meaning and utterance meaning; and (ii) the tools linguists use to characterize literal meaning, utterance, meaning, and their influences on one another.

Course website
Canvas and TBD.

Textbook
There is no required textbook for this course. Readings will be drawn from publicly available resources, and resources available through the library website.

Attendance & Participation
 • Contribute to discussion in class!

Assignments
 • Every two weeks, you will submit an exegesis (1p, single spaced) of one of the readings we have discussed over the previous two weeks.
 • You will write a final paper (5-15pp, single spaced) on a topic chosen in consultation with the instructor.

Participation in LIN/S&P/SLHS experiments (optional, extra credit)
To encourage awareness of different aspects of experimental research in language-related fields, you can elect to participate in 2 hours of language or communication research during the semester. For a list of studies that qualify, see the SONA website, https://ufl-slhs.sona-systems.com/. For details on how to use SONA, see this document. You need to have participated in 2 hours of experiments before the last session of this course for you to receive credit. This assignment will be worth a maximum of 2% of your course grade. If you choose not to participate or do not qualify for any of the studies, you can receive the same amount of course credit for reading a short research article (provided by the instructor) and writing an (additional) exegesis page synopsis, which must be turned in no later than the last session of this course.

Grade breakdown

Attendance & Participation	5%
Exegeses	75%
Final paper	20%
Extra credit	2%

A 94-100	A- 90-94	B+ 87-90	B 84-87	B- 80-84	C+ 77-80
C 74-77	C- 70-74	D+ 67-70	D 64-67	D- 61-64	E < 61

Academic Integrity

See https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/.

Attendance Policy, Class Expectations, use of LLMs, Make-Up Policy
    • Students are required to submit all assignments at the beginning of the class period on which they are due. Please contact the instructor in advance if you need to skip a class, or cannot make a deadline.
    • Attendance is mandatory. If you are absent for more than three classes, you will get a warning. If absences persist the instructor can prohibit further attendance and assign a failing grade for excessive absences.
    • Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/.
    • This course has a no-LM policy. Please read the papers on the sylabus and write your exegeses and final paper yourself, without the help of any language-model powered chatbots. Any work turned in that doesn't meet this requirement will receive a failing grade.

Campus resources

See https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/.

Calendar

Week	Date	Topics
Week 1	1/10	Intro: Chierchia & McConnell-Ginet 2000: Ch. 1
Week 2	1/17	Conv. impl.: Grice 1975; Keenan 1976
Week 3	1/24	Conv. impl.: Huang 2015 Ch 2.2; de Carvalho et al. 2016
Week 4	1/31	Conv. impl.: Katzir 2007
Week 5	2/7	Reference: Karttunen 1976; Huang 2006
Week 6	2/14	Presupposition: Beaver 2001, ch. 1
Week 7	2/21	Presupposition: Stalnaker (Assertion); Beaver 2001, ch. 3
Week 8	2/27	Presupposition: Tonhauser et al. 2013
Week 9	3/6	Speech acts: Searl 1965; Austin 1975; Huang 2006, S. 4.6
Week 10	**Spring break**	
Week 11	3/20	Speech acts: Murray 2020
Week 12	3/27	Representing context: Lewis 1979
Week 13	4/3	Representing context: Roberts 2004; Roberts 2012
Week 14	4/10	Conventional implicature: Potts 2005, ch. 1
Week 15	4/17	Conventional implicature: McCready 2010
Week 16	4/24	Taking stock