Syllabus

Semantics is the study of meaning; lexical semantics is the study of the meaning of words. This is different from formal topics like propositional and predicate calculus, which deal mostly with the meaning of sentences, or pragmatics, which deals mostly with the meaning of utterances. The object of this course is to understand metaphor, but since metaphor is exemplified in words, we must first understand words. Thus the course is concerned largely with the word-level, but we will deal occasionally with logic and pragmatics, since language, like the human mind, is a living thing, and therefore is not divided neatly into functional subroutines like a well-designed computer program.

We will begin by making sure that we are all on the same page, epistemologically speaking, by going over some basic scientific presuppositions, as discussed by Bateson, and then proceed to an elementary statement of the cognitive metaphor theory of Lakoff and Johnson. These are both contained in Part I of the coursepak (available at Excel, on South University).

At this stage, with our target on the horizon, we study some basic concepts of word semantics, the ontological and epistemological categories they express in human languages, and the relevance of these to metaphor, as well as to grammar, pragmatics, and logic, in Part II of the coursepak. To solidify our knowledge, we will write a paper (5-10 pages) giving an elementary analysis of some natural class of English words, due October 16th (after Study Days).

Finally, we spend the rest of the term investigating metaphor and its cognitive and cultural extensions (fields, schemata, images, symbolism, iconicity, ideas, memes, conventions, rituals, myths) in the textbook (Kövecses, Metaphor, at Shaman Drum) and in Part III of the coursepak; and compose the first draft of a term project, due in draft form on November 13th; the final, revised, improved, and polished, version of the project will be due on December 9th, the last day of class.

The project may be a traditional library term paper (10-20 pages), examining some topic we have touched upon, or a data analysis paper, or an electronic project of equivalent size and complexity, e.g, a computer program (debugged, with documentation, suitable for immediate public release) or a Web site (suitable for permanent installation on the World Wide Web).
Part I of coursepak


2) Chapters 1—10 from *Metaphors We Live By*, by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, University of Chicago Press 1980.


Part II


3) *Santa Cruz Lectures on Deixis 1971*, by Charles J. Fillmore.


5) Chapters 2, 6, and 16 from *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things*, by George Lakoff, University of Chicago Press 1987.

Part III


