PHIL/PNP418: Current Controversies in Cognitive Science: Cognitive Grammar

Course: Wednesdays & Fridays 10:00am–11:30am, in Psychology Building 251
Instructor: Dr. Cory Wright
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Office hours: Wednesdays 11:30am–1pm, and by appointment

Course Description
Cognitive Grammar is a theory of language and linguistic phenomena that emphasizes its cognitive underpinning. It was created by Ronald W. Langacker and officially ushered in with the publication of his two-volume Foundations of Cognitive Grammar (1987, 1991). This course is a detailed examination of the theory's main tenets and applications, its challenge to dominant theories in the linguiformal tradition, and a survey of its future directions. It will be reading intensive. Prerequisite: at least one course in Philosophy at the 300-level, or graduate standing, or permission of the instructor.

Course Texts

Grading
Discussion and Participation (20%): This course is an intensive examination of a nuanced theory in cognitive linguistics. It is expected that students will participate accordingly. Also, a conference on course-related themes is also scheduled for March 1st–2nd; this should be attended.
Presentations (20%): Each student will arrange, at his leisure, to lead two class discussions with a brief presentation (e.g., 20 min.) on some portion of the assigned material of their choosing.
Midterm Exam and Quizzes (20%): A midterm exam is scheduled for March 7th. Quizzes designed to query your knowledge of the course readings and lecture material will be given periodically; they will usually be announced ahead of time.
Seminar Paper (40%): Each enrolled student will return a seminar paper that examines and evaluates some aspect of cognitive grammar.

Course Schedule (subject to revision)
Week One:
Wed, Jan 16th
Fri, Jan 18th

Week Two:
Wed, Jan 23rd
Fri, Jan 25th

Week Three:
Wed, Jan 30th
Fri, Feb 1st

Week Four:
Wed, Feb 6th
Fri, Feb 8th

| Week One: | Course introduction; History of cognitive linguistics major themes and theses
| | Orientation [ICG, ch. 1]; Introduction to cognitive grammar [CIS, Ch. 1] |
| | Cognitive semantics: meaning [ICG, ch. 2.1] |
| | Cognitive semantics: conceptual content [ICG, ch. 2.2]; recommended: Dynamic conceptualization [GC, ch. 12] |
| | Construal: specificity, focusing, & prominence [ICG, ch. 3.1–3.3]; recommended: Evidence for descriptive constructs [GC, ch. 2] |
| | Construal: Perspective, Evidence [ICG, ch. 3.4–3.5]; recommended: Viewing [GC, ch. 7] |
| | Grammatical classes [ICG, ch. 4] |
| | Nouns and verbs [CIS, Ch. 3]; recommended: The English passive [CIS, ch. 4] |
### Week Five:
- Wed, Feb 13th
- Fri, Feb 15th
- **Abstract motion [CIS, Ch. 5]**
- **Major subclasses [ICG, ch. 6]; recommended: The meaning of of [GC, ch. 3]**

### Week Six:
- Wed, Feb 20th
- Fri, Feb 22nd
- **Constructions: general characterization [ICG, ch. 6]; recommended: Conceptual grouping and constituency [GC, ch. 5]**
- **Constructions: descriptive factors [ICG, ch. 7]**

### Week Seven:
- Wed, Feb 27th
- Fri, Feb 29th
- **Reference point constructions [GC, ch. 6]**
- **Generic constructions [GC, ch. 8]; recommended: Grouping and pronomial anaphora [GC, ch. 9]**

### Week Eight:
- Wed, Mar 5th
- Fri, Mar 7th
- **PNP conference: Perception, Language, Space**
- **Rules and restrictions [ICG, ch. 8]**
- **Midterm exam**

### Week Nine:
- Wed, Mar 12th
- Fri, Mar 14th
- **No class (University is closed for Spring Break)**

### Week Ten:
- Wed, Mar 19th
- Fri, Mar 21st
- **No class (Pacific APA conference)**
- **Grounding [ICG, ch. 9]**

### Week Eleven:
- Wed, Mar 26th
- Fri, Mar 28th
- **Nominal structure [ICG, ch. 10]**
- **Active zones [CIS, ch. 7]**

### Week Twelve:
- Wed, Apr 2nd
- Fri, Apr 4th
- **Clause structure [ICG, ch. 11]; Clause structure [GC, ch. 1]**
- **Complex sentences [ICG, ch. 12]**

### Week Thirteen:
- Wed, Apr 9th
- Fri, Apr 11th
- **Aspects of the grammar of finite clauses [Handout]**
- **Transitivity, case, and grammatical relations: The conception of actions and events, marked and unmarked coding [CIS, ch. 9.1–9.3]**

### Week Fourteen:
- Wed, Apr 16th
- Fri, Apr 18th
- **Discourse [ICG, ch. 13]**
- **Usage-based model [CIS, ch. 10]; A dynamic usage-based model [GC, ch. 4]**

### Week Fifteen:
- Wed, Apr 23rd
- Fri, Apr 25th
- **Subj ectification [CIS, ch. 12]; Subj ectification and grammat icalization [GC, ch. 10]**
- **Engaging the world [ICG, ch. 14]; seminar paper due**

### Week Sixteen:
- Wed, Apr 30th
- Fri, May 2nd
- **No class (Reading period)**
- **No class (Final Exam Period)**

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**References and additional reading**

Occasional handouts will be made available as needed. I will also make available Langacker’s publications and a large cognitive linguistics bibliography in order to help you with your seminar paper.

**Helpful advice on how to write well**

There are a wide range of websites and guides on how to write well, which vary depending on whether the audience is philosophical, scientific, etc. A particularly good one, I think, is Jim Pryor’s *Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Paper*. Pryor has developed one of the best guides that can be found online. Do check it out here: [http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html](http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html).

**Potentially Helpful Research Sources and On-line Material on Cognitive Grammar**
Cognitive Linguistics: http://www.cogling.group.shef.ac.uk/
Mental Space Lab: http://www.mentalspaces.sdu.dk/
Center for Cognitive Science of Metaphor: http://philosophy.uoregon.edu/metaphor/metaphor.htm

Miscellaneous
Writing Center
The University's Writing Center provides individual conferences on any kind of writing project or task. Please feel free to take advantage of this free service in order to receive help or feedback with your individual reports. The Writing Center is located in Eads Hall Room 111; it may be necessary to make an appointment in advance; their webpage is: http://artsci.wustl.edu/~writing/home.html.

Intellectual Integrity
Any act by a student A that either misrepresents another's academic work as that of A or compromises the academic work of another is intolerable. Penalties for academic misconduct, possibly including failure of the course, are determined by the instructor. I will lobby for the harshest punishment available. If you have questions about the University's policy on academic integrity, you should consult the following website: http://www.wustl.edu/policies/undergraduate-academic-integrity.html.

Other Course Policies
All cell phones and pagers must be turned off during the duration of class—receiving and answering calls and/or pages during class is an obnoxious disturbance and inappropriate. Failing to comply with this rule may result in a non-trivial decay in one's course grade.

Disabilities
Students with legitimate and documented disabilities can make special arrangements, such as having assignments completed at Cornerstone. It is the student's responsibility to notify me in advance where accommodations are needed. Please visit the Disabilities Resource Center website: http://disability.wustl.edu/disabilityResources/index.htm.