

STUDENT'S NAME: _____ GRADE: _____

ENG 236: *Semantics and Pragmatics* — Spring Semester 2004: MON & THU 1.30 – 3.00pm
English Program, Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures — University of Cyprus
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March 15, 2004

TAKE-HOME ESSAY

Free Choice Topic

If you opt for writing a paper, I leave it up to you to **write it by yourself or in cooperation**.

- you can cooperate with as many classmates as you like
(as long as **all your names are listed as authors** — for anyone: **be aware of plagiarism!**)

Naturally, the length of your essay must be adjusted to the number of co-authors. I suggest:

- a single-author essay consist of **at least 1,800 words** (see finer guidelines below)
- for multi-authored papers, the alternative rule of thumb is **1,200 words per author**

Regardless of whether you're working alone or in collaboration: **back up any and all of your statements with arguments** — **illustrate where possible and/or appropriate!**

Here are some topics to choose from:

For any of these topics (or others), **lay out the main thesis, illustrate, and discuss**.
You should do some **background reading** and **may compare different approaches**.

- *theoretical approaches*: cognitive, structuralist, prototype, possible-world, model-theoretic
- *specific phenomena*: tense and aspect — questions — non-descriptive meaning
- *the role of logic in semantics*: logical approaches to meaning — predicate logic
- *[-]roles and argument structure*: predication — proto-roles — syntax and semantics
- *various topics*: features and meaning — conceptual semantics — semantic primes
- *pragmatics and meaning*: speech acts — conversational implicature
- *pragmatic approaches*: relevance theory — discourse analysis
- *semantics and pragmatics*: culture and world knowledge in natural language meaning

FORMAL SPECIFICATIONS

- ① Due date for handing in your essay is **5pm on Friday, May 14, 2004** in my office.
- ② The take-home exam **must be typewritten** — I do not accept a handwritten paper.
- ③ Length: **at least 4 pages** (with 1.25" margins, 12pt font, exactly 18pt line spacing).
- ④ Your paper must be written like a real academic **essay** and include a **bibliography**.

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TAKE-HOME EXERCISES

Solve all exercises from I and II as specified (= 5 total: 3 @ #1-4 + 2 @ EXERCISES 1-3)

I FROM LÖBNER (2002): [Pick three out of four #1-4 and solve all but one of each]

- #1. CHAPTER 1-4: EXERCISES 2-5 (p. 37), EXERCISES 4-6 (p. 55), EXERCISES 6-8 (p. 83)
- #2. CHAPTER 5-7: EXERCISE 6 (98), EXERCISE 8 (121), EXERCISE 3 (150), EXERCISE 6 (151)
- #3. CHAPTER 8-9: EXERCISE 4 (168), EXERCISE 1, EXERCISE 7 (208), EXERCISE 9 (209)
- #4. CHAPTER 10: EXERCISE 1, EXERCISE 4 (248), EXERCISE 8, EXERCISE 13 (249)

II FROM OTHER SOURCES: [Pick two out of three for EXERCISES 1-3]

EXERCISE 1:

For each of the following sentences, state whether or not it is *performative*. If not, state which of the four conditions is not present:

- (1) King: "I will proclaim my birthday a national holiday."
- (2) Teacher: "I often dismiss my class early."
- (3) Judge: "I sentence you to six years in the penitentiary."

EXERCISE 2:

Mabel's roommate Lucinda doesn't do her fair share of washing the dishes, and Mabel wants to change Lucinda's behavior. If Mabel says the following, would what she says be *direct and literal*, *indirect and literal*, *direct and nonliteral*, or *indirect and nonliteral*?

- (1) It must be nice having me as your personal servant.
- (2) Please wash the dishes when it's your turn, Lucinda.
- (3) You haven't washed a darn dish in about ten years, you know.
- (4) Are you aware of how selfish and irresponsible you are, Lucinda?
- (5) Make sure you don't do anything to get dishpan hands, Miss L.

EXERCISE 3:

If more than one *maxim* can apply, give the best answer.

- (1) Joe: "Can you swim?" — Jess: "I can dog paddle."
If Joe draws the inference that Jess is not a strong swimmer, it is because he assumes Jess is not violating which conversational maxim?
- (2) Bo: "Would you like to hold my pet tarantula?" — Bess: "Do you think I'm crazy?"
If Bo infers that Bess is saying no, it is because he assumes Bess is not violating which conversational maxim?
- (3) Wes hires an advertising company to put these words on a giant billboard: "Flo, will you marry me?"
Flo thinks Wes's proposal is romantic, even though it violates which conversational maxim?