NEW IN SPRING 2010
LING509: Topics in Cognitive Linguistics

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Course description
In a sense, all of linguistics can be said to be cognitive, inasmuch as linguists are interested in how knowledge of linguistic structures is brought to bear upon people’s daily experience and use of language. We will draw a distinction between cognitive linguistics in this broad sense (which we will also consider) and cognitive linguistics more narrowly defined, as this evolved out of the work of the later Wittgenstein and 1970’s cognitive psychology and AI research, which we will focus on in this course. The aim of the course is to make students aware of the historical background of the relevant debates in the field, as well as of the theoretical and psychological commitments of different theoretical frameworks, in order also to inform their decision to work within particular frameworks in their own research. During the course of the semester, we will elaborate on the basic principles of cognitive linguistics, including prototype structure, frame/schematic organization, and the encyclopedia/lexicon interface. In addition, we will discuss recent developments in, among others, linguistic relativity, conceptual metaphor and blending theories, Relevance Theory, and Construction Grammar(s) research.

Textbook:
Additionally, articles and book chapters will be made available through E-reserves.

Organization:
Each week will be devoted to a different topic as laid out in a chapter from the textbook. Presentations of chapters and in class discussions will be led by students and should also include additional bibliographical support. Sign-up for presentations will be at the start of the semester. These in-class presentations may form the basis for final papers that will extend and/or apply the student’s thinking on the same topic to particular phenomena. On weeks when they are not presenting, students will write a short (1-page) response paper to the chapter under discussion.

Assessment:
In-class presentation 30%
Weekly response papers 15%
Class participation 15%
Final paper 40%

Credit: 4 hours. Approved for both letter and S/U grading.

Prerequisites: LING 400 or consent of instructor.