Applied Semiotics for Deep Education
Fall 2012

Applied semiotics is a transdisciplinary field of knowledge linking ordinary life to an ongoing meaning making process. It encompasses applied linguistics while being broader and integrating sociocultural pragmatics, symbolism, gesture, intuition and situated meanings. Semiotics is the study of sign-action, or semiosis, described as any activity or process including the production of meaning. We will review the basics of semiotics with a perspective proper to world languages and cultures, cultural studies, with a survey of European authors such as Saussure, Wittgenstein, Greimas, Barthes, Baudrillard, Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard, Sebeok, Danesi, along with American semioticians such as Peirce, Chandler, Deely, Shank and Merrell.

Activities
We will have small group and class debates about the texts’ contents. For each seminar, students will prepare a one-page journal of their critical reactions and comments to the readings of the day. In their comments, they will address questions such as: what did I learn from these readings that I didn’t know or wasn’t aware of? In what way can it impact my understanding of communication, learning and education? In what way can it inform my inquiry? Then we will discuss the contents of the readings in the light of the questions brought by the course participants as they relate to new ways of understanding, planning, organizing and interpreting research, communication, education, world language education. Part of each meeting will be devoted to personal experiences, analyses, sharing brief writings in view of expressing new insights and imaginaries for semiotic inquiry, and video clips.

Required Readings: Articles and chapters on the Course Reserves.

Recommended Prior Readings
Three introductions (available for less than $1 on Amazon.com):

Assignments
1) Reading the texts of the day, reflecting on the contents of these texts and writing a one-page critical comment based on personal experiences to scaffold the seminar debate.

2) During the semester, finding at least one brief video on internet that illustrates an aspect developed in the seminar. Thus there will be a video roster in addition to the food roster.

3) Each student will propose one post every other week on the facebook group Signs and Symbols. The posts (reading comment, article or video) are proposed within the perspective of defining applied semiotics as a field and contributing to its growth.

4) Final project: gather your critical comments into a 9- to 10-page creative writing (1.5 line-spacing) that can mesh reflections on authors and readings with personal experiences in a storyline development or narrative of experience on the topic of your choice, expressing new knowledge gained through your semiotic explorations. The final project is about demonstrating the role of applied semiotics in/for deep education. It can be in the form of a blog, text or personal video.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Schedule of Readings</th>
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<td><strong>Thursday September 6</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>SEMIOLOGY &amp; MODERNITY</td>
<td>Syllabus. Schedule of video presentations and food roster. Brief introduction to semiotics and what semiotics can bring to educational research; defining applied semiotics; the use of the 5 senses in research, data, and reports; the study of everyday signs.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Thursday September 13</strong></td>
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</table>
| SCIENCE AS A BELIEF SYSTEM | **TOPIC: SEMIOLOGY AND MODERNITY**  
Harris, R. Barthes’ Saussure. In Saussure and his interpreters (pp.133-151).  
Harris, R. Derrida’s Saussure. In Saussure and his interpreters (pp.171-188).  
**Power Point: INTRODUCING SEMIOLOGY (Saussure).**  
**SLIDES 1. Signs and Signing** (Hall, 2007)  |
| **Thursday September 20**  |
| SOCIOCULTURAL SEMIOTICS | **TOPIC: SOCIOCULTURAL SEMIOTICS**  
Danesi, M. *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Semiotics, Media and Communications* (pp.204-207)  
Hodge, R., & Kress, G. Chapter 1 - Social Semiotics (pp. 1-15.)  
Hodge, R., & Kress, G. Chapter 2 - Social Semiotics (pp. 15-23.)  
Danesi, M. Chapter 1: The Universe of Signs; cigarettes are signs, high heels are signs too, enter the semiotician, the system of everyday life, the science of signs; principles of semiotic analysis.  
Danesi, M. Talking like Teenagers. In *Forever Young* (pp. 51-74). Toronto: UTP.  
**Power Point: CULTURAL STUDIES FROM A SEMIOTIC PERSPECTIVE**  
**SLIDES 3. Conceptual Structures** |
| **Thursday September 27**  |
| BODY, LOOKISM & RACISM | **TOPIC: BODY, LOOKISM & RACISM**  
Danesi, M. The body in the Sign: Thomas Sebeok and Semiotics (pp.18-19 and 61-69).  
Van Dijk, T.A. Discourse and Racism.  
[http://www.inst.at/trans/15 Nr/01_2/ashby15.htm](http://www.inst.at/trans/15 Nr/01_2/ashby15.htm)  
Angela Stalcup. The Plainness Penalty: Lookism in Western Culture.  
[http://angelinastalcup.com/sample_article.pdf](http://angelinastalcup.com/sample_article.pdf)  
**Power Point: CRITICAL THEORY FROM A SEMIOTIC PERSPECTIVE**  
**SLIDES 4. Visual Structures** |
Thursday October 4  
**FEMINISM**

**TOPIC: FEMINISM, GENDER, CRITICAL SEMIOTICS**


Course in Critical Semiotics:
http://www.univie.ac.at/Wissenschaftstheorie/srb/cyber/simout.html

*Power Point: INTRODUCING BAUDRILLARD FROM A SEMIOTIC PERSPECTIVE SLIDES 5. Textual Structures*

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Thursday October 11  
**POSTMODERN INTEGRATION**

**TOPIC: POSTMODERN INTEGRATION OF SUBJECTS AND OBJECTS**


Waugh, P. From Impersonality to Situatedness. In *Practising Postmodernism, Reading Modernity* (pp. 136-147).

P.S. "I love you": Umberto Eco and the romance of the reader. In D. Elam: *Romancing the Postmodern* (pp.26-33).

Tochon, F. V. Reference twelve. The situated researcher and the narrative reference to lived experience. *IJAS*, 1, 103-113.

(Optional: Chandler, D. Chapter 4 – Challenging the literal. In *Semiotics, The Basics*.)

Deely, J. The Problem of Objectivity. In *Purely objective reality* (pp.8-16).

*Power Point: POSTMODERN THOUGHT FROM A SEMIOTIC PERSPECTIVE SLIDES 6. Matters of Interpretation*

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Thursday October 18  
**NARRATIVE GRAMMAR**

**TOPIC: NARRATIVE GRAMMAR AND STORYTELLING**


Ricoeur, P. *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1 (pp.52-86).

Kristeva, J. *Hannah Arendt: Life is a Narrative* (pp. 13-29).

Tochon, F. V. Presence beyond the narrative. In *Tropics of Teaching*, Toronto: UTP.

Tochon, F. V. Semiotic Consciousness as Discourse Integration. *IJAS*, 91-114.


*Power Point: INTRODUCING BARTHES FROM A SEMIOTIC PERSPECTIVE SLIDES 7. Framing Meaning*

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Thursday October 25  
**MEDIA STUDIES**

**TOPIC: MEDIA STUDIES, VISUAL LEARNING AND PERCEPTION**


Charon, Joel. *The importance of the symbol*. Excerpts.

Johansen & Larsen Chapter 3 Signs: From tracks to words. In *Signs in Use* (pp.24-52).


Tochon, F. V. Video Art as a New Literacy or the Coming of Semiotics in Education. *Arts and Learning Research*, 17(1), 105-131.

*Power Point: MEDIA STUDIES FROM A SEMIOTIC PERSPECTIVE SLIDES 8. Stories and Storytelling*

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Thursday November 1  
**POETICS & AESTHETIC**

**TOPIC: POETICS, AESTHETICS & RETHORIC**

Barthes, R. *Elements of semiology*.


Parker, Kelly A. Chapter 1 Architectonic Philosophy. In *The Continuity of Peirce’s Thought* (pp.2-27).

Taylor, J. *Poetic Knowledge: The Recovery of Education* (pp.5-10 and 167-172).

Conclusion. *The Rigor and Ethics of Reading*. In J. Claude Evans, *The Beast & the Sovereign*.


See links to articles on: http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/pomo/pm.html

*Power Point: INTRODUCING BAUDRILLARD FROM A SEMIOTIC PERSPECTIVE*
Thursday November 8
SPACE

TOPIC: THE PRODUCTION OF SPACE
Sebeok, T. A. The Evolution of Semiosis. In A Sign is Just a Sign (pp.83-96).
Danesi, M. Global Semiotics. In Inventing Global Semiotics (pp. 27-50). Legas.
Lefebvre, H. The production of Space (pp.1-46).
Tochon, F.V. Beams of Meaning. In Tropics of Teaching. Toronto: UTP.
Danesi, M. Representation. In The Quest for Meaning (pp.121-140).
Gutiérrez, K.D. Developing a Sociocritical Literacy in the Third Space. Reading Research Quarterly, 43(2).

Project Scaffolds Presentations
Power Point: INTRODUCING FOUCAULT FROM A SEMIOTIC PERSPECTIVE

Thursday November 15
CONNECTIVE LIFE

TOPIC: LIFE SEMIOTICS AND CONNECTIVITY
Deely, J. Preface. In Intentionality and Semiotic (xix to xxxiv).
Deely, J. Chapter 1 Intentionality. In Intentionality and Semiotic (3-8).
Zukav, G. Chapter 1 of The Dancing Wu Li Masters: An Overview of the New Physics (pp.3-18).
Tompkins, P., & Bird, C. Chapter 1 of The Secret Life of Plants. (pp.3-16).
Laszlo, E. Chapter 4. In The Connectivity Hypothesis (pp.39-48).
Sheldrake, R. Preface & Introduction to Morphic Resonance (pp.xi-xxxii and 1-4).

Project Scaffolds Presentations
Power Point: INTRODUCING DERRIDA FROM A SEMIOTIC PERSPECTIVE

Thursday November 29
SEMIOTIC SYSTEMS

TOPIC: SEMIOTIC SYSTEMS AND EDUCATION
Smith, H. Signs in Communication. In Teaching Adolescents: Ed Psych as a Science of Signs (pp. 29-64). Toronto: UTP.
Sadowski, P. Chapter 1 – Systems Theory. In From Interaction to Symbol: A systems view of the evolution of signs and communication (pp.1-24).
Young, R. F. Discursive practice in Language Learning and Teaching. Plenary delivered at the annual meeting of the American Association for Applied Linguistics. Atlanta, GA.

Project Scaffolds Presentations

Thursday December 6
PEER SESSION

Finalizing Projects, Project Sharing, Peer Work, Feedback and Revisions. Skype individual contact

Thursday December 13
PEER SESSION

Finalizing Projects, Project Sharing, Peer Work, Feedback and Revisions. Skype individual contact
Final Assignments deadline: Thursday, December 20, 2012 noon, by e-mail or dropbox.
ftochon@education.wisc.edu

Evaluation

Active participation in the seminar 15%
Conscientious and thorough reading of the texts for each seminar 15%
One-page readings’ comment at each meeting, e-mailed by Wednesday noon 25%
One facebook group post every other week 15%
Presenting one ‘Video of the Day’ 5%
Final paper or video or web pages 25%
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Accommodations for full inclusion of all students in teaching and learning activities
I try to ensure that people with disabilities are fully included in this course. Please let me know if you need any special accommodations in curriculum, instruction, or assessments of this course to enable you to participate fully. I will try to maintain the confidentiality of the information you share with me.

Bibliography


*Barthes’s Saussure*. In Roy Harris (2003). Saussure and his interpreters (pp. 132-151). Edinburgh University Press.


**INTERNET LINKS:**

http://www.cspeirce.com/

http://www.peirce.org/

http://www.peircesociety.org/


http://www.cspeirce.com/menu/library/rsources/76defs/76defs.htm

http://www.cspeirce.com/homepage/ransdell.htm

http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/peirce/

http://www.iep.utm.edu/p/PeircePr.htm

http://www.wittgen-cam.ac.uk/cgi-bin/forms/home.cgi

http://www.helsinki.fi/~tuschano/lw/links/

http://homepage.newschool.edu/~quigleyt/vcs/barthes-wt.html

UC-Denver Portal of Semiotics: http://carbon.ucdenver.edu/~mryder/itc/semiotics.html

Barthes’ Mythologies at: http://seacoast.sunderland.ac.uk/~os0tmc/culture/myth2.htm

Baudrillard: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/baudrillard/

Interviews with Baudrillard:

http://www.ubishops.ca/baudrillardstudies/vol1_2/genosko.htm

http://www.ubishops.ca/baudrillardstudies/spiegel.htm

http://www.atwoodpublishing.com/journals/journal.htm

http://www.atwoodpublishing.com/journals/singleissues.htm