

# SEMIOTICS

SPRING SEMESTER 2006



El Greco: *A View of Toledo*, 1597-99. Oil on canvas, 121,3 x 108,6 cm

Center for Semiotics

UNIVERSITY OF AARHUS

## SEMINAR

# Cognitive Linguistics

Svend Østergaard

**Tuesdays in seminar weeks, 12:00 - 14:00**

**Building I.451, room 219**

In the first part of this seminar we will discuss the topics in one of the basic books on cognitive linguistics, George Lakoff (1985): *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things*, University of Chicago Press. Active student participation is a requirement; for instance, students should be willing to make short presentations of central parts of the book for further discussion in the classroom. In the end of the semester we will use Lakoff's analysis of the *there*-construction as a starting point for a general discussion of construction grammar, i.e., can we consider syntactic constructions as the primitive units of syntactic representation? Examples from Adele E. Goldberg (1995): *A Construction Grammar Approach to Argument Structure*, The University of Chicago Press will be presented in support of this view.

## SEMINAR

# Cognition & Semiotics

Peer F. Bundgård

**Wednesdays in seminar weeks, 12:00 - 14:00**

**Building I.467, room 216**

This semester the course on semiotics and cognition is devoted to the problem of categorisation. Classic semiotic and cognitive theories will be introduced, C.S. Peirce, U. Eco, E. Rosch, G. Lakoff, R. Jackendoff.

Special attention will be paid to the question of pre-conceptual (perceptual) categorisation (Husserl, Noe/Pessoa).

## Practical Exercises

Peer F. Bundgård & Svend Østergaard

**Wednesdays February 22, March 22, April 19, May 17, 14:00-16:00**

**Building I.467, room 216**

In the practical exercises the students will have to prepare small papers on topics discussed in the courses *Cognition and Semiotics* and *Cognitive Linguistics* and make textual analyses applying methods and concepts from the same courses.

## FOUR LECTURES ON

# Cognitive Semiotics of Textual Communication

Torben Fledelius Knap

**Wednesdays February 8, March 8, April 5, May 3, 14:00-16:00**

**Building I.467, room 216**

- 1. The Phenomenology of Communication**
- 2. The Phenomenology of the Text**
- 3. The Phenomenology of the Audiovisual Text**
- 4. The Phenomenology of Inter Media Translation**

Every text is an object embedded in a communicative act between Humans.

Nevertheless does a long lasting tradition - stemming back from New Criticism and still heavily traversing the academic society concealed in various subdivisions of Post Structuralism – claim so as to texts (or any aesthetic objects) are autonomous entities. The New Critics of the 1950'ies had their harmless fun in the make-believe that poetry leads its own life disconnected to the maker of it. Post Structuralism, on the other hand, presents itself in the name of Post Modernism as a full-fledged philosophy and is harmfully misleading academic scholars into the epistemological hallucination of believing that the basic human condition is determined merely by the cultural texts that precede it. Human Beings are written by texts in a given social context, so to speak.

Nothing could be more wrong!

The four lectures introduce to the cognitive semiotics of the textual phenomenon. What is a text? How do texts relate to the individual who produces them and how do they relate to the individual who receives them. How can a text be detected as an intentional message in an inter-textual universe? How can a text give any meaning to a receiving subject existing in a social or historical context alien to its original creator? How is it possible that the content of a text can stay relatively stable in the process of translating it from one representation form to another?

*The ability in Humans to deal with texts is grounded in the human cognitive apparatus and not in the texts themselves!*

## SEMINAR ON COGNITIVE AESTHETICS

# The Phenomenology and Semiotics of Narratives

Peer F. Bundgård

Thursdays in seminar weeks, 12:00-14:00

Building 1.451, room 219

The course is devoted to the characterization of narratives. What are they? What are their fundamental components? What makes them (partially) different from other texts? How does the narrator function? What are his “voice”, “point of view”, his narrating “pace”, etc.? These questions and some others are part of the phenomenology of narratives, since they aim at establishing its discursive specificity. However, the goal of the course is not simply to convey insight in the formal nature of narratives, it is also “semiotically committed”; i.e. it intends to capture the kinds of meaning effects that are linked to variation in narrative “pace”, “point of view”, “voice”, etc.

The references of this course are not orthodox semiotic—but then again, only very orthodox semioticians believe that only very orthodox semioticians can convey relevant semiotic knowledge: we will be reading standards from classical narratology written by Käte Hamburger, Genette, Banfield, and others.

## SEMINAR

# Musical Semantics

Ole Kühl

Thursdays February 9, March 9, April 6, May 4, 16:00-18:00

Building 1.451, room 219

The 4 sessions of this course will approach the question of meaning in music from a number of different angles. A model of musical semantics will be proposed, based on semiotic analysis, cognitive theory and neurobiological data. Mentally represented gesture, as an evoked response to musical communication, is seen as the key to an understanding of the problem. Gesture is motivated in feeling, which leads us to the notion of an agent, situated in a narrative context.

A comprehensive account of musical semantics will not only broaden the scope of psycho-, neuro- cognitive and other -musicologies, but it will also open new perspectives for general cognitive studies, if music can be seen as an alternative system of symbolic communication.

## SEMINAR

# Mind & Cognition

Svend Østergaard

Thursdays in seminar weeks, 14:00-16:00

Building 1.451, room 219

This course concerns the particular cognitive functions such as perception, attention, memory, imagery, linguistic competence, social competence, etc., as well as the more general question of how to understand the relation between human phenomenology and brain functioning.

The lesson from brain research is that what is experienced as unitary at the phenomenological level can in fact be dissociated into several functional parts at the neuronal level. This raises fundamental questions of what a unitary experience is. In the first half of this semester we will concentrate on attention and the function of memory, mainly by consulting the work of D. L. Schacter, and in the second half we will deal with imagery, where one of the leading researchers is S. M. Kosslyn.

In relation to the last topic we will discuss what the limits to imagery are. If we have no image of the concept *infinity* what are then the mechanisms by means of which humans can generate such concepts? Papers related to the mentioned topics will be distributed at the seminar.

## SEMINAR

# Structuralism – an Introduction

Peer Bundgård & Svend Østergaard

Fridays in seminar weeks, 10:00-12:00

Building 1.451, room 219

The aim of this course is to convey insight in some of the basic concepts and ideas of structuralism and classical semiotics. We will read standard texts by Saussure, Lévi-Strauss, Jakobson, Greimas, Husserl, Chomsky, Peirce and we will try whenever it is possible to define the actuality and legacy of linguistic structuralism and classical semiotics in modern cognitive linguistics. The order of presentation will follow the order mentioned above.

On the first meeting we will discuss part one and part two from Ferdinand de Saussure: *Course in General Linguistics*. Part one is about the general principles and part two about synchronic linguistics. The rest of the texts will be announced during the course.

## SYMPOSIA

# Student Symposia

*Organized by the students*

**Fridays in seminar weeks, 13:00-15:00**

**Building 1.467, room 515**

Allow the students to discuss their researches, to try themselves on an oral presentation, to see practical applications of the theories studied during the seminars, to engage open discussions. These are the aims of the student symposia.

Two hours organized by the students every Friday lesson weeks, from 13 to 15.

The topics already planned regard methodologies in analysing semiotic phenomena, the application of semiotics to musics, neuroaesthetics, interface design and others.

# SEMINAR CALENDAR SPRING 2006

## FEBRUARY

Tuesday 7	12-14: Cognitive Linguistics		
Wednesday 8	12-14: Cognition and Semiotics	14-16: The Phenomenology of Communication	
Thursday 9	12-14: Cognitive Aesthetics	14-16: Mind and Cognition	16-18: Musical Semantics
Friday 10	10-12: Structuralism - an Introduction	13-15: Student Symposium	
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Tuesday 21	12-14: Cognitive Linguistics		
Wednesday 22	12-14: Cognition and Semiotics	14-16: <i>Practical Exercises</i>	
Thursday 23	12-14: Cognitive Aesthetics	14-16: Mind and Cognition	16-18: <i>Guest Speaker</i>
Friday 24	10-12: Structuralism - an Introduction	13-15: Student Symposium	

## MARCH

Tuesday 7	12-14: Cognitive Linguistics		
Wednesday 8	12-14: Cognition and Semiotics	14-16: The Phenomenology of the Text	
Thursday 9	12-14: Cognitive Aesthetics	14-16: Mind and Cognition	16-18: Musical Semantics
Friday 10	10-12: Structuralism - an Introduction	13-15: Student Symposium	
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Tuesday 21	12-14: Cognitive Linguistics		
Wednesday 22	12-14: Cognition and Semiotics	14-16: <i>Practical Exercises</i>	
Thursday 23	12-14: Cognitive Aesthetics	14-16: Mind and Cognition	16-18: <i>Guest Speaker</i>
Friday 24	10-12: Structuralism - an Introduction	13-15: Student Symposium	

## APRIL

Tuesday 4	12-14: Cognitive Linguistics		
Wednesday 5	12-14: Cognition and Semiotics	14-16: The Phenomenology of the Audiovisual Text	
Thursday 6	12-14: Cognitive Aesthetics	14-16: Mind and Cognition	16-18: Musical Semantics
Friday 7	10-12: Structuralism - an Introduction	13-15: Student Symposium	
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Tuesday 18	12-14: Cognitive Linguistics		
Wednesday 19	12-14: Cognition and Semiotics	14-16: <i>Practical Exercises</i>	
Thursday 20	12-14: Cognitive Aesthetics	14-16: Mind and Cognition	16-18: <i>Guest Speaker</i>
Friday 21	10-12: Structuralism - an Introduction	13-15: Student Symposium	

## MAY

Tuesday 2	12-14: Cognitive Linguistics		
Wednesday 3	12-14: Cognition and Semiotics	14-16: The Phenomenology of Inter Media Translation	
Thursday 4	12-14: Cognitive Aesthetics	14-16: Mind and Cognition	16-18: Musical Semantics
Friday 5	10-12: Structuralism - an Introduction	13-15: Student Symposium	
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Tuesday 16	12-14: Cognitive Linguistics		
Wednesday 17	12-14: Cognition and Semiotics	14-16: <i>Practical Exercises</i>	
Thursday 18	12-14: Cognitive Aesthetics	14-16: Mind and Cognition	16-18: <i>Guest Speaker</i>
Friday 19	10-12: Structuralism - an Introduction	13-15: Student Symposium	

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