330: Semantic Fieldwork Methods  
Mondays/Thursdays 1:10-3pm, Math-Stat (Stevanovich) 112 2347

Instructor:  
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Office hours: By appointment

The goals of the class:  
Over the past twenty or so years, research on meaning (semantics and pragmatics) has broadened its empirical horizon by considering empirical evidence from languages not spoken natively by theoretically trained linguists (a.k.a “fieldwork”) and empirical evidence obtained through quantitative research with theoretically untrained native speakers (a.k.a. “experiments”). This course introduces participants to the methodology of collecting semantic/pragmatic comprehension data with theoretically untrained native speaker consultants. Specifically, the course will address the following three questions in the first three class meetings:

1. **Pieces of data:** What is a piece of data in research on meaning? When should it include a context, and what kinds of contexts are there? How much information about the speakers who participated in the research should be included?

2. **Judgment tasks and other response tasks:** Which kinds of judgment tasks and other response tasks are suitable in research on meaning? Can one rely on translations to provide empirical evidence?

3. **Minimal pairs and linking hypotheses:** What role do minimal pairs play in providing empirical evidence in research on meaning? How many types of minimal pairs are there, and which types of hypotheses about meaning can each of them provide evidence for? What’s the role of the linking hypothesis?

In the 4th class meeting, we will discuss how these general considerations about empirical evidence in research on meaning are put to the task in the exploration of particular linguistic phenomena, namely temporal reference and projective content.

This course does not have a practical component, but instead focuses on the preparation of materials that are appropriate to investigate semantic/pragmatic phenomena with theoretically untrained native speakers, i.e. to provide empirical evidence in research on meaning.

**Prerequisites:**  
This course is targeted at students already familiar with formal syntax, semantics and pragmatics who wish to collect data with native speakers, as well as students who already have experience in conducting research with native speakers and who want to extend their research to semantic/pragmatic topics. Interested course participants should contact the instructor with questions about the course content and suitability.
Readings and lecture slides:
Course readings and the lecture slides will be made available on this web page (and via a link to a Dropbox folder from there): http://www.ling.osu.edu/~judith/semantic-fieldwork.html. Please send me an email if you have problems accessing the readings or lecture slides.

Class schedule:
The readings given for each day will be discussed in class on the day for which they are listed. I will draw on the optional readings in class.

1. **Monday, July 20, 2015**
   - **Topic:** Introduction, pieces of data in research on meaning
   - **Reading:** Tonhauser & Matthewson ms: sections 1-3
   - **Optional readings:** AnderBois & Henderson 2015

2. **Thursday, July 23, 2015**
   - **Topic:** Judgment tasks and other response tasks
   - **Reading:** Tonhauser & Matthewson ms: section 4
   - **Optional readings:** Matthewson 2004, Bohnemeyer 2015, Deal 2015

3. **Monday, July 27, 2015**
   - **Topic:** Minimal pairs and linking hypotheses
   - **Reading:** Tonhauser & Matthewson ms: section 5

4. **Thursday, July 30, 2015**
   - **Topic:** Case studies (temporal reference, projective content)
   - **Reading:** Tonhauser, Beaver, Roberts & Simons 2013: sections 1-4
   - **Optional readings:** Cover & Tonhauser 2015

Course requirements and assessment:

- **Readings and sending questions/comments: 30%**
  Please come to class prepared by studying the reading assigned for each day (optional readings are optional). To focus our discussions of the readings, please send me, via email, a question or a critical comment about each reading by noon of the day on which we will discuss the reading.

- **In-class participation: 30%**
  My lectures are interactive and designed around questions. During class, I will ask you all to discuss particular data or methodological, empirical and theoretical issues. Doing the readings and sending a question or critical comment about the reading is a great way to prepare for class and our discussion. I may also call on you to raise the question or comment you sent to me, to allow you to bring it to the in-class discussion.
• **Elicitation diagnostic: 40%**

Your final project for the course is to develop a diagnostic that establishes empirical evidence for some hypothesis about meaning of your choosing. We will discuss several such diagnostics during the course.

Your write-up of the diagnostic should consist of i) a statement of the hypothesis, ii) the description of a response task designed to elicit pieces of data that bear on this hypothesis, iii) some pieces of data (with hypothetical responses, if native speakers of the language you investigate are not available), and iv) a statement of the linking hypothesis.

I welcome you to discuss your ideas for a diagnostic with me. You can either make an appointment, or share your ideas with me via email.

The write-up of your diagnostic should not be longer than one page (11pt, 1-inch margins). Please send it to me via email (judith@ling.osu.edu) in PDF format by August 1, 2015 at noon (EST). (Grades are due August 2, 2015 so this is a strict deadline.)

**Special needs:**
Students with disabilities will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs.

**Academic misconduct:**
I expect all of the work you do in this course to be your own, unless collaboration is explicitly requested for a particular task. Academic dishonesty will not be allowed under any circumstances. Any case of cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the university committee on academic misconduct, and will be handled according to academic policy.

**References:**


Tonhauser, Judith and Lisa Matthewson. Ms. Empirical evidence in research on meaning. Manuscript, The Ohio State University, University of British Columbia.