

SL705: T/TH 2:30-3:45; Van Hise 595

Introduction to Slavic Semantics

Dr. David S. Danaher

Van Hise 1444, 2-9765
280-9417 (h)

dsdanaher@facstaff.wisc.edu

Office hours: T 1-2:15/Th 12-1 or by appointment

Course Description. This course is an introduction to both semantic theory (an overview) and its application to cultural and literary analysis. The course focuses on analysis of so-called key cultural terms in English, Slavic (especially Russian), and other languages. These terms include: “friendship,” “freedom,” “home(land),” “soul,” “truth,” and “pity.” Our focus will be on how different cultures profile different aspects of these concepts and on the analytic tools which semanticists or ‘ethnolinguists’ use to model these conceptual distinctions. The value of this kind of semantic analysis for interpretation of literature will also be explored and illustrated. Part of the course (1 hour of class each week) will be devoted to a collective research project on the cross-cultural semantics of one emotion concept (“shame”); theoretical readings on emotion from a variety of disciplines will be read and discussed as background to the analysis.

Students will be expected to complete a final project for the course: a 15-20 page comparative (with English) semantic analysis of a key Slavic term, ideally – but not obligatorily – extended to include analysis of a Slavic literary text in which this concept is profiled. Students will present their research to each other in the final two meetings of the semester.

Readings. I have ordered one text for this course; students will pay instructor (\$33) directly.

- Wierzbicka, Anna. 1997. *Understanding Cultures through Their Key Words*.

In addition to these texts, we will be reading a large number of articles. These will be made available on a weekly basis as the semester progresses and are in lieu of a course-packet. To defer the costs of copying this course-packet-in-progress, I will ask for \$15 from each student (checks made out to University of Wisconsin). I also strongly encourage everyone to purchase a binder and organize all materials.

Requirements. The following are requirements for successful completion of the course; I have also indicated how each requirement will figure in the final grade.

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|---|-----|
| •Attendance/participation in discussions | 20% |
| •Completion of readings and other homework | 10% |
| •Participation in collective research project | 10% |
| •Presentation of selected readings to class | 25% |
| •Oral presentation of final project | 10% |
| •Written version of final project | 25% |

Since this is a 700-level course, attendance is required and *active* contribution to discussion expected; allowances will, of course, be made for extraordinary circumstances such as illness. *Critical* reading of materials (thinking about the reading, taking notes on it, keeping a running list of questions about it, etc.) will be expected. Some of the readings will come with guide questions, and students are expected to prepare responses to them (although they do not have to be turned in in written form).

Over the course of the semester, each student will have the opportunity to present selected supplemental readings to the group; these will mostly be presented in the first half of the semester. There are 12 articles to report on currently in the syllabus; the exact number of reports each student makes will depend upon course enrollment.

Final Projects. Projects will be presented both orally (to the whole group) and in written form at the end of the semester. Students will be expected to choose a topic for their project *early* in the semester in order to allow for development of ideas (and/or collection of a corpus for analysis). Periodic consultations with me as well as submission of outlines and/or drafts are strongly encouraged. It is my hope that several projects completed for this course can be reworked for presentation at AATSEEL-Wisconsin in the fall, if not also for the national meeting of AATSEEL in New Orleans in December (at the very least this is a goal to aim for).

Grading. Grades will be earned according to the following scale.

92+	A	70-78	C
89-91	AB	60-69	D
82-88	B	0-59	F
79-81	BC		

NB: Barring extreme circumstances, incompletes will NOT be given.

SEMESTER SYLLABUS

[readings are indexed to the day on which they are due]

Week 1

[Jan]

T 23

Th 25

Intro to semantics and “emotion”. Course overview.

Overview of approaches to semantic analysis.

•Goddard 1/3

•Reports: Bloomfield on meaning; Kempson on semantics

Week 2

T 30

knowledge

[Feb]

Th 1

Other approaches and theories.

- Andrews on learning aspect; Haiman on dictionary

Semantic primitives.

- Wierzbicka, “Intro” in Semantics
- Report: Steiner on translation

Week 3

T 6

categories

readers]

Th 8

literature.

The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis.

- Whorf on science and linguistics; Sapir on conceptual
- Report: Review article (“Language and Worldview”) [2

The “Picture of the World”, cognitive grammar, and

- Tokarski on 2 Polish color terms

Week 4

T 13

Tolstoy and

Gorer on swaddling

Th 15

Views of Russia and Russian-ness.

- Pshenitsyn on Chekhov; Woolf on Russian writing
- Reports: Hingley on the Russian mind; Wasiolek on James; Jarintzov on the Russian language;

Emotions and cross-cultural comparison.

- Emotions in cognitive science (overview); Goddard 4
- ”Shame” activities

Week 5

T 20

Th 22

[EB]

a

Key Words.

- Wierzbicka, “Intro” in Understanding Key Words... [KW]
- Shmelev on Russian key cultural terms

Emotions.

- Wierzbicka, Chp 1 in Emotions across Languages book
- Reports: Oatley on emotions in psychology; de Rivera on structural analysis of emotions
- ”Shame” activities

Week 6

T 27

120-3

“Friendship”.

- Wierzbicka, “Patterns of Friendship” in KW, pp. 32-101,

101-20

[Mar]

Th 1

term]

- Report: Wierzbicka on “mate” in Australian in KW, pp.

Emotions.

- Iordanskaia on defining certain Russian emotions
- V. Apresian on “fear” and “pity” [half of class does each
- ”Shame” activities

Week 7

T 6

Culture...

Th 8

“Soul” and “Mind”.

- Wierzbicka on soul, mind, and heart in Semantics,

Emotions.

- Wierzbicka on Russian emotions in EB
- Lutz
- ”Shame” activities.

Week 8:

Spring Break:

- 1) **Think seriously about your final projects!**
- 2) **Finish reading Ivan Il’ich (in Russian).**

Week 9

T 20

Th 22

“Freedom”.

- Wierzbicka on freedom in KW, pp. 125-55

Emotions. *Project proposals are due in written form!*

- Wierzbicka on Polish-American emotional expression in EB
- ”Shame” activities

Week 10

T 27

Th 29

“Truth” (and “Falsehood”), Part I.

- Mondry and Taylor on truth and falsehood in Russian
- Ungerer and Schmid on metaphor

Emotions and Metaphor.

- Kövecses on metaphors for “anger”
- ”Shame” activities

Week 11

[Apr]

T 3

“Truth” (and “Falsehood”), Part II.

- Cienki on straight/bent in Slavic [half of the class]
- Cienki on metaphor [other half of the class]

Il'ich
Th 5

- Danaher on metaphors for truth and falsehood in Ivan

Emotions and Metaphor.

- Apresian and Apresian on metaphorical associations
- "Shame" activities

Week 12

T 10

"Pity", Part I.

- Jackson on Ivan Il'ich

Th 12

Emotions and Syntax.

- Mostovaja on prepositional phrases and Russian emotions
- Osmond on prepositions with English emotion terms
- "Shame" activities

Week 13

T 17

"Pity", Part II.

- Danaher on zhalost' in Ivan Il'ich

Th 19

Emotion Universals.

- Wierzbicka on emotional universals in EB

Week 14

T 24

"Home(land)".

- Wierzbicka on home(land) in KW, pp. 156-97

Th 26

Culture and Syntax.

- Wierzbicka on the Russian language in Semantics

Week 15

[May]

T 1

The Russian National Character through Language.

- Zalizniak and Levontina on the Russian lexicon

Th 3

Individual Consultations on Final Projects.

Week 16

T 8

Project presentations.

Th 10

Project presentations.

Papers due in my mailbox by 9 a.m. on Monday, May 14th!

This syllabus is subject to change at the instructor's discretion