

Coherence Relations

Course Syllabus

Lecturer: Dr. Debopam Das

Time: Thursdays, 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Summer Semester 2018

Location: House 14, Room 0.09

Module: AM7, AM10, AM11

Course Description:

This course provides an introduction to the study of coherence relations in discourse. Coherence relations are defined as the relations between propositions, or more simply, the semantic and pragmatic relations between clauses or sentences. Discourse is defined as the language above the level of sentence and also the use of language in context. The course will explore a wide range of phenomena in the study of coherence relations from linguistic, psycholinguistic and computational points of view. Students will read original and recent works in these areas. They will also focus on different forms of discourse and analyze important aspects of coherence relations.

Course Objectives:

At the end of the course, students will be familiar with numerous issues in the study of coherence relations. The classes will take the form of seminars and include engaging discussions on significant topics in the field. The students will be evaluated based on their performance in a number of activities: writing summaries and reviews, conducting a small project, and writing (and presenting) a term paper based on the project.

Topics to be covered:

1. Definition of cohesion and coherence
2. Concept of coherence relations
3. Treatment of coherence relations in different discourse theories
 - a. Halliday and Hasan's (and later Martin's) theory
 - b. Penn Discourse Treebank framework
 - c. Rhetorical Structure Theory
 - d. Segmented Discourse Representation Theory
 - e. Any many others...
4. Psycholinguistic aspects of coherence relations
 - a. Processing of coherence relations
 - b. Acquisition of coherence relations
5. Signals of coherence relations
 - a. Discourse markers
 - b. Other textual signals
6. Computational applications
 - a. Discourse parsing

Course grade

Component	Weight
Assignments	Will NOT be graded
Summary writing	15%
Review writing	15%
Project	20%
Presentation	10%
Final paper	40%
TOTAL	100%

Meeting dates:

Week	Date	Note
1	April 12	
2	April 19	
3	April 26	
4	May 3	
-	May 10	Ascension Day - No class
5	May 17	
-	May 24	Conference trip - No class
6	May 31	
7	June 7	
8	June 14	
9	June 21	
10	June 28	
11	July 5	
12	July 12	
13	July 19	

Required readings (articles, book chapters, etc.) will be available online on the Moodle course page.