ENGL 306F * INTRODUCTION TO SEMIOTICS
Winter 1993
M. A. Gerhardstein
HH 269, Ext 2448

SYLLABUS

§ I. TEXTS

* Bookstore Texts

Innis, Robert E., ed. *Semiotics: An Introductory Anthology* (Indiana) 0-253-20344-9
Deely, John, et al., eds. *Frontiers in Semiotics* (Indiana) 0-253-20371-6
Doyle, Arthur Conan. *The Sherlock Holmes Mysteries* (Signet) 0-451-52431-4
Barthes, Roland. *Mythologies* (Hill & Wang) 0-374-52150-6
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Eco, Umberto. *The Name of the Rose* (Warner) 0-446-35720-0

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Berger, "Formulas in the Public Arts" (in *Signs in Contemporary Culture*, pp. 85-88)

* Σημειωτική *

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§ II. COURSE DESCRIPTION

• Epigraphs

• John Locke. 1690: "All that can fall within the compass of human understanding being either, first, the nature of things, ... or, secondly, that which Man himself ought to do, ... or, thirdly, the ways and means whereby the knowledge of both the one and the other of these are attained and communicated, I think Science may be divided properly into these three sorts .... The third branch may be called σημειωτική, or the Doctrine of Signs, the most usual whereof being words. ...; the business whereof is to consider the nature of signs the mind makes of for the understanding of things or conveying its knowledge to others...."

• Charles S. Peirce, 1868: "We think only in signs.... There is no element whatever of man's consciousness that has not something corresponding to it in the word; and the reason is obvious. It is that the word or sign that man uses is the man himself. For, as the fact that every thought is a sign, taken in conjunction with the fact that life is a train of thought, proves that man is a sign.... Thus my language is the sum total of myself; for the man in the thought."

• Charles W. Morris, 1938: "Human civilization is dependent upon signs and systems of signs, and the human mind is inseparable from the functioning of signs...."

• Umberto Eco, 1973: "I am speaking to you. You are understanding me, because I am following the rules of a precise code (the English language).... You understand me because there exists a code (a sort of inner competence shared by you and me) and there exist possible messages, performed as concrete utterances and interpretable as a set of propositions. I am using signs. The code... couples a sign-vehicle... with something called its meaning or its sense.... As a semiotic entity the sign is—according to Peirce—'something which stands to somebody for something else in some respect or capacity'.... In [the] continuous movement [from sign to sign] semiosis transforms into signs everything it encounters. To communicate is to use the entire world as a semiotic apparatus. I believe that culture is that, and nothing else."

• Nature, Purpose, and Content of the Course

As Arthur Berger says in Signs in Contemporary Culture, semiotics is "the 'science of signs' and of the codes used to understand them" (p. ix), and "The key to finding meaning in things is to realize that we live in a world that is full of signs—a sign being something that stands for or represents something else. Semiotics teaches us how to read or interpret signs...." (p. viii). Semiotics is also a vast field, touching potentially on every aspect of the human
experience, of the human intellect, and of the human and the non-human environment. Charles S. Peirce, one of the founders of modern semiotics, once wrote that "the entire universe... all this universe is perfused with signs, if it is not composed entirely of signs" (1906). In a world that is full of signs, in a universe perfused with signs, the signs formulate and identify contexts, relations, and networks of relationships; from the semiotic perspective, all meaning or knowledge constitutes, in the phrase of Thomas A. Sebeok, a "semiotic web."

The pervasiveness of signs means that semiotics as a field of study has relevance and applicability to a wide variety of disciplines in the humanities, the social sciences, the fine and performing arts, and even in the natural and physical sciences and mathematics. The Introduction to Semiotics with which we are involved in ENGL 306F, though it will deal with a generous range of topics, will not comprehend all of the potential topics of semiotics but instead will be focused upon and directed toward those areas most relevant to the discipline of English—in other words, toward language, texts, and culture.

With this goal of an exploration of the semiotic dimensions of language, texts, and culture, ENGL 306F moves through three parts intended to illuminate various aspects of these dimensions. From an initial background consideration of the nature of semiotics, Part I of the course—Foundations—examines the essential contributions of the founders of twentieth-century semiotics. Part I also presents two segments titled "Thinking Like a Semiotician," each of which in quite different ways is intended to illustrate semiotic patterns of thought. From Foundations, the course moves to Part II—Theoretical Topics—which considers four crucial aspects of semiotic theory (sign and meaning, semiosis and code, language, and structuralism). Finally, Part III of the course—Theoretical Applications—explores two areas of the semiotic field which develop out of the fundamental semiotic theories: text semiotics and culture/popular culture.

**• Format and Mechanics of the Course**

The course meets twice a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, for one and one-half periods per course session. As the normal undergraduate course period in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Waterloo is fifty minutes long (that is, for example, 1:30-2:20), the one and one-half period session in ENGL 306F will normally be seventy-five minutes long (that is, 1:00-2:15).

Each lecture of the course will be supported and accompanied by one or (usually) more overhead transparencies. The transparencies will include such materials as lecture outlines, select bibliographies, relevant quotations and other pertinent illustrations, and so on. Lecture by lecture, xeroxes of the transparency materials and other course materials will be transferred to a Course Notebook which will be kept in the English Department Reading Room so that students may refer to it as they wish.
With the exception of the two periods devoted to term tests (Periods 9 and 16), each lecture session of the course will open with what will be called a Daily Feature on the Life of Signs in This World. Berger notes that we are all semioticians by nature (p. x); this element of the course is in part intended to sharpen your capacities as natural semiotician. The Daily Feature will characteristically illustrate something of the semiotics of public and private conduct and behavior, of social and institutional forms, and so on. The Daily Feature will be displayed at the opening of the class period; it may or may not have anything to do with the specific content of the lecture which it heads; each, however, will involve sufficiently significant theoretical implications to warrant being noted and remembered.

§ III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Reading requirements: Required reading assignments of the course are detailed in the next section of the course syllabus. These required reading assignments are drawn from the texts listed within §I of the syllabus. Under the heading
Bookstore Texts, the Eco novel The Name of the Rose is required in its entirety; from each of the other texts within this category, several articles or essays are assigned. Under the heading Kinko's Package, all items are included within the assigned reading. (The Kinko's package should cost about $17; Bookstore texts will cost $65.75 before taxes.)

The reading requirements of the course include all works listed within the next section (§ IV) of this syllabus. All readings should be completed before they are scheduled to be discussed in class. (To avoid later difficulties, you should start your reading of The Name of the Rose well in advance of its appearance on the schedule.)

- Written requirements: Term work of the course includes two term tests and a term paper. Test 1 (Foundations) will cover the material of Part I of the course; Test 2 (Theory) will cover the material of Part II. The Term Paper, to be assigned six weeks in advance of the due date, will have a basis in aspects of the Parts I and II materials. It is to be 10-12 pages in length.

The final element of the written requirements of ENGL 306F is the Closing Exercise. This will be a take-home examination to be completed during the April examination period (it will be assigned on April 6 and will be due on April 13). The Closing Exercise will cover the materials of Part III of the course (Theoretical Applications).

Weighting of Written Requirements:

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<td>Test 2 (Theory)</td>
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<td>Closing Exercise (Theoretical Applications)</td>
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Schedule of Written Requirements:

- February 2: Test 1
- February 4: Assignment of Term Paper
- March 4: Test 2
- March 18: Term Paper due
- April 6: Assignment of Closing Exercise
- April 13: Closing Exercise due

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§ IV. COURSE SCHEDULE

• Period 1 - January 5: Preliminaries

• PART I: FOUNDATIONS -- Periods 2-9 (January 7-February 2)
  
  • Period 2 - January 7: The Nature of Semiotics/Backgrounds and Contexts
    
    Sebeok, "The Doctrine of Signs" (in Deely, pp. 35-42)
    Innis, "Introduction" (pp. vii-xv)
    Deely, Editors' Preface ('Pars Pro Toto," pp. vii-xvii)
    Locke, "Coining the Name" (in Deely, pp. 3-4)
    Jakobson, "A Glance at the Development of Semiotics" (in Kinko's materials)
    Sebeok, "Semiotics' and Its Congeners" (in Deely, pp. 255-263)

  • Period 3 - January 12: Founders 1: Peirce
    
    Innis headnote, pp. 1-4
    Peirce, "Logic as Semiotic: The Theory of Signs" (in Innis, pp. 4-23)

  • Period 4 - January 14: Thinking Like a Semiotician 1: Sherlock Holmes
    
    Doyle, "The Red-headed League" (pp. 42-65); "The Boscombe Valley Mystery" (pp. 66-90); "The Five Orange Pips (pp. 91-109); "The Naval Treaty" (pp. 239-272); "The Adventure of the Dancing Men" (pp. 338-362); "The Adventure of the Six Napoleons" (pp. 383-404)

  • Period 5 - January 19: Founders 2: Saussure
    
    Innis headnote, pp. 24-27
    Saussure, "The Linguistic Sign" (in Innis, pp. 28-46)

  • Period 6 - January 21: Thinking Like a Semiotician 2: Barthes
    
    Barthes, "Myth Today" (in Mythologies, pp. 117-174)

  • Periods 7-8 - January 26-28: Founders 3/4: Morris/Jakobson
    
    Innis headnotes, pp. 176-177 and pp. 145-147
    Morris, "Signs and the Act" (in Innis, pp. 178-189)
    Jakobson, "Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics" (in Innis, pp. 147-175)

  • Period 9 - February 2: Test 1 (Foundations)
• PART II: THEORETICAL TOPICS -- Periods 10-16 (February 4-March 4)

• Period 10 - February 4: *Sign and Meaning*

Previously assigned Peirce, Saussure, and Morris readings from Innis (pp. 1-23; pp. 24-46; pp. 176-189)
Previously assigned Sebeok reading from Deely (pp. 35-42)
Sebeok, "Introduction: I Think I Am a Verb" (in Kinko's materials)
Thom, "From the Icon to the Symbol" (in Innis, pp. 272-291)
Eco, "On Symbols" (in Deely, pp. 153-180)
Eco, "The Semantics of Metaphor" (in Innis, pp. 247-271)

• Periods 11-12 - February 9-11: *Semiosis and Code*

Sebeok, "Zoosemiotic Components of Human Communication" (in Innis, pp. 292-324)
Sebeok, "The Notion of Zoosemiotics" (in Deely, pp. 74-75)
Sebeok, "Talking with Animals: Zoosemiotics Explained" (in Deely, pp. 76-82)

• Periods 13-14 - February 23-25: *Language*

Previously assigned Saussure, Jakobson, and Eco readings from Innis (pp. 24-46; pp. 145-175; pp. 247-271)
Vološinov, "Verbal Interaction" (in Innis, pp. 47-65)
Bühler, "The Key Principle: The Sign Character of Language" (in Innis, pp. 66-86)
Benveniste, "The Semiology of Language" (in Innis, pp. 226-246)
Pratt, "The Linguistics of Use" (in Kinko's materials)

• Period 15 - March 2: *Structuralism*

Previously assigned Saussure and Jakobson readings from Innis (pp. 24-46; pp. 145-175)
Lévi-Strauss, "Structural Analysis in Linguistics and in Anthropology" (in Innis, pp. 108-128)
Barthes, "The Rhetoric of the Image" (in Innis, pp. 190-205)
Merrell, "Structuralism and Beyond: A Critique of Presuppositions" (in Deely, pp. 120-138)

• Period 16 - March 4: *Test 2 (Theory)*

• PART III: THEORETICAL APPLICATIONS -- Periods 17-24 (March 9-April 1)

• Periods 17-21 - March 9-23: *Text Semiotics*

Eco, essays from *The Role of the Reader* ("Introduction: The Role of the Reader," pp. 3-43; "Peirce and the Semiotic Foundations of
Openness: Signs as Texts and Texts as Signs," pp. 175-199;
"Lector in Fabula: Strategy in a Metanarrative Text," pp. 200-260)

Barthes, "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives" (in
Kinko's materials)
Eco, "Small Worlds" and "Interpreting Serials" (both from Kinko's
materials)
Pratt, "The Linguistics of Use" (previously assigned, from Kinko's
materials)
De Beaugrande and Dressler, "Basic Notions" (from Kinko's materials)
Eco, The Name of the Rose

• Periods 22-24 - March 25-April 1: Culture and Popular Culture

Winner, "Semiotics of Culture" (in Deely, pp. 181-184)
Barthes, "Myth Today" (previously assigned) and "The Rhetoric of the
Image" (previously assigned)
Eco, "Interpreting Serials" (previously assigned)
Eco, "The Myth of Superman" (from Role, pp. 107-124)
Berger, "Formulas in the Public Arts" (in Kinko’s materials)
Commentaries from Barthes, Mythologies ("The World of Wrestling," pp. 15-26; "Operation Margarine," pp. 45-47; "Soap-powders and
"Photography and Electoral Appeal," pp. 98-100; "The Great
Family of Man," pp. 107-110)
Other items TBA

• Closing Exercise on Theoretical Applications (Take-Home Examination
scheduled during April Examination period: April 6-13)
§ V. WORKS ON RESERVE

Note: Works on Reserve for the course are listed below. (The status of each is Overnight Reserve.) Three of these works are very strongly recommended to you. These are Nöth, *Handbook of Semiotics*; Krampen, *Classics of Semiotics*; and Hervey, *Semiotic Perspectives*. The Nöth work has valuable chapters on all of our topics; both of the Krampen and Hervey works have chapters on several of the topics. The Nöth work is especially recommended to you as a supplement to the course lectures and to the assigned readings.


NX 650.N37C45 1978

PN 98.S7C8 1975b

P 99.D398 1990


PR 4624.S53 1983

P 146.H3 1977b

P 99.H45 1982

P 99.W3813 1987
P 99.N6513 1990

PR 6037.A95H3x 1971b

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White to play, win.
§ VI.

AZBLT WDHB GC HBE. UBKMOTQ, KBZ, FBGQBC, GO CMO TCX GDGAF; KI MHCAQQY EAAT GQD. YTHMHALE COD? TIAGH GHQ CXBIH IRHMHO TQM SUBUL SCEZH KMO! TXDDE BGLS WU NZHOE ZICA, VBZLIBGH OTEW. UZHR NUBVEV HTHM BIP WUCEA QNMZUMB PUMKOOT: BNQ HPXCH BEU BKMQ CGNHQWU.

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White to play, win.

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4 NT Pass 5 ♦ Pass
5 NT Pass 6 ♦ Pass
7 NT Pass Pass

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∑ η μειωτική

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§ VI.

AKOWID! BIO MTAM DGPDOK ZAR? VBBX CPTIBYL, ABA OF A KOPT, BECKEFAELO, AOBK LNPI PZKFAR DFR BILP. XUY FTRY EMY C RTAYEP? BWRE ARBHRIG DEG MFRBC: ZXS BEZ BY DIMLLAR. WLBLUX UF PTAX TAKOPT BAUY FOIFYLE OWEL PACL R FECMUE; OSB K RFWO ID CMULUAK BPOED BBKE OFRP. LPRKRN CLPA PYUL ORC TALBK OR AQORO, TAKR PEC FLAKLEO BAKROI I IMLE PBBY ECE. LINBQR EZKL UAK BMW RAVELS RTDB HALB KRBBNP OWR CLUY.

TEAKMT INBLI BBWAL AKL ORYTA RELTAZ

(iii)

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White to play, win.
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§ VI.

AHOA, UBBKA HRKF TAVX BHABKAH! RKM DAVL MANOWX EBYA; HAVLMA NOW EQKT BW KOIN BUNZUCLM. DBYEN VBC FBM, WXBBY AHQV, ZOF VRKKZ WFW. IS FZXAV XBBKA? VSXN HWOMIDXEX BY YEQ VEL, IXMYUE HQX, SOWXXE CDB, WIN BWAHXEC. FHE CPOM VNZ PYE. PZMZC DSKU UWN CPBFE QFKC UWBM SOH?

RXBRC IUQEM FRWFV XBA OBFAHBKF FVHKOH

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* Σημειωτική *

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§ VI.

W QMQBL CAVIDEN RGEIP BFB HOCPNANE VSVNIK HOIK. BAQ BPNP NSOC NGMBEGL CUFCCL; WOF BDN ANTE, CLD ETKLD, L TERNTBGQ PBFC POGDLNEC. LZP WNLREI DMEK PKUO QOB DBFCDP VIQY SKHRDB? NAFQFT RLPWF CLKUOQZ IF WKS LPG BEVVS; HPNENING EVFB DNAITE CLRE HLALNL. CTEBL RNLN A1 DBT ENVH? BPH DTPCRGBHT RQ PFB EGEF. HP NEW FESM QFQFWT NARXQN WIAENM LEGGN QDTRH PQRTQQP PQPQKQ EVUA CNANG? KBFQMO QND OINEBP!

RGHPMG NSERF EQWVD HPD ELANTBGAN WO HPD LREBKTR ACBO

![Chess Diagram](image-url)

White to play, win.

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Vulnerable: Both Dealer: North

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Opening lead: ♥ J
ENGL 306F * INTRODUCTION TO SEMIOTICS
Winter 1993
M. A. Gerhardstein
HH 269, Ext 2448

SYLLABUS

§ 1. TEXTS

• Bookstore Texts

Innis, Robert E., ed. *Semiotics: An Introductory Anthology* (Indiana) 0-253-20344-9
Deely, John, et al., eds. *Frontiers in Semiotics* (Indiana) 0-253-20371-6
Doyle, Arthur Conan. *The Sherlock Holmes Mysteries* (Signet) 0-451-52431-4
Barthes, Roland. *Mythologies* (Hill & Wang) 0-374-52150-6
Eco, Umberto. *The Role of the Reader* (Indiana) 0-253-20318-X
Eco, Umberto. *The Name of the Rose* (Warner) 0-446-35720-0

• Kinko's Package (Bin #34)

Jakobson, "A Glance at the Development of Semiotics" (from *The Framework of Language*, pp. 1-29)
Sebeok, "Introduction: I Think I Am a Verb" (from *I Think I Am a Verb*, pp. 1-9)
Barthes, "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives" (from *Image/Music/Text*, pp. 79-124)
Eco, "Small Worlds" (from *The Limits of Interpretation*, pp. 64-82)
Eco, "Interpreting Serials" (from *The Limits of Interpretation*, pp. 83-100)
Pratt, "The Linguistics of Use" (from *Toward a Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse*, pp. 79-99)
De Beaugrande and Dressier, "Basic Notions" (from *Introduction to Text Linguistics*, pp. 1-13)
Berger, "Formulas in the Public Arts" (in *Signs in Contemporary Culture*, pp. 85-88)

\[ \Sigma \eta \mu \varepsilon \iota \omicron \tau \iota \kappa \eta \]

*
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∗

Σ η μειωτική

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§ VI.

ZCUVH NLBBULAM: I UBXMV RM NQBED BQS FMHUIH BZIS DFQNS
LAV; I PGHR FXUIS BPA VSR HBLF. VI DLHNC N HUCAP OUXIMX KVSXL.
BPRYQBYH DF AIM, HI EUUW DNFD, CBVC NKYXZ ZRRULBAM LBP BZCBU.
NB VRW RZDFU DZKIS GOX BPAPX DAK ONZK. ZOZCI Q RAU BEUS TFQFBR?
WFQ AKVC GBTVS MUBRWQX MIFM IVB VIOU. ISB NAUN BMBFQ VRH?
SIBRBU ZXFBH KKRS LZUG VRWRX IBBPRY QBK XQBAK. I UARK XQHI HKA
IBSMF OZUBK!

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(vi)

White to play, win.

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Vulnerable: Both
Dealer: North

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