SYLLABUS—a paradigm!

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Office hours: especially just before and after class
and anytime but by appointment—just walk in

Spring 2016
TuTh 3:00-4:15
215 Stone Hall

Objectives
This course assumes no specific prior knowledge of semiotics, but counts on an eclectic assemblage of motivated participants. With this in mind, an unusual degree of flexibility has been tucked into the syllabus, so that the course can continue to realize itself as individual interests become manifest. It is a treat to facilitate such trans- and meta-disciplinary discourse. If nothing else, we aim to become comfortable with some of the many faces and back-sides of semiotics. Semiotics tackles meaning-making in individual experience and in collective scholarship, including the sciences, while recognizing that meaning-making will perforce always be saturated within cognitive and lingual-cultural webs.

Semiotics provides an approach for apprehending diverse phenomena (including language, culture, and biology, and their more concrete manifestations interpretable as 'data', such as sensation, perception, cognition, consciousness, and experience itself) in terms of the behavior of 'signs'. From prehistoric times, surely, humans (like other living things) have been students of signs, not to mention being the product of signs. Some of our western masters include Aristotle, Locke, de Saussure, and Peirce. These and other individuals have generated a literature on the iconic, indexical, and symbolic properties and processes of signs, and have explored their role in signification, communication, interpretation, anticipation, creativity, and (let's remember) discard.

Recognizing semiotics' early foundations in philosophy and medicine, contemporary semioticians also explore issues in literary theory, philosophy of language, media, cybernetics, systems theory, pedagogy, synthetic intelligence, neurophysiology, and biological phylogeny and ontogeny. While appreciating this salmagundi, participants in the class will be invited to delve more deeply into some select field of their choice. We will benefit from the diversity of backgrounds and interests I expect to find in this class.

At times, semiotics appears only by its transparency, wafting with some diaphanous hermeneutic; but blink, and you're confronted with a procrustean prism of dichotomous Saussurean imperatives or ternary Peircean categories. These crisp models attract quite a spectrum of personalities as well as of disciplines, and some of these personalities are not as disciplined as others. Some practitioners seek theory, some method, some followers; some just seek. But semiotics, of course, is greater than the sum of its practitioners and even distinctly different from their products. Emphatically, it qualifies as an approach and umbrella; it is not, strictly speaking, a field, a discipline, a theory, a method, a science—but rather it is a perspective of considerable generality and utility, a universal solvent, with all the potential and baggage that that entails.

Data and Subject Matter and Perspective
In most disciplines, the subject gets tangled up with the data. As usual, we wish to distinguish data ('facts/detailed particulars/description') from any subject we consider ('framework/theory/hypothesis/speculation'), attending to the latter even if at the expense of the former. Any subject matter may be probed through data, decorated with data, justified by data, or exercised through data, but even when the subject matter seems to be about data, data do not constitute the subject matter.

In the case of semiotics, not only are the data not the subject matter (paraphrasing Chomsky about speech and language), but the data are not the subject matters are not the perspective! Or, from the more natural end of the scope, the perspective 'has' no fixed subject (unless it be the processes centering on 'sign', signing, and significance) and no particular obligate data. Hence, when accessing the literature, we can sacrifice some ephemeral and ever-emended 'facts', and focus on the subject and perspective.

There is nothing to memorize in this course, but much to understand. Use the course as an opportunity to sharpen your skills of skimming materials to discern major arguments rather than reading to capture
minor points. With collaboration, we will cover quite a bit of literature and still have time to ponder. Note that we collectively accomplish most of the heavy reading by mid-semester.

**Strategies**
The organization of the course rests on open-ended discussion of the issues shaping semiotics, as these emerge from texts and lectures. Lectures will never deliberately duplicate text material; hence, attendance is essential. Please establish at the outset of the course an agreement with one or more other participants, such that you can cover each other's exigencies regarding handout-collection and more detailed notes. The eventual Handout 10 will list the names and contact details of everyone involved in the class, whether enrolled or auditing. Use this list for networking.

Formerly, over decades, participants in this course maintained a class-period log-journal and a binder collecting individual work and handouts. Due to space constraints, these materials were first exiled to the attic and finally, last summer, pretty much dissolved. After spring 2011, the more recent binders from spring 1987, spring 1990, fall 1994, and fall 2003 renditions of this course disappeared. We still inherit an Excel catalogue of all pre-2003 binders, of limited utility. I mention this historical detail to invite us to imagine some new ways to share and synergize, for this current and future classes.

You are reading Handout 1, the paradigmatic syllabus of our course. Accompanying this syllabus is Handout 2, the syntagmatic chronicle for our course. The paradigm sets forth the nonlinear big picture and rationale for the course; the syntagm sequences our calendric plans. Handouts numbered in—
- the 2-series concern reading assignments;
- the 3-series cover sundry bibliographies of general interest;
- the 4-series outline written assignments, including QCKs, with suggestions re their construction;
- the 7-series include general-purpose materials;
- the 10-series list class participants and any parsing of responsibilities.

**Evaluation of Performance**
Grading will be based on the quality of performance as evinced in (a) five exploratory essays (15% each), or their equivalent (for 75% total), and (b) class participation (25%). As to class participation—obviously, if one is not in attendance, one is not participating! Class participation will impact final grades when it is significantly superior to or, more likely, dramatically shy of the quality of written work. Essays will be due by class time in the 4th, 7th, 10th, 13th, and 16th weeks. See handouts in the 4-series that also introduce QCKs. It's never too early to consult Purdue's thesis format guidelines!

If you do prefer to turn in a fewer number than five (but not less than one!) of essays, submit a proposal to that effect by the 4th week, together with your schedule for submissions. Late work will be penalized, in some creative fashion, and no work can be accepted after the last day of our course. Essay topics may be anything semiotic! Of course, essays must reflect your individual effort; persons actively or passively otherwise involved will be removed from the course with an F. Do not rely on or plagiarize from the www.

The five essays together are conceived as being roughly equivalent to the work and value of one term paper, which paper is an option if you alert me by week 4 and turn in your finished, gradable product by week 13. I do not wish to place upper or lower limits on a term paper, any more than for the essays, but for essays, five pages should be in the ballpark (or 7 plus-or-minus 2l). Conciseness is recommended. Remember to attend to both the coarse-grained and fine-grained details of execution—organization of topic and theme at one level, and legible layout at the other. Be consistent in the style of bibliographical reference. Used here is one of the preferred styles in the social sciences, and one of the easier, more exhaustive, and least ambiguous as well. I recommend historical layering for editions and translations. But whatever the style, follow it through in the most consistent fashion for each document.

**Organization of Course**
The course outline follows, while Handout 2 expands that outline to summarize the literature covered each week, much of it collaboratively. Reading should be accomplished by class time each week, except of course for the first week's assignments. The reading will concentrate in the first part of the semester, with much of it flexible rather than as fixed assignments. Everyone should keep up to date with the basic
text and reader, submitting selected chapter QCKs each week. For auxiliary materials, individuals are responsible for their selection and for sharing them with the class, calling for the submission of one QCK per volume the week prior to the scheduled discussion of that auxiliary. Remember that the intention is to share insights and to vicariously feed off of one another.

**Topical Outline—See Handout 2.0 for weekly assignments**

**Week Wednesday**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 12.01.16</td>
<td>FOUNDATIONS: SEMIOSIS...ABDUCTION, DEDUCTION, INDUCTION...SIGNIFICATION, COMMUNICATION...</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 19.01.16</td>
<td>COSMOLOGIES OF TWO, THREE, FOUR...TIME AND PLACE: PHILOSOPHY, MEDICINE...</td>
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<td>3 26.01.16</td>
<td>SPECIES OF SIGNS: ICON, INDEX, SYMBOL...SIGNAL, SYMPTOM, NAME...HUMANS, ALLOANIMALS...</td>
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<td>4 02.02.16</td>
<td>REPRESENTATION: MODELING OF AND MODELING FOR AND MODELING IN: SYSTEMS...</td>
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**Conceptual Approaches: Dynamics of Evolution and Development**

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 09.02.16</td>
<td>LIFE IN SEMIOTIC PERSPECTIVE: SYNERGISTIC EDGES...BIOLOGY, INNENWELT, UMWELT...</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 16.02.16</td>
<td>CULTURE AND SOCIETY, LANGUAGE AND SPEECH: BEYOND COMMUNICATION...ETHICS...</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 23.02.16</td>
<td>VERBAL, NONVERBAL, WRITING, TEXTS: TROPE, METAPHOR, MENTONYMY...[CONICITY]...</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 01.03.16</td>
<td>INDICATIONAL, INTENSIONAL, EXTENSIONAL: DEIXIS...[INDEXICALITY]...</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 08.03.16</td>
<td>CULTURE AND BEHAVIOR: BEING, BEHAVING, BECOMING...UNBECOMING...[SYMBOLICITY]...</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 15.03.16</td>
<td>[SPRING BREAK (YES, TURN IN ESSAY NEXT WEEK!)]</td>
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**Applications: Thinking/ Writing/ Communicating**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>11 22.03.16</td>
<td>NATURE AND CULTURE OF SCIENCE: COIN AND CURRENCY...TRANSCENDING FUNCTIONALISM...</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 29.03.16</td>
<td>SPACE, TIME, INFORMATION, AND MATTER-ENERGY: &quot;KNOWLEDGE&quot;, &quot;POWER&quot;, &quot;MAGIC&quot;...</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 05.04.16</td>
<td>PEIRCE EDITION PROJECT, IF FEASIBLE; OTHERWISE PROCEED!</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 12.04.16</td>
<td>LOGICS: MOTIVATION/Anticipation/Perception/ Cognition/Interpretation/Throughput...</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 19.04.16</td>
<td>COTEXT, CONTEXT, AND &quot;CLOSURE&quot;</td>
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<td>16 26.04.16</td>
<td>RETROSPECTIVE AND PROSPECTIVE</td>
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E Weeks essays due.
OH Weeks of Friday openhouses at 1807 Northwestern Avenue

**Organization of Texts**

Our texts, all placed on reserve and available from Von's (unless otherwise noted), close this Handout 1 and repeat as Handout 2 (coupled with Handout 4, QCK). Initials of author or editor serve to identify each volume. These texts comprise one reference glossary, two complementary survey texts, one anthology, and choices among five (a) biographical/auto-biographical/historical surveys, (b) conceptual treatises, and (c) applications foregrounding thinking/writing/communicating—exclusive the glossary, a net of five volumes for each person. Consider the "openhouse" selections that may be substituted for any syllabus text. Note the orthogonal threads which may shape your selections:

- (g) general, eclectic, and systems approaches to semiotics;
- (s) semiotic and structural semiotics; (p) Peircean semiotics.

One thing not lacking in this course is provocative materials. Our course design assumes that we can spread ourselves around and share our explorations with others. More on how we'll do this later. Watch for numerous bibliographies in the Handout 3-series for reference and eventual archiving. Some of the selections on the following page roughly index the approaches: general (g), semiotic (s), and Peircean (p). Our discussion of the literature will aim to integrate and expand these topics.
Selection of Texts
All volumes have been ordered through Von's Book Shop, and all are also in the Reserve Book Room. Reading assignments should be accomplished by class time each week and indexed through QCKs or Q+G+IKs. You may substitute any auxiliary selection with any other volumes. Speak up by week 4 if you will be taking advantage of this opportunity to design your own syllabus!

GENERAL REFERENCES (suggested for everyone)

COMMON TEXT and ANTHOLOGY (assigned for everyone)
ALSO, available as pdf and substitutable for anything else on syllabus:
Merrell, Floyd (2013) Meaning-making: It's what we do; it's who we are. University of Tartu Press.

SELECT ONE: FOUNDATIONS AND HISTORY
Note your selection: __________________________ Discussions in weeks 2 through 8.

SELECT ONE: CONCEPTUAL APPROACHES
Note your selection: __________________________ Discussions in weeks 5, 6, and 7.

SELECT ONE: APPLICATIONS—THINKING/Writing/COMMUNICATING
Note your selection: __________________________ Discussions in weeks 8, 9, and 11.

Schedule and selections for the occasional FRIDAY evening openhouses at 1807 Northwestern Avenue.

FR 22 January 2016 = 1st of 4 OHs:

FR 19 February 2016 = 2nd of 4 OH's:

FR 25 March 2016 = 3rd of 4 OH's:

FR 29 April 2016 = 4th of 4 OH's:
WEEKLY SCHEDULE — a syntagm!

Reading Assignments (Each week, turn in QCKs for D chapter and for I (and M) clump of chapters, on scrap paper, and, the week before its discussion, turn in a Q+C+K for each auxiliary selection as a whole.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
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| 1    | 12.01.16 **MEANING**: semiosis...abduction, deduction, induction...signification, communication...data, capta, qualia, quanta...redundancy, ambiguity, relativity, "reality", construction...cenose/paradigm, ideose/paradigm, ideose/paradigm, phanese/paradigm...perception, understanding...key, index, typology, taxonomy, paradigm...(neg)entropy...Consult Colapietro as needed throughout semester.
Start perusing: text D=Danesi or/and M=Merrell; and reader, I=Innis.
Make your selections of one "foundation" [B/CSP, S/USA, ML, DB, DK] and one "conceptual approaches" [EH, D+P, S+D, DS, DG], and one "applications" [T, H+S GM, JS, EK], and start browsing all three! |
| 2    | 19.01.16 on **COSMOLOGIES** of TWO, THREE, FOUR...TIME and PLACE: philosophy, medicine...pragmatism, pragmatism...paradigm, syntagm, context, content...motivated/translucent, unmotivated/opaque...boundedness, free...linear, nonlinear, indeterminacy...markedness...Merrell's contradictory complementary coalescence; Interdependency, interaction, interrelated...dissipation, conservation...D 1 ☐ 2 ☐ M 1--3 ☐ |
| 3    | 26.01.16 **SPECIES OF SIGNS**: icon, index, symbol...signal, symptom, name...humans, alloanimals...sign/representamen, object, interpretant...what about interpreter?...tone, token, type...firstness, secondness, thirdness..."subjectivity", "objectivity"...M's object/act/happening...D 3 ☐ M 4--6 ☐ I first third ☐ |
| 4    | 02.02.16 **REPRESENTATION**: MODELING OF AND MODELING FOR AND MODELING IN: sign, text, code, metaphor...sensation, perception, cognition, modeling, representation..."message, code, source, destination, channel, context"...endose/semiosis, exose/semiosis...internal representation linking outside experience...art, craft, science...process, product...D 4 ☐ M 7--9 ☐ Starting this week, remember the Q+C+Ks! |
| 5    | 09.02.16 **LIFE IN SEMIOTIC PERSPECTIVE**: synergistic edges...biology, Innenwelt, Umwelt..."adaptation", "fitness", selection, exaptation...epigenesis..."intention"...culture of "STEM"...D 5 ☐ I middle third ☐ B/CSP discuss ☐ S/USA discuss ☐ |
| 6    | 16.02.16 **CULTURE AND SOCIETY, LANGUAGE and SPEECH**: beyond communication...ethics...la langue, la parole, le langage...denotata, connotata, symbol...synchrony, diachrony...phylogeny and ontogeny of culture and society, of language and speech...substitutability/similarity, sequence/contiguity/, in space and time...far-from-equilibrium...SYSTEMS...D 6 ☐ M 10--13 ☐ ML discuss ☐ DB discuss ☐ |
| 7    | 23.02.16 **VERBAL, NONVERBAL, WRITING, TEXTS**: trope, metaphor, metonymy...lore, legend, myth, mystification...aurality, orality, literacy...vocality, verbality...mimesis...ICONICITY...D 7 ☐ M 13--17 ☐ DK discuss ☐ |
| 8    | 01.03.16 **INDICATIONAL, INTENSIONAL, EXTENSIONAL**: deixis...INDEXICALITY...D and M (review) ☐ I final third ☐ EH discuss ☐ D+P discuss ☐ |
Week Wednesday

9 08.03.16 CULTURE AND BEHAVIOR: being, behaving, becoming...unbecoming...fetishism...ritualize, remystify, cognitive investment; repetition, habituation in thinness, cognitive supression...senses and "sixth sense"...opaque/arbitrary/conventional...SYMBOLICITY...

I (review)  S+D discuss  DS discuss

10 15.03.16 [SPRING BREAK (yes, turn in essay next week!)]

Applications: Thinking/Writing/Communicating

11 22.03.16 on NATURE AND CULTURE OF SCIENCE: coin and currency...transcending functionalism...firstness/vague/overdetermined, thirdness/general/underdetermined...analysis, synthesis...anomaly, anachronism, paradox, contradiction...semiosphere...DG discuss

12 29.03.16 SPACE, TIME, INFORMATION, AND MATTER-ENERGY: "knowledge", "power", "magic", intermittent reinforcement/sanction/feedback...social construction of "objectivity", "subjectivity"...possibility/actuality/probability...certainty, uncertainty...incommensurabilism...incompleteness, inconsistency, indeterminacy...TI discuss  H+S discuss

13 05.04.16 PEIRCE EDITION PROJECT if feasible  GM discuss  JS discuss

14 12.04.16 LOGICS: motivation/anticipation/perception/cognition/interpretation/throughput...

15 19.04.16 COTEXT, CONTEXT, AND "CLOSURE"

16 26.04.16 on RETROSPECTIVE AND PROSPECTIVE

Legend:  E  Weeks essays due.
OH  Weeks of Friday house parties at 1007 Northwestern Avenue

Perhaps we can meet informally during exam week.
If not, please leave stamped, self-addressed envelope for the return of your work.

Some helpful links

Semiotic Society of America—
IASS-AIS International Association for Semiotic Studies—Association Internationale de Sémiotique—

Charles S. Peirce Arisbe, directed by Professor Joseph Ransdell—
Charles S. Peirce Digital Encyclopedia—
Peirce Edition Project—
The Semiotic Review of Books—
Signs, International Journal of Semiotics—

http://uwm.edu/prehwitt/ssa.htm
http://vhf.msh-paris.fr/escmd/AIS/
http://www.digitalpeirce.org/menu.htm
http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/epc/srb/index.html
http://vip.ab.dk/signs/Articles.htm

The texts at a glance

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<th>Reader</th>
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<tr>
<td>C = Colapietro</td>
<td>D = Danesi</td>
<td>I = Innis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M = Merrell</td>
<td>GCK on each 'part'</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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1st (Foundations) Auxiliary
B/CSP = Brent 4/5
SUASA = Sebeok 4/5
ML = Liberman 5/6
DB = Bor 5/6
DK = Kainhman 6/7

2nd (Approaches) Auxiliary
EH = Hall 7/8
D+P = D+Perron 7/8
S+D = Sebeok+D 8/9
DS = Sagan 8/9
DG = Graeber 9/11

3rd (Applications) Auxiliary
TI = Ingold 11/12
H+S = Hofstadter+S 11/12
GM = Mate 12/13
JS = Saramago 12/13
EK = Kohn 13/14