Overview: This course provides an introduction to the analysis of temporal reference in natural languages. Core areas to be covered include lexical and viewpoint aspect, absolute and relative tense, time adverbials, and temporal relations in discourse (or “temporal anaphora” phenomena). There will be a strong emphasis on crosslinguistic data. We will assemble an eclectic set of analytical tools from across contemporary approaches to time semantics, with the objective of

Goals: This course is directed at students with an interest in problems of linguistic temporality and a background in descriptive linguistics, historical linguistics, language typology, first or second language acquisition research, formal semantics and/or computational linguistics. Its aim is to provide a basic training in the analysis of time reference and the semantics of tense-mood-aspect systems of natural languages. The emphasis will be on the analysis of data from a variety of both European and Non-Indo-European languages. The discussion of theories and frameworks will be subjected to this goal and hence remain eclectic. Each unit will start from a set of analytical puzzles that we will attempt to resolve in the course of the session, and conclude with a set of training exercises.

Prerequisites: LIN415/515 (Syntax I); LIN438/538 (Semantics I)

Meetings: MWF 11:00-11:50 684 Baldy
Instructor: Dr. Jürgen Bohnemeyer – Office 627 Baldy Phone 645-2177 ext. 727
E-mail jb77@buffalo.edu Office hours MW 13:00-14:00

Coursework: Every student is expected to present a 20-to-30-minutes oral summary of one of the readings listed on the syllabus in class, based on a handout elaborated by the student. In addition, every student will be assigned a project involving data collection with the Tense-Mood-Aspect Questionnaire of Dahl (1985) and/or the Tempest clips of Bohnemeyer (1998) and write-up of a 10-to-20-pages summary of the results. The overall grade will be computed as follows:

- Literature presentation, including handout – 35%
- Data collection project, including analysis, comparison, and report – 50%
- Overall participation – 15%.

Syllabus Under construction!

Part I: Basic concepts

Week 1: Intro; temporality in lexical vs. referential semantics

Reading: Klein 1994: ch. 1-2; Smith 1991: ch. 1
# LIN 621 Temporal Semantics – Spring 2005 – Syllabus

## Week 2: Building blocks: events, times, reference points

**Reading:** Bohnemeyer 2002: 20-28; 44-49; Dowty 1979: 133-150, Klein 1994: ch. 4;  

## Part II: Aspect

### Week 3: Event structure and lexical aspect

**Reading:** Bohnemeyer 2002: 28-37; Dowty 1979: 71-90; Smith 1991: 17-58;  

### Week 4: Lexical aspect and *aktionsart*

**Reading:** Bohnemeyer 2004: 71-75; Smith 1991: 39-58, 241-250; Klein 1995;  
*optional & advanced:* Filip 1999: tba.; Freed 1979: 47-63

### Week 5: Lexical aspect and *aktionsart* (Cont.); Viewpoint aspect

**Reading:** Bohnemeyer 1998: 71-86; Klein 1994: ch.5; Krifka 1992  

### Week 6: Viewpoint aspect (Cont.)

**Reading:** Bohnemeyer & Swift 2004; Portner 1998  
*optional & advanced:* Bohnemeyer 2002: 44-51; Comrie 1985: ch. 2; Klein 1994: ch. 6

## Part III: From aspect to tense

### Week 7: Viewpoint aspect vs. relative tense

**Reading:** Bohnemeyer 2003b; Comrie 1976: 52-65; Klein 1994: ch. 7  
*optional & advanced:* Chung & Timberlake 1985: 209-213; Comrie 1985: ch. 3; Dahl 1985: ch. 5; Mufwene 1990

*** SPRING BREAK Mo Mar 14 till Fr Mar 18 ***

### Week 8: Aspect vs. relative tense: Perfect and prospective; Types of perfect

**Reading:** Comrie 1976: ch. 3; Klein 1994: ch. 7; Ogihara 1999

### Week 9: Types of perfect (Cont.); Metrical tense; Sequence-of-tense phenomena

**Reading:** Comrie 1985: ch. 5; Dahl 1985: 120-128; Dahl (1985: 103-112);  
*optional & advanced:* Ogihara 1996: ch. 1
Part IV: Modality and future time reference

Week 10: Term projects; Sequence of tense (Cont.); Modal attitudes of future time reference

Reading: Portner 1997; Bybee, Pagliuca, & Perkins 1991

Week 11: Modal attitudes of future time reference (Cont.); diagnosing future tenses; future time reference in tenseless languages

Reading: Chafe 1995; Mithun 1995
optional & advanced: Chung & Timberlake 1985: 241-255; Fleischman 1982: ch. 4, 6

Part V: Time relations in discourse

Week 12: Temporal anaphora in Discourse Representation Theory

Reading: Hinrichs 1986; Kamp & Rohrer 1983; Partee 1984
optional & advanced: Kamp & Reyle 1993: 521-534

Week 13: The pragmatics of temporal anaphora; temporal connective constructions

Reading: Bohnemeyer 2000
optional & advanced: Bohnemeyer 1998a: ch. 11, 1998b

*** DATA COLLECTION PROJECTS DUE Mo Apr 26! ***

Week 14: The typology of tense-mood-aspect systems; tenselessness

Reading: Bhat 1999: tba.; Bittner in press

*** Last day of classes Monday May 2nd! ***

Reading list


1 All books have been or are being put on reserve, and all chapters and articles have been or are being made downloadable. Published chapters/articles can be downloaded from the UB library web site; unpublished articles/chapters can be downloaded from the Blackboard system/UBlearns. The references include additional readings not listed on the syllabus.
---- (2002). *The grammar of time reference in Yukatek Maya*. Munich: LINCOM.


