LING 607: Seminar in Aspect

In this course we look at verbal aspect, both morphologically marked and unmarked, across languages, focusing on the major types of aspeccual oppositions and their interfaces with tense, mood, and even grammatical case.

Learning outcomes: By the end of the course, you should have a good general understanding of the various major theoretical approaches to the notion of verbal aspect, and you should be able to apply that knowledge to analyze the aspect features of individual languages.

Course requirements:

1. **Assigned readings** for each class session: these will be posted on BB.

2. **Term paper** must be e-mailed to me at vakarel@uoregon.edu in both PDF and Word formats by midnight, Thursday, December 11. Length: 15-20 pp., including bibliography. Late papers will not be accepted without prior instructor permission. For the term paper, you may discuss either (a) the aspect system of a particular language (but not Russian), or (b) a specific aspect issue in a language (this may include Russian) or across languages.

3. **E-mail questions for class discussion:** by 10:00 p.m. the night before each meeting, e-mail to me a thoughtful question on the reading for class discussion that can be used for discussion in class the next day. This will count as part of your course grade.

4. **Rotating discussion leading:** you will be assigned, on a rotating basis, an article from the readings for which you will be primarily responsible in class. This means that you should be prepared to summarize the article briefly in class, to lead the class discussion, to ask and answer questions on the article, and to tie the article in with earlier readings for the course. You will be graded on how prepared you are on the article, how well you tie it in with earlier readings, and how well you report on the article and answer questions.

5. **Class participation:** Since this is a seminar, all students are required to participate in class at each meeting. This means that you must be well-prepared for each class: not only must you complete the readings, you must be prepared to discuss them in a meaningful way and and answer questions on them in class. You will need also to bring the assigned reading(s) and your notes on them to class, in hard copy or on a laptop or tablet. Since
class participation is a significant component of the grade in a seminar, your grade likely will be affected by unpreparedness, tardiness or absences.

That being said, if you are ill with anything you believe to be contagious, do not come to class. Instead, notify me before the class by e-mail, if possible, so that I can give you an excused absence.

Course grade components:

Term paper:  50%
Discussion leading: 20%
Class participation: 20%
E-mail questions: 10%

Syllabus

September

Mon. 29   Class: Introduction. What is verbal aspect? Do all languages have aspect? Definitions, examples.

Reading (due Wed.): Vendler, “Verbs and Times”. Prepare and e-mail a discussion Q and/or any Q you have on the reading by 10 p.m. Tues. evening.

October

Wed. 1    Class: lexical aspect. Discuss Vendler article.

Hmwk (due Mon.): Comrie chapter 1, Perfective-Imperfective opposition, and chapter 2, aspect and inherent meaning. Prepare and e-mail Qs.

Mon. 6    Class: Discuss Comrie chapters and how they interface with Vendler.

Reading: Comrie chapter 3, Perfect; chapter 4, aspect and tense. Prepare and e-mail discussion Qs.
Wed. 8  Class: Perfect: tense/aspect boundary.

Reading: (a) Comrie chapter 5, morphological aspect marking; chapter 6, markedness; (b) PIE aspect system. Prepare and e-mail discussion Qs on both readings.

Mon. 13  Class: Morphology and markedness.

Reading: Arche, *Individuals in Time*, chapter 3: event classes and individual-level predicates. Prepare and e-mail discussion Qs.

Wed. 15  Class: Event structure; compare/contrast with Vendler, Comrie

Reading: Arche chapter 4, aspectual alternations. Prepare and e-mail discussion Qs.

Mon. 20  Class: Arche vs. Comrie.

Reading: Arche chapter 5, outer aspect. Prepare and e-mail discussion Qs.

Wed. 22  Class: Discuss Arche’s model.

Reading: Binnick, *Time and the Verb*, chapter 5, The Problem of Aspect (a history of aspect study). Prepare and e-mail discussion Qs.

Mon. 27  Reading: Aspect and Tense: discuss Binnick’s views in light of Comrie, Arche.

Reading: Binnick chapter 6, Explanation in Aspectology. Prepare and e-mail discussion Qs.

Wed. 29  Class: Aspect vs. tense, cont’d.

Reading: Binnick chapter 7, formal semantics. Also submit term paper proposals (1 page maximum plus preliminary bibliography of sources you will be able to use for your topic).
November

Mon. 3  Class: formal semantics of tense and aspect.

Reading: Binnick chapter 8, Beyond the semantics of tense and aspect. Prepare and e-mail discussion Qs.

Wed. 5  Class: Discuss Binnick.

Reading: Croft, *Aspect and Causation*, chapter 2, aspectual structure of events; chapter 3, change, boundedness, construal. Prepare and e-mail discussion Qs.

Mon. 10 Class: Discuss Croft’s model.

Reading: Croft chapter 4, Interaction of grammatical and lexical semantics. Prepare and e-mail discussion Qs.

Wed. 12 Class: Discuss Croft.

Reading: Bybee et al., *The Evolution of Grammar*, chap. 3, Anterior, perfective, and related senses. Prepare and e-mail discussion Qs.

Mon. 17 Class: Compare Bybee et al. to Comrie, Binnick, Croft.

Reading: Bybee et al. chap. 4, Quantitative approach to grammaticization. Prepare and e-mail discussion Qs.

Wed. 19 Class: Discuss Bybee.

Reading: Bybee et al. chap. 5, Progressive, imperfective, present, and related senses.

Mon. 24 Class: Discuss Bybee, cont’d.

Reading: New Testament Greek, chaps. 1-2: definition of aspect; Imperfect-Aorist. Prepare and e-mail discussion Qs.
Wed. 26      Class: Case and aspect. Greek.

Reading: TAM: Abraham on aspect vs. mood; Russian; Athabaskan and Lakota aspect/modality. Prepare and e-mail discussion Qs on each reading.

December


Reading: Basque, Japanese. Prepare and e-mail discussion Qs.

Wed. 3      Class: Basque, Japanese TAM. Catch-up, conclusions

**Term paper must be e-mailed to me at vakarel@uoregon.edu in both PDF and Word formats by midnight, Thursday, December 11. No exceptions without prior instructor permission and an extremely good reason (in my judgment).