CS 703
SEMINAR IN NATURAL-LANGUAGE UNDERSTANDING AND GENERATION
Fall 1994
Registration No. 266522

SYLLABUS

Professor:
Dr. William J. Rapaport, 214 Bell Hall, 645-3180x112,
Office Hours: To be announced and by appointment.

Class Meetings:
MWF 11:00 A.M.–11:50 A.M.
224 Bell Hall

Topic:
The SNePS knowledge representation and reasoning system has a natural language interface that allows
2-way communication with the system in natural language. This has been used by many students in the
SNePS Research Group (SNeRG) for experimentation with computational “minds” and with issues
in natural language and knowledge representation. The “mind” implemented in the system is called
“Cassie” (the Cognitive Agent of the SNePS System: an Intelligent Entity).

The old version of SNePS (SNePS-79) had a large grammar covering a wide range of natural-
language phenomena. It doesn’t run (well) under the new version of SNePS; SNePS 2.1. Although
several people in SNeRG have created or are creating new grammars for SNePS/Cassie, none of those
grammars (yet) have the coverage of the old one. In addition, it is hard to do new research in natural
language using SNePS without a good grammar in place. Thus, this will be a working seminar in
which the participants will work on bringing the Cassie grammars up to date.

Students will also be expected to read the articles describing the previous research that has been
done on natural-language understanding and generation using SNePS/Cassie. The minimal goal of the
seminar is to get the SNePS-79 grammar up to speed for SNePS 2.1. A longer-range goal is to improve
and extend the grammar.

Attendance: You will be expected to attend all meetings. Readings and assignments will be announced
during the seminar meetings. Be sure to get a classmate’s phone number,\(^\text{1}\) so that you will not miss
anything in the unlikely event that you miss a class.

Important Dates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>August 29</th>
<th>First meeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday–Wednesday</td>
<td>September 5–7</td>
<td>No classes (Labor Day/Rosh Hashana)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>October 21</td>
<td>*** Last day to withdraw with a grade of ‘R’ ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>November 25</td>
<td>No class (Thanksgiving break)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>December 2</td>
<td>No class (I’ll be out of town)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>December 12</td>
<td>Last meeting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Requirements: Registered students will be expected to lead one or more class discussions on their work in
re-implementing the grammar and write a paper summarizing their work. This paper could be a joint
report.

Prerequisites: The seminar is open to interested graduate students in Computer Science, Anthropology,
Geography, Linguistics, Philosophy, Psychology, or any of the other cognitive sciences. Familiarity
with SNePS and programming in Lisp are strongly recommended, unless you are willing to learn on
the job.

\(^\text{1}\)For instance, 1 or 2 people sitting next to you in class, whoever they are!
Grading: In accordance with departmental regulations, only S/U grades will be given.

Incompletes: It is University policy that a grade of Incomplete (with a default grade) is to be given only when a small amount of work or a single exam is missed due to circumstances beyond the student's control, and that student is otherwise doing passing work. I will follow this policy. Incompletes will normally have to be made up by the end of the Spring 1995 semester. The default grade will automatically be assigned after that if the work has not been completed.