

**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,<sup>1</sup> so that you will not miss anything in the unlikely event that you miss a class.

**Important Dates:**

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

**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.

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<sup>1</sup>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.