Lecture 1: Introduction

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Course Staff

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What is Natural Language Processing?

Today’s lecture

Course Overview:
What is NLP?
What will you learn in this course?

Course Admin:
How will we teach this course?
How will you be assessed in this course?
What is Natural Language Processing really?

NLP in the news…

Facebook AI Creates Its Own Language In Creepy Preview Of Our Potential Future

Computers can now describe images using language you'd understand

Barbie Wants to Get to Know Your Child

With the help of A.I., America’s most famous doll tries to fulfill a timeless dream — convincing little girls that she's a real friend. What will happen if they believe her?

IBM’s Watson wins at Jeopardy!
Figure 29.2

The same follow-up questions that Siri couldn’t answer in 2014 receive appropriate responses from the V oiceXML system that is a simple industrial instantiation of the architecture,

We then turn to task-oriented dialog, introducing the frame-based architecture (the Atlas text-based tutoring system) and the ITSPOKE system of Cleverbot:

User: I have to do my homework.
Cleverbot: I have to do my homework.
User: Because you said so.
Cleverbot: Jason I already told you.
User: I thought it was Jason?
Cleverbot: Stephanie IS my real name.
User: No your real name.
Cleverbot: I don’t have one.
User: What’s your name?
Cleverbot: I don’t have one.
User: What’s your favorite show?
Cleverbot: Yes, so funny.
User: Do you like Doctor Who?
Cleverbot: I don’t have one.
User: What’s your name?
Cleverbot: Stephanie IS my real name.
User: No your real name.
Cleverbot: I don’t have one.
User: What’s your favorite show?
Cleverbot: Yes, so funny.
User: Do you like Doctor Who?

Student: Um. I’m thinking. 29.4 m/s

Tutor: Right. Now back to the man and his keys. We’ve shown that they both have an acceleration of 9.8 m/s

Because its acceleration tells us that every second, its velocity increases by 9.8 m/s. So, how do their velocities compare with each other, at

29.4 m/s. So what’ll its velocity be, a second after that?

velocity is 9.8 m/s and the acceleration is 9.8 m/s

Student: Is it 19.6 m/s?

Tutor: What will the velocity of the object be a second after that (where the initial velocity is 9.8 m/s and the acceleration is 9.8 m/s)

1.08 or 1.127 people heard the following reviews for the Haier HLT71.7-Inch Handheld LCD TV:

I am really thrilled with my purchase. This Haier HLT71.7-inch, ATSC 2009 portable LGD TV I have never heard name brand Haier, and I had heard a nightmare stories about some of the name brands having poor pictures of little screens, so I thought I'd give the Haier a try.

Ordered this TV directly from Amazon.com
Have chatbots developed their own language?

https://code.facebook.com/posts/1686672014972296/deal-or-no-deal-training-ai-bots-to-negotiate/

Bob: “I can can I I everything else.”
Alice: “Balls have zero to me to me to me to me to me to me to me to me to me to.”

No, not really…
http://www.snopes.com/facebook-ai-developed-own-language/

What well does that Barbie do?

Barbie: “Do you have any sisters?”
Child: “Yeah, I only have one.”
Barbie: “What’s something nice that your sister does for you?”
Child: “She does nothing nice to me”
Barbie: “Well, what is the last nice thing your sister did?”
Child: “She helped me with my project — and then she destroyed it.”
Barbie: “Oh, yeah, tell me more!”
Child: “That’s it, Barbie,”
Barbie: “Have you told your sister lately how cool she is?”
Child: “No. She is not cool,”
Barbie: “You never know, she might appreciate hearing it”

(Thanks to Barbara Grosz for pointing out the example from the NYT)

What is the current state of NLP?

Lots of commercial applications and interest.
Some applications are working pretty well already, others not so much.

A lot of hype around “deep learning” and “AI”
- Neural nets are powerful classifiers and sequence models
- Public libraries (Tensorflow, Torch, Caffe, etc.) and datasets make it easy for anybody to get a model up and running
- “End-to-end” models put into question whether we still need the traditional NLP pipeline that this class is built around
- We’re still in the middle of this paradigm shift
- But many of the fundamental problems haven’t gone away

What will you learn in this class?
The topics of this class

We want to identify the structure and meaning of words, sentences, texts and conversations. N.B.: we do not deal with speech (no signal processing).

We mainly deal with language analysis/understanding, not language generation/production.

We focus on fundamental concepts, methods, models, and algorithms, not so much on current research:
- Data (natural language): linguistic concepts and phenomena
- Representations: grammars, automata, etc.
- Statistical models over these representations
- Learning & inference algorithms for these models

What you should learn

You should be able to answer the following questions:
- What makes natural language difficult for computers?
- What are the core NLP tasks?
- What are the main modeling techniques used in NLP?

We won’t be able to cover the latest research… (this requires more time, and a much stronger background in machine learning than I am able to assume for this class)

… but I would still like you to get an understanding of:
- How well does current NLP technology work (or not)?
- What NLP software is available?
- How to read NLP research papers [4 credits section]

Building a computer that ‘understands’ text: The NLP pipeline

新华社拉萨二月二日电（记者央珍） “八五”（一九九一至一九九五年）期间，西藏金融体制改革坚持与全国框架一致，体制衔接的方针，顺利完成西藏各级人民银行的分设工作，实现信贷资金使用从粗放型经营方式向集约型经营方式转变。
**Task: Tokenization/segmentation**

We need to split text into words and sentences.
- Languages like Chinese don’t have spaces between words.
- Even in English, this cannot be done deterministically:

  There was an earthquake near D.C. You could even feel it in Philadelphia, New York, etc.

NLP task:
What is the most likely segmentation/tokenization?

**How do we decide?**

We want to know the most likely tags $T$ for the sentence $S$:

$$\arg\max_T P(T|S)$$

We need to define a statistical model of $P(T|S)$, e.g.:

$$\arg\max_T P(T|S) = \arg\max_T P(T)P(S|T)$$

$$P(T) =_{def} \prod_i P(t_i|t_{i-1})$$

$$P(S|T) =_{def} \prod_i P(w_i|t_i)$$

We need to estimate the parameters of $P(T|S)$, e.g.:

$$P( t_i = V \mid t_{i-1} = N) = 0.3$$

**Task: Part-of-speech-tagging**

Open the pod door, Hal.

Verb
Det Noun Noun, Name.

open:
verb, adjective, or noun?
Verb: open the door
Adjective: the open door
Noun: in the open

**Disambiguation requires statistical models**

Ambiguity is a core problem for any NLP task.

Statistical models* are one of the main tools to deal with ambiguity.

*more generally: a lot of the models (classifiers, structured prediction models) you learn about in CS446 (Machine Learning) can be used for this purpose.

You can learn more about the connection to machine learning in CS546 (Machine learning in Natural Language).

These models need to be trained (estimated, learned) before they can be used (tested).

We will see lots of examples in this class (CS446 is NOT a prerequisite for CS447)
“I made her duck”

What does this sentence mean?
“duck”: noun or verb?
“make”: “cook X” or “cause X to do Y”?
“her”: “for her” or “belonging to her”?

Language has different kinds of ambiguity, e.g.:
Structural ambiguity
“I eat sushi with tuna” vs. “I eat sushi with chopsticks”
“I saw the man with the telescope on the hill”

Lexical (word sense) ambiguity
“I went to the bank”: financial institution or river bank?

Referential ambiguity
“John saw Jim. He was drinking coffee.”

“I made her duck cassoulet”

(Cassoulet = a French bean casserole)

The second major problem in NLP is coverage: We will always encounter unfamiliar words and constructions.

Our models need to be able to deal with this.

This means that our models need to be able to generalize from what they have been trained on to what they will be used on.

Task: Syntactic parsing

Observation: Structure corresponds to meaning
NLP and automata theory

What kind of grammar/automaton is required to analyze natural language?

What class of languages does natural language fall into?

Chomsky (1956)’s hierarchy of formal languages was originally developed to answer (some of) these questions.

Task: Semantic analysis

Representing meaning

We need a meaning representation language.

“Shallow” semantic analysis: Template-filling (Information Extraction)

Named-Entity Extraction: Organizations, Locations, Dates,...

Event Extraction

“Deep” semantic analysis: (Variants of) formal logic

We also distinguish between

Lexical semantics (the meaning of words) and

Compositional semantics (the meaning of sentences)
More than a decade ago, Carl Lewis stood on the threshold of what was to become the greatest athletics career in history. He had just broken two of the legendary Jesse Owens' college records, but never believed he would become a corporate icon, the focus of hundreds of millions of dollars in advertising. His sport was still nominally amateur. Eighteen Olympic and World Championship gold medals and 21 world records later, Lewis has become the richest man in the history of track and field — a multi-millionaire.

Who is Carl Lewis?
Did Carl Lewis break any world records? (and how do you know that?)

Summary: The NLP Pipeline

An NLP system may use some or all of the following steps:

Tokenizer/Segmenter
- to identify words and sentences
Morphological analyzer/POS-tagger
- to identify the part of speech and structure of words
Word sense disambiguation
- to identify the meaning of words
Syntactic/semantic Parser
- to obtain the structure and meaning of sentences
Coreference resolution/discourse model
- to keep track of the various entities and events mentioned
This class consists of...

... Lectures:
  Wednesdays and Fridays, 12:30pm–1:45 pm, DCL1310

... Office hours:
  Julia: Wednesdays and Fridays, 2pm–3pm, Siebel 3324
  Sidhartha: Mondays 3pm—4pm, Wednesdays, 5pm—6pm, Siebel 0207
  Yisi: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2pm—3pm, Siebel 0207

... Websites:
  Syllabus, slides, policies, etc: http://courses.engr.illinois.edu/cs447
  Discussions: piazza.com/illinois/fall2017/cs447
  Grades, submitting assignments: http://compass2g.illinois.edu

... Readings:
  Textbook + additional readings (http://courses.engr.illinois.edu/cs447)

... Assessment:
  4 assignments, 2 exams (4th credit hour: project or survey)

Lectures and office hours

Attend!
Ask questions!
Participate!

Weekly schedule

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NB: You should go to Julia’s office hours (Siebel 3324) for questions about the lecture and exams, and to Sidhartha and Yisi (Siebel 0207) for questions regarding the lecture or homework assignments.

Reading

The textbook: https://web.stanford.edu/~jurafsky/slp3/
Jurafsky and Martin, *Speech and Language Processing* (3rd edition PDFs in prep.; 2nd edition, 2008 in print)

Other material (Slides, additional reading):
  Posted on course website

For some assignments:
Assessment

If you take this class for 3 hours credit:
- 1/3 homework assignments
- 1/3 midterm exam
- 1/3 final exam

If you take this class for 4 hours credit:
- 1/4 homework assignments
- 1/4 midterm exam
- 1/4 final exam
- 1/4 literature reviews

We reserve the right to improve your grade by up to 5% depending on your class participation. If you’re in between grades, but attended class and participated frequently and actively in in-class discussions etc., we will give you the higher grade.

Homework assignments

What?
- 4 assignments (mostly programming), plus homework 0
- We use Python and the Natural Language Toolkit (NLTK)

Why?
- To make sure you can put what you’ve learned to practice.

How?
- You will have two weeks to complete HW0.
- You will have three weeks to complete HW1, HW2, HW3, HW4.
- Grades will be based on your write-up and your code.
- Submit your assignments on Compass.

Late policy?
- No late assignments will be accepted (sorry).

Exams

What?
- Midterm exam: Thursday, Oct 12 (Week 7), 6:30pm DCL 1320
- Final exam: TBD [between Dec. 15 and Dec. 21]
  (based on material after first midterm)

Why?
- To make sure you understand what you learned well enough to explain and apply it.

How?
- Essay questions and problem questions
- Closed-book (no cheatsheets, no electronics, etc.)
- Will be based on lectures and readings

Schedule:
- Week 1: Friday, 09/25   HW0 out (today!)
- Week 3: Friday, 09/15   HW0 due, HW1 out
- Week 6: Friday, 10/06   HW1 due, HW2 out
- Week 9: Friday, 10/27   HW2 due, HW3 out
- Week 12: Friday, 11/17  HW3 due, HW4 out
- Week 15: Wednesday, 12/13  HW4 due (last lecture)

Points per assignment:
- HW0 = 2 points
- (Did you submit (on time)? Was it in the right format?)
- HW1,HW2,HW3,HW4 = 10 points per assignment
4th credit hour: Research Projects

What?
You need to read and describe a few (2-3) NLP papers on a particular task, implement an NLP system for this task and describe it in a written report.

Why?
To make sure you get a deeper knowledge of NLP by reading original papers and by building an actual system.

When?
- Oct 20 (Wk 8): Proposal due (What topic? What papers will you read?)
- Nov 15 (Wk 12): Progress report due (Are your experiments on track?)
- Dec 14 (Reading Day): Final report due (Summary of papers, your system)

4th credit hour: Literature Survey

What?
You need to read and describe several (5-7) NLP papers on a particular task or topic, and produce a written report that compares and critiques these approaches.

Why?
To make sure you get a deeper knowledge of NLP by reading original papers, even if you don’t build an actual system.

When?
- Oct 20 (Wk 8): Proposal due (What topic? What papers will you read?)
- Nov 15 (Wk 12): Progress report due (Is your paper on track?)
- Dec 14 (Reading Day): Final report due (Summary of papers)

Course Outline (tentative)

Lectures 2–5: Words and strings (morphology, language models)
Lectures 7–10: Sequence labeling (POS tagging etc.)
Lectures 11-12: Lexical similarities, word clustering
Lecture 13: Review for midterm
Midterm exam
Lecture 14–21: Syntax and Parsing
Lecture 22–24: Machine Translation
Lecture 25–28: Semantics, Discourse
Lecture 29: Review for Final Exam

http://courses.engr.illinois.edu/cs447/syllabus.html

Today’s readings

Today’s lecture:
Jurafsky and Martin Chapter 1 (2nd edition)
http://www.cs.colorado.edu/~martin/SLP/Updates/1.pdf

Homework 0
Out on Friday, due two weeks later.
https://courses.engr.illinois.edu/CS447/HW/cs447_HW0.zip

Read Python tutorial sections 1—5
https://docs.python.org/2/tutorial/

Make sure you have access to Piazza and Compass2G