

# MIND, TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIETY

## *Seminar Series*

UC MERCED, Fall 2016

*Oana David*

**University of California, Merced**

**Beyond War Metaphors in Cancer Discourse**

Linguistic and discourse analytic studies in Conceptual Metaphor Theory have shed light on the metaphors that structure our understanding of cancer. From a clinical, personal and social perspective, there are practical reverberations to metaphor use. Choice of metaphor when discussing cancer can influence the path of action and the attitudes of those affected by it. For instance, the way that cancer is metaphorically discussed in English – frequently either as a journey or as a war – has been shown to influence how willing cancer patients are to take preventative measures. The use of the war metaphor (e.g., battle cancer, war on cancer), in particular, has led physicians and patients alike to feel pessimism about prognosis. The focus in the literature has generally been on war metaphors, and has drawn only from American English data. In this talk I discuss how existing discourse-analytic approaches from health communication studies can be enriched by computational and corpus linguistic analyses, as well as how data from other languages can better our understanding of both metaphor theory more generally and cancer framing more specifically. Using large corpora of web-based texts, and the metaphor-mining tool MetaNet, I present a more diverse landscape of metaphors used to talk about cancer. The goal of this research is to discover a breadth of metaphor beyond war and journey metaphors. I use corpus and computational linguistic methods that mine texts for a broader variety of metaphors, and show commonalities among linguistic metaphors at higher levels of conceptualization. Cross-linguistic corpus work (Spanish, Romanian, Japanese) reveals that war and journey metaphors are not necessarily available across languages, or are present in different proportions than they are in English. Finally, I explore how fundamental differences in the grammatical structures of different languages may explain some of these different distributions.

*Oana David completed her PhD in linguistics at UC Berkeley. She is currently a Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellow in Cognitive and Information Sciences at UC Merced. Her research focus is in cognitive linguistics, specifically computational, corpus and discourse analytic approaches to the study of metaphor.*



**MONDAY,**

**October 31, 2016**

**3:00 PM - 4:30 PM**

**KL 232**

**Please contact Jeff Yoshimi ([jyoshimi@ucmerced.edu](mailto:jyoshimi@ucmerced.edu)) for more information.**

