Below are the desiderata for a theory of meaning that were identified in class. I have lightly organized them so that they are grouped in categories. Let’s keep these in mind as we progress through the semester.

Intrinsic Characteristics

1. **Meaning Facts**
   - **Symbolic weight**: can represent or be a representation of the physical and abstract
   - Corresponds to reality
   - Clarity of intent or intended meaning vs. opacity (also **cognitive impact**)
   - Ambiguity
   - Meaning can be learned by an audience, but new meanings can only be learned relative to a “point of reference” (**acquisition**, **coherence**)
   - Translatable and understandable across languages and (possibly) cultures
   - Meaningful silence

2. **Properties of a Theory of Meaning**
   - Timeless; isn’t designated to a singular moment (**generalizable**)
   - **Accounts for context**: environment alters intent, explain context in non-verbal communication

Extrinsic Characteristics

1. **Communication**
   - Must correlate the mental representation of the speaker to the representations of the audience
   - Non-verbal behavior (e.g., body language): interpretation, changes between languages and cultures (also applies to verbal language)
   - Mutual understanding by speaker/audience
   - Audience perception of meaning
• Human speech invokes and expresses emotions and intent

2. Non-verbal and verbal communication *Pragmatics*

• Sarcasm
• Humor
• Inside jokes (shared meanings) – from the dyadic to the cultural level
• Conditional relevance
• Explain (away) figurative language (also *meaning fact*)