Graeme Hirst’s research interests cover a range of topics in applied computational linguistics and natural language processing, including lexical semantics, the resolution of ambiguity in text, the analysis of authors’ styles in literature and other text (including plagiarism detection and the detection of online sexual predators), identifying markers of Alzheimer’s disease in language, and the automatic analysis of arguments and discourse (especially in political and parliamentary texts).

Hirst is the editor of the Synthesis series of books on Human Language Technologies, published by Morgan & Claypool. He is the author of two monographs: *Anaphora in Natural Language Understanding* and *Semantic Interpretation and the Resolution of Ambiguity*. He is the recipient of two awards for excellence in teaching. He has supervised more than 50 theses and dissertations, four of which have been published as books. He was elected Chair of the North American Chapter of the Association for Computational Linguistics for 2004-05 and Treasurer of the Association for 2008-2017.

**Bio**

* LTI colloquium: http://colloquium.lti.cs.cmu.edu
* To meet with the speaker, please email: jaecho@cs.cmu.edu

Friday, February 19, 2016 / 2:30PM, GHC 4401

**“Who Decides What A Text Means?”**
(And What the Answer Implies for Computational Linguistics)

**ABSTRACT**

Writer-based and reader-based views of text-meaning are reflected by the respective questions "What is the author trying to tell me?" and "What does this text mean to me personally?" Contemporary computational linguistics, however, generally takes neither view; applications do not attempt to answer either question. Instead, a text is regarded as an object that is independent of, or detached from, its author or provenance, and as an object that has the same meaning for all readers. This is not adequate, however, for the further development of sophisticated NLP applications for intelligence gathering and question answering, let alone interactive dialog systems. I will review the history of text-meaning in computational linguistics, discuss different views of text-meaning from the perspective of the needs of computational text analysis, and then extend the analysis to include discourse as well -- in particular, the collaborative or negotiated construction of meaning and repair of misunderstanding.