The advent of the new discipline of Formal Semantics around forty years ago has resulted in a vast expansion in our knowledge and theoretical understanding of grammatical meaning. Semantics for Latin collects together this new material, applies it to Latin, and makes the results accessible to a Classical audience. The issues confronted by Formal Semantics are mostly those that comprise the core subject matter of Latin grammar. Formal Semantics, however, is not just a new way of doing an old subject: the richness and explanatory depth of its analyses, together with their striking elegance and precision, go far beyond anything that was achieved by the rather vague notional semantics used in our classroom textbooks and in the standard German reference grammars. Thus, apart from its intrinsic interest, the material in this book will be of real practical value to students and teachers of Latin and, more generally, to scholars engaged in any discussion of Latin textual meaning.

“This is an exciting book—ambitious, penetrating, and a watershed in the description of Latin… Readers familiar with earlier magna opera of Devine and Stephens will recognize the style: a terse presentation of theory, data, and analysis whose density is rivalled only by TLL articles… a book for every classicist… an extraordinary accomplishment… has set a new standard in the description of Latin.” (Bryn Mawr Classical Review)

Word order is not a subject anyone reading Latin can afford to ignore: apart from anything else, word order is what gets one from disjoint sentences to coherent text. Reading a paragraph of Latin without attention to the word order entails losing access to a whole dimension of meaning, or at best using inferential procedures to guess at what is actually overtly encoded in the syntax. This book begins by introducing the reader to the linguistic concepts, formalism and analytical techniques necessary for the study of Latin word order. It then proceeds to present and analyze a representative selection of data in sufficient detail for the reader to develop both an intuitive grasp of the often rather subtle principles controlling Latin word order and a theoretically grounded understanding of the system that underlies it. Combining the rich empirical documentation of traditional philological approaches with the deeper theoretical insight of modern linguistics, this work aims to reduce the intricate surface patterns of Latin word order to a simple and general crosscategorial system of syntactic structure which translates more or less directly into constituents of pragmatic and semantic meaning.
“Will enhance the reading experience of every reader of Latin texts. An enormous wealth of material has been accumulated” (Times Literary Supplement)

“A vast store of evidence is presented… The author’s knowledge of formal theories is impressive… From the core of grand structural theories the authors have produced an impressive investigation. In no way is it tediously theoretical, but rather, given their many thousands of original citations, it is data oriented throughout… Anyone who is not an extreme partisan of the pragmatics-only school and who doesn’t let the terminology of formal linguistics frighten him will find in this book many explanatory approaches to one of the most difficult chapters in Latin grammar. In the numerous individual analyses, discriminating method and theoretical foundation, he will find a wealth of stimuli to further research” (Kratylos, Indog. Ges.)

The interface between syntax and meaning, both semantic and pragmatic, has emerged as perhaps the richest and most fascinating area of current linguistic theory. This study applies some of these ideas to hyperbaton, offering an original new theory with broad applications for our understanding of Greek syntax. Students of epic will find a fresh perspective on orality in Homer while the general classicist will discover a more precise and explicit framework for the analysis of textual meaning in literary research.

“As if to mark a new era of illumination in the investigation of Greek syntax, the beginning of the new century saw the appearance of… the ground-breaking study by A.M. Devine and L.D. Stephens of syntactic discontinuity in Greek” (Mouseion)

“Another brilliant piece of scholarship by this extraordinarily productive and creative scholarly team… This is groundbreaking work in Greek syntax” (OUP reviewer)

“A significant work which should help breathe new life into the study of Greek syntax” (Language)
The reconstruction of the prosody of a dead language is, on the face of it, an almost impossible undertaking. However, once a general theory of prosody has been developed from reliable data in living languages, it is possible to exploit texts as sources of answers to questions that would normally be answered in the laboratory. In this work, the authors interpret the evidence of Greek verse texts and musical settings in the framework of a theory of prosody based on crosslinguistic evidence and experimental phonetic and psycholinguistic data, and reconstruct the syllable structure, rhythm, accent, phrasing, and intonation of classical Greek speech. Sophisticated statistical analyses are employed to support an impressive range of new findings which relate not only to phonetics and phonology, but also to pragmatics and the syntax-phonology interface.

“An unparalleled achievement in recovering the sound of an ancient language” (General Linguistics)

“I enjoyed reading this book more than almost any other… in the past several years, and it is a spectacular piece of scholarship. It should be read by every Classicist even remotely concerned with Ancient Greek as the living entity it once was… A nearly bottomless source of real advances and ideas that should spawn years of fruitful research (Bryn Mawr Classical Review)

“The seminal work of Devine and Stephens” (“Homeric Recitation: Pitch,” Web article)