Verb classifications have often been proposed which group together verbs with similar syntactic and/or semantic behaviour. On the practical side, verb classes permit capturing generalisations about verb behaviour thus reducing both the effort needed to construct a verb lexicon and the likelihood that errors are introduced when adding new entries. On the theoretical side, (Levin 1993) has shown that syntax reflects semantics and consequently, that verbs that belong to a syntactic class can be shown to often share a semantic component.

In this talk, we explore the use of Formal Concept Analysis (FCA) to acquire classes for French verbs from available lexical resources. We start by outlining the intuition behind the proposal and describing the lexical resources used. We then show how FCA can be used to bootstrap a classification of French verbs and report on a quantitative and qualitative evaluation. In particular, we argue that the resulting classification has good coverage and good factorisation power; that the obtained classes provide a good basis for associating thematic grids with syntactic frames.