Pragmatics (01:615:350; Section 01)

Time: Monday & Thursday 10:20-11:40am
Location: Campbell Hall A2 (College Ave. Campus)
WWW: hosted at `canvas.rutgers.edu`

Instructor: Peter Alrenga
Email: `peter.alrenga@rutgers.edu`
Office Hrs: Tuesday 12-2pm, or by appt.
                  (online via `Zoom`)

Course Overview and Learning Goals

The study of linguistic meaning comprises two disciplines: *semantics*, the study of the literal, or conventional, meanings carried by words and sentences, and *pragmatics*, the study of how speakers use words and sentences in interactive communicative settings to convey messages. As we will see (and as any skilled conversationalist already knows), these messages may encompass much more than just the literal meanings of the sentences used to convey them.

This course surveys several core issues in pragmatics. We will be particularly concerned this semester with the interaction between pragmatics and semantics, exploring the numerous ways in which the literal meaning of a sentence interacts with the conversational context in which it is uttered. Our goals will be (i) to determine the extent to which these interactions are regular and well-defined, and (ii) to arrive at a more precise understanding of what constitutes an utterance context, and how various types of utterances may affect it. Along the way, we will also consider the relevance of pragmatic theory to other disciplines, such as cognitive psychology and the law.

Students who successfully complete this course will:

* understand the distinction between pragmatics and semantics, their respective domains of investigation, and their respective methods of inquiry,
* gain mastery of the basic analytical tools of linguistic pragmatics,
* gain awareness of language usage (your own and other speakers') in context,
* learn more about psycholinguistic and developmental experimentation in pragmatics,
* learn more about the real-world relevance of pragmatic theory to (e.g.) the law and advertising,
* (for majors and minors) add to your technical and conceptual repertoire in the field of Linguistics as you complete a (core) course as part of your degree.

Prerequisites

The prerequisite for this course is Introduction to Linguistic Theory (01:615:201). Our readings and class discussions will presuppose a familiarity with the material covered in that class.

Readings

The required textbook for this course is:

Cummins, Chris. 2019. *Pragmatics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. (ISBN: 978-1474440035)

Several supplementary readings will also be assigned—these will be made available to you as PDF files via the course website.

Course Requirements

Reading: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, all readings are required, and should be completed by the beginning of class.

A word of advice: do <u>not</u> leave these assignments until the last minute! I have made every effort to find accessible readings, but even so, some of these will challenge you. You are not expected to understand every word of every reading, but I <u>do</u> expect that you will put forth your best efforts.

Attendance & Participation: Regular attendance and active participation are expected throughout the semester. If you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University's Self-Reporting Absence Application to indicate the date and reason for your absence (`https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra`). An email will be automatically sent to me.

If you are using an electronic device during class, it must be for a reason directly related to class (taking notes, looking at digital copies of the course materials, and so on). <u>No surfing, social media, or texting.</u>

You should come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings and to ask questions (clarification or otherwise). Together, attendance and participation will constitute 10% of your overall grade.

Homeworks/Reading Responses: Throughout the semester, you will submit six homework assignments (HW's) and three reading responses (RR's). The homework assignments will cover material from the readings and our class discussions; at times, you will also be asked to apply your understanding of this material to novel types of problems. The reading responses will ask you to engage with foundational articles from the pragmatics literature: what are the issues, what are the core proposals, and what arguments are advanced to support those proposals? I will pose specific questions about the readings,

around which your discussion should be organized. Your responses need not be long (one single-spaced page of targeted prose may be enough), but they should be thorough. Your lowest homework/reading response score will be dropped; the remaining eight scores will account for 45% of your overall grade.

Exams: There will be an in-class midterm exam on **Thursday, March 10**, which will constitute 20% of your overall grade. There will also be a cumulative take-home final exam, which will be due on **Monday, May 9 at noon**. The final exam will constitute 25% of your overall grade.

Course Policies

Academic Integrity: I encourage you to discuss the course material with each other. However, each student must complete his/her written work independently, without reference to the written work of any other student. You are expected to abide by the University's Academic Integrity Policy (`http://nbacademicintegrity.rutgers.edu`). If you have not yet reviewed this policy, then you should do so now. Since students are expected to be familiar with this policy and its commonly accepted standards, ignorance of these standards does not suffice to establish lack of intent. If you are unsure of any aspect of this policy, please ask!

Plagiarism in any form (including from online sources), presenting someone else's work as your own, and other academic misconduct will not be tolerated.

Late Policy: It is your responsibility to stay abreast of our course's submission deadlines, and to bring any potential scheduling conflicts to my attention promptly, so that alternative arrangements can be made. In the absence of any such prior arrangements, all coursework must be submitted via the course website by the published deadlines, and late submissions will not be accepted.

Instructor Communication: Please contact me via my Rutgers email address (`peter.alrenga@rutgers.edu`). I will reply to emails within 24 hours during weekdays. Emails sent over the weekend may not receive a reply until the following Monday, but I will try my best to communicate promptly.

Technical Support: For help with Canvas, please contact the Office of Information Technology (OIT) at `https://it.rutgers.edu/help-support`.

Grading: Your overall course grade will be assigned according to the following scale:

Grade	Range
A	90 – 100
B+	85 – 89
B	80 – 84
C+	75 – 79
C	70 – 74
D	60 – 69
F	Below 60

Extra Credit

You will have the opportunity to <u>raise your final grade by up to 2 points</u> through experimental participation:

- Some faculty and graduate students in the Department of Linguistics perform experimental research on language. This research depends on the participation of undergraduate participants.
- You have the option of participating in Linguistics experiments during the semester. Each experiment usually takes between 20 and 45 minutes.
- You will get **1 point credit for every half hour** of experimental participation. It does not matter what subfield of Linguistics this experiment is in, but it must be in <u>Linguistics</u>.
- Experiments are offered through the Department's experiment management system Sona (`http://rutgerslinguistics.sona-systems.com/`). Towards the beginning of the semester, your name and email will be added to the experiment system. You will be issued an anonymous ID to participate in experiments through this system. Once Linguistics experiments are posted, you can sign up online. (Note that this system is different from the Psychology pool, and you should not use a Psychology ID to log in to the system.)
- <u>Any</u> student enrolled in a Linguistics undergraduate course is eligible to participate in Linguistics experiments, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, language status, or impairments, disorders, or disabilities (as long as their instructor provides the opportunity). You cannot be denied participation for any of these reasons.
- You have the right not to participate in experiments to earn extra credit. You may speak with me about possible research alternatives, such as reading a pre-approved scholarly article and writing a 2-page paper summarizing it.
- If you are taking multiple Linguistics courses that allow for experimental participation to count towards extra credit, <u>you</u> are responsible for making sure you have assigned the credit correctly through the experiment system online. This is <u>not</u> your instructor's, the experimenter's, or the experiment system administrator's job!
- If you sign up for, but fail to show up for, two or more experiments, you may barred from further participation and restricted to research alternatives as described above. Please note the time and location of your experiments, and take your schedule and transportation time into account. Many experiments have restrictions on how late you may cancel online.

Preliminary Schedule (subject to change as the semester proceeds)

WEEK	DATE	CLASS TOPIC	READINGS	ASSIGNMENT
1	Th 1/20	Course Overview		
2	M 1/24	The Semantics/Pragmatics Boundary: What Do We Mean by 'Meaning'?	Cummins, Chap. 1; Chierchia & McConnell-Ginet, Chap. 1 (16-28)	
	Th 1/27			
3	M 1/31	Conversational Implicature I: Sentence Meaning, Utterance Meaning & Grice's Maxims	Cummins, Chap. 2 (15-23); Grice 1975 (for RR1)	HW1 due
	Th 2/3			
4	M 2/7	Conversational Implicature II: Quantity Implicatures & Lexical Scales; Strength, Relevance & Discourse Goals	Cummins, Chap. 3 (38-55)	RR1 due
	Th 2/10			
5	M 2/14			HW2 due
	Th 2/17	Conversational Implicature in the Courtroom	Solan & Tiersma, Chap. 11	
6	M 2/21	Reference I: Pronouns, Deixis & Anaphora	Huang, Chap. 5 (133-162); Chierchia & McConnell-Ginet, Chap. 1 (28-32); Cummins, Chap. 5 (100-109)	
	Th 2/24			HW3 due
7	M 2/28	Reference II: (In)definite NPs in Discourse	Karttunen 1976 (for RR2); Haviland & Clark 1974	
	Th 3/3			RR2 due (end of F 3/4)
8	M 3/7	Midterm Review		
	Th 3/10	**In-Class Midterm Exam**		

Preliminary Schedule (subject to change as the semester proceeds)

WEEK	DATE	CLASS TOPIC	READINGS	ASSIGNMENT
9	M 3/21	Presupposition I: Triggers & At-Issueness	Cummins, Chap. 4 (73-90); Cummins, Chap. 4 (90-99)	
	Th 3/24			
10	M 3/28	Presupposition II: Projection, Accommodation & the Common Ground; Conversational Scorekeeping	Stalnaker 1974	HW4 due
	Th 3/31			
11	M 4/4			
	Th 4/7	**Guest Lecture by Prof. Syrett**	To be determined	HW5 due
12	M 4/11	Speech Acts I: Performatives & Sentence Types	Cummins, Chap. 8 (186-198); Austin 1956	
	Th 4/14			
13	M 4/18	Speech Acts II: The Problem of Indirect Speech Acts	Searle 1975 (for RR3)	
	Th 4/21			RR3 due (end of F 4/22)
14	M 4/25	Speech Acts & the Law	Solan & Tiersma, Chap. 3	
	Th 4/28	Questions Under Discussion	Cummins, Chap. 7 (155-168)	HW6 due
15	M 5/2	Final Review		
Take-Home Final Exam due (M 5/9 @ noon)				

Readings List

Austin, John L. 1956/1961. Performative utterances. In J.O. Urmson and G.J. Warnock (eds.), *J.L. Austin: Philosophical Papers*, 233-252. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chierchia, Gennaro and Sally McConnell-Ginet. 1990. *Meaning and Grammar: An Introduction to Semantics*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Cummins, Chris. 2019. *Pragmatics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Grice, Paul. 1975/1989. Logic and conversation. In P. Cole and J. Morgan (eds.), *Syntax and Semantics, Vol. 3: Speech Acts*, 41-58. New York: Academic Press.

Haviland, Susan & Herbert Clark. 1974. What's new? Acquiring new information as a process in comprehension. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior* 13: 512-521.

Huang, Yan. 2007. *Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Karttunen, Lauri. 1976. Discourse referents. In J.D. McCawley (ed.), *Syntax and Semantics, Vol. 7: Notes from the Linguistic Underground*, 363-385. New York: Academic Press.

Solan, Larry M. and Peter M. Tiersma 2005. *Speaking of Crime: The Language of Criminal Justice*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.

Stalnaker, Robert C. 1974. Pragmatic presuppositions. In M.K. Munitz and P.K. Unger (eds.), *Semantics and Philosophy*, 197-213. New York: New York University Press. (Reprinted in R.C. Stalnaker *Context and Content: Essays on Intentionality in Speech and Thought*, 47-62. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1999)

Searle, John R. 1975. Indirect speech acts. In P. Cole and J. Morgan (eds.), *Syntax and Semantics, Vol. 3: Speech Acts*, 59-82. New York: Academic Press.