

**Pragmatics of Linguistic Communication (PPLS11005)
Semester 2, 2015**

Instructor: Hannah Rohde

Email: hannah.rohde@ed.ac.uk
Office: Dugald Stewart Building, 2.06
Office Hours: Wednesday 2:30-3:30pm, or by appointment

Course Meetings

Class time/place: Monday 3:10-5pm, 22 Buccleuch Place, Room 3.3
No classes 26 January (week3) or 16 February (ILW);
Exceptions: Class meets only 4:10-5pm on 2 February (week4)

Course secretary: Toni Noble, toni.noble@ed.ac.uk

PG Teaching Office: Dugald Stewart Building 1.06

What's this course all about?

People use language in context, yet linguistic models of language structure and processing tend to focus on language in isolation, *all else being equal*. The focus of this course is on charting what it means for all else *not* to be equal in order to better understand how language works in larger discourse contexts. We will examine how listeners infer what is meant beyond what a speaker explicitly says. The course starts from the observation that linguistic forms are inherently, even necessarily, ambiguous, and the interpretation of ambiguous expressions therefore says a lot about the expectations listeners have for what speakers intend. Topics include the role of presupposition and implicature in language understanding, speakers' use of common ground, the processing of ambiguous material, and the deduction of the implicit relationships that hold between sentences in a larger discourse. We will discuss how these phenomena are analysed within a range of different models - philosophical, computational, and psycholinguistic. The goal of the course is to consider a variety of pragmatic phenomena through the lens of human cognition and to ask how those phenomena are reflected in applied scenarios. We will look at a variety of types of models that have been proposed to capture cross-sentence relationships (philosophical, computational, and psycholinguistic). We will explore these approaches and discuss their theoretical assumptions, methodological tools, and empirical strengths and weaknesses.

Readings

There is no required textbook. All readings will be available on Learn.

Assessment

Course Component	% of Final Mark
Homeworks: 3 assignments related to readings and class lectures	30%
Final essay: 3,000 words on one of a given set of topics	70%

Policies

1. Keep up with class. Attending class is expected of everyone. Readings should be completed prior to the set of classes for which they are intended.
2. Daily web readings In addition to assigned chapters and articles, material will be posted on the web to be read in anticipation of class discussion. This material covers content that in previous years was presented as lectures. This is the first year that class time will be entirely devoted to exercises and discussion and will not follow a lecture format.

3. Hand in your work on time. Each homework is due to the course organiser (Hannah) in class (Monday 3pm) a week after it is assigned. Due dates are firm. Preferably, we will discuss the answers in class on the day they are handed in, so late hand-ins will impede class discussion.
4. Collaboration on assignments. Working with one or two other students on HW is fine/encouraged but final write-ups must be your own. You may discuss assignments together with other students (and certainly solicit acceptability/felicity judgments from native speakers), but you must hand in separate writeups.
5. Essay. The final essay constitutes the majority of your mark. For the essay, any collaboration will be considered a violation of the university's policy on academic integrity (<http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/students/undergraduate/discipline/academic-misconduct>). All violations will be reported to the School Academic Misconduct Officer.

Extensions

Students are expected to monitor their workload, be aware of all deadlines and prepare accordingly. Extension requests should be submitted before the submission deadline. They must be submitted to the Teaching Office for approval, and must include details of the assessment(s) affected and length of extension requested, together with supporting evidence if required. Other than in exceptional circumstances, extensions will only be granted in cases of illness or family emergency. If an extension of more than one week is requested, students must provide medical evidence and/or discuss the request with the Student Support Officer.

The Teaching Office will email the student to tell them whether the extension has been granted. If students feel that they have been unfairly denied an extension they should make a case to the special circumstances committee for the removal of late submission penalties at the examination board.

Extension requests due to time mismanagement, personal computing/printing problems or ignorance of deadline will not be accepted. Retrospective extensions will not be granted. However, late submission penalties may be waived if a student requests an extension on the day of the submission deadline but cannot get medical evidence until some days later. Extensions include weekends and University holidays.

Students with Adjustment Schedules

Extension requests from students with adjustment schedules that allow 'short notice extensions' will be treated sympathetically where possible. Students should however be prepared to give a reason for the extension request; simply citing an adjustment schedule is not an adequate reason. If students are seeking extensions for more than one week, they must provide medical evidence and/or discuss the request with the Student Support Officer.

Any student with a documented disability needing accommodations is requested to speak directly to the Student Disability Service (SDS; 3rd floor, Main Library, 0131 650 6828) and to the instructor as early as possible. All discussions will remain confidential.

Course schedule (Listed readings are to be read for the following week; i.e., the readings listed in the week 1 row are for Week 2, 19 January)

DATE	TOPICS	READING/HW ASSIGNMENT FOR FOLLOWING CLASS
Week 1 (12 Jan)	<i>Introduction</i>	Green 1996, Chapter 1 Web readings
Week 2 (19 Jan)	<i>Semantics vs. Pragmatics</i>	Grice 1975 Green 1996, Chapter 5 Web readings
Week 3 (26 Jan)	No class	
Week 4 (2 Feb)	<i>Implicature</i>	HW#1 goes out Web readings
Week 5 (9 Feb)	<i>Measuring Implicature</i> HW#1 due in class	Martin 1987 Searle 1965 Web readings
ILW (16 Feb)	No class	
Week 6 (23 Feb)	<i>Speech Acts</i>	HW#2 goes out Web readings
Week 7 (2 March)	<i>Meaning in Context</i> HW#2 due in class	Gordon et al. 1993 Web readings
Week 8 (9 March)	<i>Common Ground</i>	HW#3 goes out Web readings
Week 9 (16 March)	<i>Reference</i> HW#3 due in class	Kehler 2004 Web readings
Week 10 (23 March)	<i>Discourse Coherence</i>	Final Essay Assigned
Week 11 (30 March)		
23 April 4pm	Final Essay Due to PG office	

References

Gordon, P.C., Grosz, B.J., & Gilliom, L.A. (1993). Pronouns, names, and the centering of attention in discourse. *Cognitive Science*, 17, 311-347.

Green, G. M. (1996). *Pragmatics and natural language understanding*. Second Edition. Hillsdale, N.J. : L. Erlbaum Associates. Tutorial essays in cognitive science.

Green, G. M. & Morgan, J. L. (1981). Pragmatics, Grammar, and Discourse. In P. Cole (ed.) *Radical Pragmatics*. New York: Academic Press. pp. 167-181.

Grice, H. P. (1975) Logic and conversation. In P. Cole & J. Morgan (Eds.), *Syntax and Semantics*. Vol. 3. New York: Academic Press. pp. 41-58.

Kehler, A. (2004). Discourse coherence. In L. R. Horn & G. Ward (Eds.), *The Handbook of Pragmatics*. pp. 241-265.

Martin, R. M. (1987). *The meaning of language*. MIT Press.

Searle, J. R. (1965). What is a Speech Act? In Max Black (ed.) *Philosophy in America*. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press. pp. 221-239.