

**Pragmatics (LASC10067, LASC11097)  
Semester 2, 2015**

**Instructor:** Hannah Rohde ([hannah.rohde@ed.ac.uk](mailto: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 12:10-1:00	M2b Appleton Tower
	Wednesday 12:10-1:00	G.05 50 George Square
	Thursday 12:10-1:00	DSB 1.17
Exceptions:	No classes 26 & 28 January (week 3)	

**UG course secretary:** Frankie Kerr-Dineen, [F.Kerr-Dineen@ed.ac.uk](mailto:F.Kerr-Dineen@ed.ac.uk)

**PG course secretary:** Toni Noble, [toni.noble@ed.ac.uk](mailto:toni.noble@ed.ac.uk)

**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 consider the organization of language above the sentence-level, considering a variety of cross-sentence discourse phenomena (implicature, information structure, pronoun interpretation, ellipsis, coherence) and the types of models that have been proposed to capture cross-sentence relationships (philosophical, computational, and psycholinguistic). We will explore a variety of 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. Listed readings are to be read BEFORE class in order to support class discussion. In addition to assigned chapters and articles, material will be posted on Learn 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.

**Aims and objectives**

At the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Determine the inferential reasoning that gives rise to implicatures in context (How do people read between the lines?)
- Analyze discourse structure (Do the sentences in a discourse form a tree structure just like the words in a sentence?)
- Classify, for each utterance in a dialogue or a text, what information is given and new (How does the growing common ground between speakers change the forms they use?)
- Identify the pragmatic constraints that license particular syntactic constructions (When is passive voice appropriate?)
- Apply models of coreference and ellipsis to naturally occurring data (How do listeners interpret ambiguous or missing words?)
- Critically discuss psycholinguistic studies of pragmatic phenomena (What predictions emerge from theoretical pragmatics and how do you test them?)

## Prerequisites

UG students must have passed LEL2A. The course is open to all PG students.

## Assessment

Course Component	% of Final Mark
<b>Homeworks:</b> 4 assignments related to readings and class lectures	40%
<b>Final exam:</b> short essay questions (and some short answer or multiple choice for UG)	60%

## 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. Hand in your work on time. Each homework is due at noon on the day on which it is to be handed in. Submit it via TurnItIn on Learn.
3. Working together 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.
4. Exam The final exam constitutes the majority of your mark. In the exam, 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** (Readings to be read in anticipation of the week listed for each topic)

DATE	TOPICS	READINGS/HW
<b>WHAT IS PRAGMATICS</b>		
Week 1	<i>Semantics vs. Pragmatics</i> Context sensitivity Truth conditional semantics, Entailment, Implicature, Presuppositions	Daily web readings Green 1996, Chapter 1 Tiemann et al. 2011 HW#1 assigned 15 Jan
<b>LANGUAGE AS COOPERATION</b>		
Weeks 2-3	<i>Implicature</i> Grice's maxims, informativity, Conversational vs. conventional, Generalized vs. particularized	Daily web readings Green 1996, Chapter 5 Grice 1975, Gibbs 2002 <b>HW#1 DUE Thurs 29 Jan</b>
	<i>No class 26,28 Jan</i>	
Week 4	<i>Speech acts</i> Performative verbs, Direct and indirect speech acts, Conditions of success	Daily web readings Martin 1987, Chapter 9 Searle 1965 HW#2 assigned 4 Feb
Week 5	<i>Common ground</i> Alignment of referring expressions, Cooperativity vs. consistency, Quantity of information conveyed, Turn taking cross-culturally	Daily web readings Garrod & Pickering 2004 Brennan & Clark 1996 <b>HW#2 DUE Thurs 12 Feb</b>
	<i>Innovative Learning Week</i>	
<b>HOW YOU SAY IT (OR DON'T)</b>		
Week 6	<i>Information Structure</i> Information status, Question-answer congruence, Non-canonical syntax	Daily web readings Green 1996, Chapter 6 Prince 1992 HW#3 assigned 26 Feb
Week 7	<i>Reference</i> Indexicals, Demonstratives, Pronouns, Cross-linguistic variation in coreference systems, Psycholinguistic and computational models	Daily web readings Green 1996, Chapter 2 Gordon et al. 1993
Week 8	<i>Ellipsis</i> Syntactic vs. semantic accounts Active-passive mismatch, Psycholinguistic and computational models	Daily web readings Kehler 2000 <b>HW#3 DUE Thurs 12 March</b> HW#4 assigned 12 March
<b>DISCOURSE STRUCTURE</b>		
Week 9	<i>Discourse coherence</i> Intrasentential relationships	Daily web readings Kehler 2004
Week 10	<i>Discourse coherence cont.</i> Questions under Discussion, Coherence vs. cohesion, Timecourse of discourse integration	Daily web readings <b>HW#4 DUE Thurs 26 March</b>
Week 11	<i>Wrap-up and review</i>	

## Full references

- Brennan, S. E. & Clark, H. H. (1996) Conceptual pacts and lexical choice in conversation. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, 22, 1482-1493.
- Garrod, S. & Pickering, M. J. (2004). Why is conversation so easy? *TRENDS in Cognitive Science*, 8, 8-11.
- Gibbs, R. W., Jr. (2002). A new look at literal meaning in understanding what is said and implicated. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 34, 457-486.
- 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.
- 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. (2000). Coherence and the Resolution of Ellipsis. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 23:6, 533-575.
- 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.
- Prince, E.F. (1992). The ZPG letter: subjects, definiteness, and information-status. In Thompson, S. & Mann, W. (Eds.), *Discourse description: diverse analyses of a fund raising text*. pp. 295-325.
- Searle, J. R. (1965). What is a Speech Act? In Max Black (ed.) *Philosophy in America*. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press. pp. 221-239.
- Tiemann, M. Schmid, N. Bade, B. Rolke, I. Hertrich, H. Ackermann, J. Knapp, & S. Beck. (2011). "Psycholinguistic Evidence for Presuppositions: On-line and Off-line Data". In Reich, Ingo et al. (Eds.), *Proceedings of Sinn & Bedeutung 15*. pp. 581-595.