

Pragmatics

LING 565

Fall 2020
CRN 19584
Tu, Th 11:35am–12:55pm

Instructor: Bernhard Schwarz
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Office hours: F 10:00–11:00am (group meetings) or by appointment (one-on-one)

Information about remote delivery

Lectures will be delivered remotely through Zoom. A portion of each lecture will be dedicated to students practicing and solving problems in groups, using Zoom’s “breakout room” function. Lectures will be recorded and recordings will be made available through myCourses. Lectures will be based on detailed class handouts, which will be also be posted on myCourses. Other readings will be made available electronically on myCourses as well. The myCourses “Discussions” tool will be used to invite offline discussion relating to class content.

Office hours will likewise be conducted through Zoom. Office hours will be offered as group meetings (at the fixed weekly time slot given above) or one-on-one meetings (by appointment).

Students will be assessed on the basis of homework assignments, class participation (during lectures, office hours, or via the myCourses discussion board), and a final paper. All written work must be submitted through myCourses.

For general information about remote teaching, please read the Guidelines on Remote Teaching and Learning <https://www.mcgill.ca/tls/instructors/class-disruption/strategies/guidelines-remote>.

Regarding the recording of lectures, you will be notified through a “pop-up” box in Zoom if a lecture or portion of a class is being recorded. By remaining in sessions that are recorded, you agree to the recording, and you understand that your image, voice, and name may be disclosed to classmates. You also understand that recordings will be made available in myCourses to students registered in the course.

Course content

Pragmatics is concerned with aspects of meaning that are tied to actual language use. Pragmatics therefore requires close attention to the relevant characteristics of the context of utterance, such as

the topic of the conversation, the utterance location and the time, the identity of speaker and addressee, and their beliefs, expectations, and shared assumptions. Instead of providing a broad survey, this course offers an in-depth introduction to a selection of central themes from contemporary research in pragmatics. A line-up of topics, subject to possible revision:

- Mind reading and meaning enrichment: the case of quantity implicature (Geurts 2011, ch.1-2)
- Asserting and presupposing (Stalnaker 1978)
- Mind reading and meaning enrichment: the case of antipresuppositions (Rouillard & Schwarz 2017)
- Presupposition and truth value judgments (von Stechow 2004)
- Indexicals and their contexts (Anand & Nevins 2004)
- Speech acts and grammar: speech act type and clause type (Rudin 2019)
- Speech acts and grammar: covert performativity (Sauerland & Yatsushiro 2017)

Readings

We will read a few selected works—journal articles, book chapters, or conference proceedings papers. Those readings primarily target an audience with more background in linguistics than you are likely to have, but they will be unpacked and interpreted in class. Readings will be available electronically in myCourses. The list below is subject to possible revision.

1. Anand, Pranav, & Andrew Nevins. 2004. Shifty operators in changing contexts. In *Proceedings of Semantics and Linguistic Theory*, volume 14, 20–37
2. von Stechow, Kai. 2004. Would you believe it? The king of France is back! Presuppositions and truth-value intuitions. In *Descriptions and beyond*, ed. Marga Reimer & Anne Bezuidenhout. Oxford University Press
3. Geurts, Bart. 2011. *Quantity implicatures*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press [chs.1-2]
4. Rouillard, Vincent, & Bernhard Schwarz. 2017. Epistemic narrowing from Maximize Presupposition. In *Proceedings of the 47th annual meeting of the North East Linguistic Society (NELS 47)*, ed. Andrew Lamont & Katerina A. Tetzloff, 49–62. GLSA (Graduate Linguistics Student Association), Department of Linguistics, University of Massachusetts
5. Rudin, Deniz. 2019. Embedded rising declaratives and embedded quotation. In *Proceedings of Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT) 29*, ed. Katherine Blake, Forrest Davis, Kaelyn Lamp, & Joseph Rhyne, 1–21. Linguistic Society of America
6. Sauerland, Uli, & Kazuko Yatsushiro. 2017. Remind-me presuppositions and speech-act decomposition: Evidence from particles in questions. *Linguistic Inquiry* 48:651–678
7. Stalnaker, Robert. 1978. Assertion. In *Syntax and semantics*, ed. Peter Cole, volume 9, 78–95. Academic Press, New York

Prerequisites

LING 360 and PHIL 210, or instructor's permission

Requirements and evaluation

Evaluation

Homework assignments:	66%
Participation:	10%
Final project:	24%

Assignments

For each homework assignment, I will provide written comments on your initial submission and/or discuss the assignment in class. You are then given the opportunity to submit a revised version of the assignment that takes into account the comments you received and/or class discussion. A revised version that you submit will typically receive a higher grade than the original submission, but this is not guaranteed. In particular, a revised version will not be graded unless the changes from the original submission are clearly marked using color or some other form of typographical highlighting.

Participation

Apart from oral contributions in class, participation includes written contributions posted on the myCourses discussion board, as well as contributions during office hours. Written contributions can be of a range of different sorts. For example, you may raise questions related to class content, propose an answer to a question raised by someone else, share relevant examples you may have thought of or encountered, etc.

Final projects

On your own or with another student, you will choose and investigate a topic of your interest for your final project that is related to course material and write a short (\approx 5 page) paper (“squib”) on that topic. A final topic will typically include a critical review of one or more research papers, but it may also focus on the outcome of your own research – e.g., propose an analysis of certain data collected data from native speakers or the internet, etc. See separate handout on final projects for more information.

Schedule (subject to possible revision)

The circled numbers (①, ②, ...) identify projected due dates for homework assignments. These due dates are subject to possible revision.

		TOPIC	READING
WEEK 1			
Th	09/03	Quantity implicature	Geurts (2011, ch.1-2)
WEEK 2			
Tu	09/08		
Th	09/10		
WEEK 3			
Tu	09/15		
Th ①	09/17		
WEEK 4			
Tu	09/22	Asserting and presupposing	Stalnaker (1978)
Th	09/24		
WEEK 5			
Tu	09/29		
Th ②	10/01		
WEEK 6			
Tu	10/06	Presupposition and truth value judgments	von Stechow (2004)
Th	10/08		
WEEK 7			
Tu	10/13		
Th ③	10/15	Antipresuppositions	Rouillard & Schwarz (2017)
WEEK 8			
Tu	10/20		
Th	10/22		
WEEK 9			
Tu	10/27	Indexicals and their contexts	Anand & Nevins (2004)
Th ④	10/29		
WEEK 10			
Tu	11/03		
Th	11/05		
WEEK 11			
Tu	11/10	Speech acts: speech act type and clause type	Rudin (2019)
Th ⑤	11/14		
WEEK 12			
Tu	11/17		
Th	11/19		
WEEK 13			
Tu	11/24	Speech acts: covert performativity	Sauerland & Yatsushiro (2017)
Th	11/26		
WEEK 14			
Tu ⑥	12/01		

Course rules and procedures

Academic integrity

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the code of student conduct and disciplinary procedures (see <http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity> for more information).

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site <http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity>).

Assignments may be done in groups. However, a group may contain a maximum of three students. Also, each student must turn in a separate assignment **written up individually and independently**. If you worked in a group, you must provide the names of the students who you worked with on the first page of your assignment.

Missed submission deadlines

No late assignments will be accepted and no make-up assignments will be offered unless you have a documented medical excuse and I have been notified within 24 hours of when the assignment was due. Any problem with grading on an assignment must be reported within one week of when the assignment was returned.

Course materials and copyright

© Instructor generated course materials (e.g., handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions, etc.) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the [Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures](#).

Class handouts

There will be a handout for each class that you will need to have access to in order to follow the lecture. Handouts will usually be posted on myCourses by 8am the day of the lecture.

Revised versions of handouts will sometimes be posted on myCourses after class. It is your responsibility to make sure that you always consult the latest version of the handout.

E-mail

You can expect me to respond to your e-mail questions and comments. However, please do not expect instant responses. I will try to respond within two working days.

Right to submit in French

In accord with McGill University's [Charter of Students' Rights](#), students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Inclusiveness

As instructors of this course, I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and [the Office for Students with Disabilities, \(514\) 398-6009](#).