

Course:	PRAGMATICS (01:615:350)
Instructor:	Prof. Kristen Syrett (kristen.syrett (at) rutgers.edu)
Meetings:	Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:10 pm- 2:30 pm
Location:	Campbell Hall A1
Office Hours:	Thursdays 11:00 am -12:30 pm, Linguistics Department, room 304
	<i>Please contact me in advance if you plan to attend office hours!</i>

Course Description

You know how to communicate with other people, but how aware are you of *what* you are saying, *how* you are saying it, and *why* you chose certain words or constructions? When communication proceeds smoothly, or you encounter bumps, do you know why? These are central issues that make up the foundation for this course. This course is about **Pragmatics**, the subfield of Linguistics devoted to understanding the way that language is used in context, and aspects of meaning that extend beyond the truth-conditional (or literal) component. We will focus on the relationship between semantics and pragmatics, explore a range of theoretical and experimental research on topics in pragmatics, and apply these concepts to word learning.

Course Learning Goals and Objectives

- To gain technical mastery over the tools of linguistic analysis in pragmatics
- To become more aware of language usage in context (your own language and that of others)
- To understand the distinction between semantics and pragmatics and what is meant by each
- To learn about the range of topics covered under pragmatics
- To become acquainted with notable researchers who have made contributions in this area
- To learn more about psycholinguistic and developmental experimentation in this area: how experiments arise from theoretical claims and hypotheses, what methodologies are used, and how experimental results inform linguistic (pragmatic and semantic) theory
- For majors and minors: To add to your technical and conceptual repertoire in the field of Linguistics as you complete a (core) course as part of your major or minor.

Course Website

- This Pragmatics course has a website on Sakai (<http://sakai.rutgers.edu>).
- Log on using your netid and password. Once logged in, please look for the course in your active course tabs. Click on the appropriate link. There, you will find links for readings and slides (in resources), the discussion forum, your dropbox, etc.
- If you encounter any difficulty using Sakai, please contact their helpdesk.

Course Content

- Please do not video- or audio-record lectures, unless you have explicitly asked for permission and been given permission by the instructor in advance.
- Slides for each class will not be posted before the class. A version of the slides will be posted just after each class or at the end of the week for studying purposes.

Office hours

Office hours are there for you! It is always best to ask to set up an appointment during office hours to talk face to face, since this is usually the most efficient and clearest way to address any

concerns or questions you have. This is also a good time for us to get to know each other, and for me to learn more about your style of communication (which may benefit you when I am reading your writing on an assignment), or your career plans (which might help if you ask me for a reference letter later on).

Assigned readings:

- There is no assigned textbook. All readings will be pdfs or doc files available on the Course Sakai website in the “Resources” area.
- In some cases, you are only asked to read certain sections of the assigned reading. Please see the schedule and the end of this syllabus for assigned and optional readings. Do not be fooled by page length; even shorter papers can be tricky!
- Do not wait until the last minute to do these readings! I have tried to select the clearest and most accessible references for you, but even so, some of these papers can be quite challenging to get through – especially if you have little linguistic and/or experimental background! You are not expected to understand everything, but do your best to make it through them, and generate thoughts and questions for me and your peers.

Academic Integrity

You are expected to know and follow the Rutgers University policy on Academic Integrity:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml>

- Cheating, plagiarizing, presenting someone else’s work as your own, and not properly acknowledging another student’s contribution ***will not be tolerated***. Nor will sharing the content of this course’s assignments outside of the class.
- All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs.
- Making available notes or other materials from this course, especially in return for compensation, is also discouraged.

Attendance and Absences

- You are expected to attend every class and to be present for the in-class exams. University policy excuses absences due to religious observance or participation in Rutgers-approved activities, and permits students to make up work missed for these circumstances.
- If you anticipate that you will be absent for whatever reason, particularly religious or medical reasons or for an emergency, you must notify me in writing as soon as possible AND report your absence via this link <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/>
- You will still be responsible for the readings for that day, and you should coordinate with a classmate to cover the material covered in that class.
- You will receive a *zero* on any in-class assessment or exam for which you are absent, and the absence is not excused.
- Students who must (for whatever reason) miss more than an occasional class should consult with the Dean of Students office. ***Note that it will be extremely difficult to perform successfully on the exams and in the class, should you miss multiple classes.***

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations must follow the procedures outlined at

<http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/request.html>

Course Requirements

There are four main course requirements.

All of these components will rely upon your having done the assigned readings.

Class Participation

10%

- You will be graded on a 3-point scale, based on your overall level of participation in the class. You are required to attend each class, and to be an active participant in each class.
- Come to the class with questions and points of clarification.
- When you enter the classroom, please turn off your cell phone (or any other handheld device) and put it away. Your final grade may go down 1 point every time your cell phone goes off, or you are seen texting, online chatting, or emailing in class.
- There will be 5 in-class exercises. For these, I may ask you to prepare something in advance and upload this to dropbox on Sakai in advance of the class. Doing so, and participating in the exercises, counts towards your participation grade.

In-Class Assessments

5%

- There will be 6 randomly-scheduled in-class assessments. The lowest assessment grade will be dropped. The remaining 5 assessment grades will be averaged.
- The purpose of these assessments is to keep you on your toes and make sure you're doing the readings. Accordingly, assessments will be based on the assigned readings for that week's class.

Forum Postings (Reaction Comments)

25%

- Your grade for this component will be over 11 forum topic postings, with one topic dropped. (There are actually 12 forums, but 1 is not graded at all; it's the general forum.)
- Post a comment and/or contribute to discussions related to the assigned reading and course content on the forum section of the course website no later than Wednesday night at 9 pm each week. (The sooner the better!) Forums open up on Thursdays.
- You must post at least one a week. You may start a new thread, or reply on one already started. These contributions must be substantive, and must be at least a paragraph in length and include some sort of reaction on your part to the reading or in-class content or discussion. You will not get credit for a post that does not have these characteristics!

Exams

60% total (no makeups!)

- Midterm Exam 30% Thursday, 3/1
- Final Exam (cumulative) 30% Friday, 5/4

Grades

You will be graded according to the following schema. Please note that although the exams for this class are notoriously challenging, I am also 'notoriously fair' in taking this into account.

A:	≥90
B+:	85 to 89
B:	80 to 84
C+:	75 to 79
C:	70 to 74
D:	60 to 69
F:	<60

Extra Credit

You have the opportunity to raise your final grade by up to 2 points through experimental participation.

- Some faculty and graduate students in the Department of Linguistics do 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 30 minutes and one hour.
- You will get 1 point of 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 Linguistics.
- Experiments are offered through the Linguistics department 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.
- Any 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. You cannot be denied participation for any of these reasons.
- You have the right to not participate in experiments to earn extra credit. You may also attend a colloquium announced by the professor to earn extra credit points.
- If you are taking multiple Linguistics courses that allow for experimental participation to count towards extra credit, you are responsible for making sure you have assigned the credit correctly through the experiment system online. This is not 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 be barred from further participation, so please note the time and location of your experiments, and take your schedule and transportation time into account.

Interaction with Faculty and Peers

In this class, you will be learning a lot about communication and language usage. An issue related to this is how to communicate with your instructors and your peers. Keeping in mind these helpful tips will allow you to present yourself more professionally and will go a long way towards making a good impression. (The reverse holds true as well!)

- Choose the proper title for the person with whom you are communicating. If the person is your instructor, you should choose Dr., Mr., Mrs., or Ms., depending on their degree. Someone who has earned a Ph.D. should be addressed as *Dr.* Administrative and other teaching staff and graduate students should not be, but should still be addressed politely.
- Keep register in mind. Emails to your instructors should never take the form of a casual message that resembles texting. Always include a salutation (e.g., Dear Dr. X), and always sign your message along with your name (e.g., Best regards, Sincerely, Thank you, etc.). Do not include texting abbreviations in your messages.
- Be respectful. Frame your questions or requests in the most polite way possible. Do not make demands of your addressee, even if they are preceded by *please*. For example, *Please tell me why I did not get an A on my midterm exam* may still come across as abrupt and offensive, especially if this is the only content of your email. Remember, you are probably writing to resolve some issue or receive an answer to a question (quickly). If so, the best way

to accomplish this is to be polite and show respect. If you are a non-native speaker, it may help to have a friend review your message in advance.

- **Keep timing in mind.** Instructors field a lot of emails each day. They may not be able to respond to your email right away, or respond to a string of emails with little questions. Send your email well in advance. If you do not receive a response within 24 hours time, then politely follow up, referencing your previous message. At the same time, do not wait until the last minute, and never send an email the morning of class, expecting a response before the start of class!
- For more on how to email your professor, read this piece online: “How to email your professor (without being annoying AF)” (<https://medium.com/@lportwoodstacer/how-to-email-your-professor-without-being-annoying-af-cf64ae0e4087>)

Schedule, Topics, and Readings			
Day	Date	Topic	Readings
Tues	1/16	Introduction to Pragmatics, Semantics, Fundamentals of Meaning	n/a
Thurs	1/18	Introduction (continued)	<i>required:</i> Chierchia & McConnell-Ginet (2000) ch. 1
Tues	1/23	Conversational Implicatures	<i>required:</i> Chierchia & McConnell-Ginet (2000) ch. 4, Grice (1975) <i>optional:</i> Hirschberg (1985), Horn (2008)
Thurs	1/25	Conversational Implicatures (continued)	
Tues	1/30	Discourse Context, Presuppositions	<i>required:</i> Stalnaker (1974) <i>optional:</i> Stalnaker (1998)
Thurs	2/1	Class exercise: Entailment, Implicatures, Presuppositions	
Tues	2/6	Presupposition Accommodation	<i>required:</i> Lewis (1979) <i>optional:</i> Stalnaker (2002)
Thurs	2/8	Presupposition Accommodation, Projection	<i>required:</i> Karttunen (1974) <i>optional:</i> Heim (1988)
Tues	2/13	Presupposition Projection, At-Issue-ness (continued)	<i>required:</i> Simons <i>et al.</i> (2010)
Thurs	2/15	More on Accommodation (Global and Local Accommodation) Class exercise: Presuppositions of Complex Sentences	
Tues	2/20	Conventional Implicatures	<i>required:</i> Karttunen & Peters (1979)
Thurs	2/22	Conventional Implicatures (continued)	<i>required:</i> Potts (2007) <i>optional:</i> Harris & Potts (2009), Syrett & Koev (2015)
Tues	2/27	Class exercise: Presuppositions, Accommodation, At Issue-ness	
Thurs	3/1	**MIDTERM EXAM**	
Tues	3/6	Reference and Definiteness	<i>required:</i> Donnellan (1966), Heim (1991) <i>optional:</i> Strawson (1950)
Thurs	3/8	Speech Acts and Performatives	<i>required:</i> Austin (1979), Chierchia & McConnell-Ginet (2000) <i>optional:</i> Searle (1965), Searle (1989)
T 3/13 - Th 3/15		No class: Spring Break	
Tues	3/20	Context Dependence and Predicates of Personal Taste	<i>required:</i> Lasnik (2005)

Thurs	3/22	Experiments: Context Dependent Predicates	<i>required:</i> Syrett <i>et al.</i> (2010) <i>optional:</i> Ullman <i>et al.</i> (2016)
Tues	3/27	Class exercise: Definites, Speech Acts, Performatives	
Thurs	3/29	Experiments: Predicates of Personal Taste, Projection	<i>required:</i> Kaiser & Herron Lee (2017) <i>optional:</i> n/a <i>already covered:</i> Chemla & Bott (2013)
Tues	4/3	Experiments: Conversational Implicatures	<i>required:</i> Doran <i>et al.</i> (2012) <i>optional:</i> Bott & Noveck (2004)
Thurs	4/5	Experiments: Scalar Implicatures	<i>required:</i> Breheny <i>et al.</i> (2012) <i>optional:</i> Huang & Snedeker (2009)
Tues	4/10	Experiments: Scalar Implicatures in Child Language	<i>required:</i> Noveck (2001), Guasti <i>et al.</i> (2005) <i>optional:</i> Miller <i>et al.</i> (2005), Papafragou & Musolino (2003)
Thurs	4/12	Experiments: Scalar Implicatures in Child Language	<i>required:</i> Papafragou & Tantalou (2004), Stiller <i>et al.</i> (2015) <i>optional:</i> Hirschberg (1985), Breheny <i>et al.</i> (2013)
Tues	4/17	No class: Prof. Syrett traveling for research	
Thurs	4/19	Pragmatics and Word Learning	<i>required:</i> Diesendruck & Markson (2001), Moll <i>et al.</i> , (2006) <i>optional:</i> Grassmann <i>et al.</i> (2009)
Tues	4/24	Class exercise: Pragmatics Bingo	
Thurs	4/26	Final exam review	
Friday	5/4	**FINAL EXAM** (Cumulative! Take-home due before.) 9 am – 11 am	

Course Topics and Readings

Required readings are in BOLD. Others readings are optional. Please note that in some cases, you are not asked to read the entire selection, as indicated in [].

I will also draw from these texts:

Birner, Betty. (2012). *Introduction to pragmatics*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Griffiths, Patrick. (2006). (Revised by Cummins, Chris, 2017). *An introduction to English semantics and pragmatics, 2nd Ed.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh Press.

Levinson, Stephen. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Introduction: Pragmatics, Semantics, and Meaning

Chierchia, Gennaro, & McConnell-Ginet, Sally. (2000). *Meaning and grammar: An introduction to semantics*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press. [Chapter 1: Sections 1 and 3 only]

Conversational Implicatures

Chierchia, Gennaro, & McConnell-Ginet, Sally. (2000). *Meaning and grammar: An introduction to semantics*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press. [Chapter 4: section 5 only]

Grice, H. Paul. (1975). *Logic and conversation*. In H. Paul Grice (Ed.), *Studies in the Ways of Words*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Reprinted in P. Cole & J. L. Morgan (Eds.) *Syntax and Semantics, Vol. 3: Speech Acts* (pp. 41-58). New York: Academic Press.

- Hirschberg, J. (1985). *A theory of scalar implicature*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania. [Chapter II only]
- Horn, Laurence R. (2006) Implicature. In L. R. Horn and G. Ward (Eds.), *The Handbook of Pragmatics* (pp. 2-28). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Discourse Context, Presuppositions

- Stalnaker, Robert. (1974). Pragmatic presuppositions. In R. Stalnaker (Ed.), *Context and Content* (pp. 47-62). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stalnaker, Robert. (1998). On the representation of context. *Journal of Logic, Language and Information*, 7, 3-19

Presupposition Accommodation

- Lewis, David. (1979). Scorekeeping in a language game. *Journal of Philosophical Logic*, 8, 339-359.
- Stalnaker, Robert. (2002). Common ground. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 25, 701-721.

Presupposition Projection, At-Issue-ness

- Karttunen, Lauri. (1974). Presuppositions of compound sentences. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 4, 169-193.
- Simons, Mandy, Tonhauser, Judith, Beaver, David, & Roberts, Craige. (2010). What projects and why. In Nan Li and David Lutz (Eds.), *Proceedings of Semantics and Linguistics Theory (SALT) 20* (pp. 309-327). Ithaca, NY: CLC Publications.
- Heim, Irene. (1988). On the projection problem for presuppositions. In R. van der Sandt (Ed.), *Presupposition, lexical meaning and discourse processes: Workshop reader*.

Conventional Implicatures

- Karttunen, Lauri, & Peters, Stanley. (1979). Conventional implicature. *Syntax and Semantics, Vol. 11: Presupposition* (pp. 1-56). New York: Academic Press. [Sections 1, 2, 3, 7 only!]
- Potts, Chris. (2007). Conventional implicatures, a distinguished class of meanings. In G. Ramchand & C. Reiss (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of linguistic interfaces* (pp. 475-502). Oxford: Oxford University Press. [Sections 1-4 only]
- Harris, Jesse, & Potts, Chris. (2009). Perspective-shifting with appositives and expressives. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 32, 523-552. [Not section 5 (corpus study)]
- Syrett, Kristen, & Koev, Todor. (2015). Experimental evidence for the truth conditional contribution and shifting information status of appositives. *Journal of Semantics*, 32, 525-577.

Reference and Definiteness

- Donnellan, Keith. (1966). Reference and definite descriptions. *The Philosophical Review*, 75, 281-304.
- Heim, Irene. (1991). Articles and definiteness. In A. von Stechow & D. Wunderlich (Eds.), *Semantics: An international handbook of contemporary research* (pp. 487-535). Berlin: de Gruyter. [Sections 1,1, 1.2.3, 2.1 only]
- Strawson, P. F. (1950). On referring. *Mind*, 59, 320-344. [Section III especially]

Speech Acts and Performatives

- Austin, John Langshaw. (1979). **Performative utterances.** In J. O. Urmson & G. J. Warnock (Eds.), *J. L. Austin Philosophical Papers*. 3rd Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chierchia, Gennaro, & McConnell-Ginet, Sally. (2000). **Meaning and grammar: An introduction to semantics.** Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press. [Chapter 4: section 4 only]
- Diesing, Molly (with McConnell-Ginet, Sally). (2007). How to do things with words and wands: The pragmatics of casting spells. Ms. [Just for fun! Focus on Sections 1 and 3]
- Searle, John. (1965). What is a speech act? In M. Black (Ed.), *Philosophy in America* (pp. 221-239). Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Searle, John. (1989). How performatives work. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 12, 535-558.

Context Dependence and Predicates of Personal Taste

- Lasersohn, Peter. (2005). **Context dependence, disagreement, and predicates of personal taste.** *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 28, 643-686. [not pp. 664-668, or sections 6.2, 7.1]

Experiments: Context Dependent Predicates

- Syrett, Kristen, Kennedy, Christopher, & Lidz, Jeffrey. (2010). **Meaning and context in children's understanding of gradable adjectives.** *Journal of Semantics*, 27, 1-35.
- Ullman, Tomer D., Xu, Yang, Goodman, Noah. (2016). The pragmatics of spatial language. In *Proceedings of the 38th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*.

Experiments: Predicates of Personal Taste

- Kaiser, Elsi, & Herrron Lee, Jamie. (2017). **Experience matters: A psycholinguistic investigation of predicates of personal taste.** In Dan Burgdorf, Jacob Collard, Sireemas Maspong, and Brynhildur Stefánsdóttir (Eds.), *Proceedings of Semantics and Linguistics Theory (SALT) 27* (pp. 323-339).

Experiments: Presupposition Projection and Accommodation

- Chemla, Emmanuel, & Bott, Lewis. (2013). **Processing presuppositions: Dynamic semantics vs pragmatic enrichment.** *Language and Cognitive Processes*, 28, 241-260.

Experiments: Scalar (and other) Implicatures

- Breheeny, Richard, Ferguson, Heather, & Katsos, Napoleon. (2012). **Investigating the timecourse of accessing conversational implicatures during incremental sentence interpretation.** *Language and Cognitive Processes*, iFirst, 1-25.
- Doran, Ryan, Ward, Gregory, Larson, Meredith, McNabb, Yaron, & Baker, Rachel E. (2012). **A novel experimental paradigm distinguished between what is said and what is implicated.** *Language*, 88, 124-154.
- Bott, Lewis, & Noveck, Ira. (2004). Some utterances are underinformative: The onset and time course of scalar inferences. *Journal of Memory and Language*, 51, 437-457.
- Breheeny, Richard, Ferguson, Heather, & Katsos, Napoleon. (2013). Taking the epistemic step: Toward a model of on-line access to conversational implicatures. *Cognition*, 126, 423-440.
- Huang, Ti-Ting, Spelke, Elizabeth, & Snedeker, Jesse. (2013). What exactly do numbers mean? *Language Learning and Development*, 9, 105-129.

Experiments: Scalar Implicatures in Child Language

- Guasti, Maria Teresa, Chierchia, Gennaro, Crain, Stephen, Foppolo, Francesca, Gualmini, Andrea, Meroni, Luisa. (2005). Why children and adults sometimes (but not always) compute implicatures. *Language and Cognitive Processes*, 20, 667-696.
- Noveck, Ira. (2001). When children are more logical than adults: Experimental investigations of scalar implicature. *Cognition*, 78, 165-188.
- Papafragou, Anna, & Tantalou, Nicki. (2004). Children's computation of implicatures. *Language Acquisition*, 12, 71-82.
- Stiller, Alex, Goodman, Noah, & Frank, Michael C. (2015). Ad-hoc implicature in preschool children. *Language Learning and Development*, 11, 176-190.
- Hirschberg, J. (1985). *A theory of scalar implicature*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania. [Chapter III only, excluding sections 3.2.3 and 3.3.4]
- Miller, Karen, Schmitt, Cristina, Chang, Hsiang-Hua., Munn, Alan. (2005). Young children understand *some* implicatures. In A. Brugos, M. Clark-Cotton, & S. Ha (Eds.), *Boston University Conference on Language Development (BUCLD) 29 Proceedings* (pp. 389-400). Somerville, Mass: Cascadilla Press.
- Papafragou, Anna, & Musolino, Julien. (2003). Scalar implicatures: Experiments at the semantics-pragmatics interface. *Cognition*, 86, 253-282.

Experiments: Pragmatics and Word Learning

- Diesendruck, Gil, & Markson, Lori. (2001). Children's avoidance of lexical overlap: A pragmatic account. *Developmental Psychology*, 37, 630-641.
- Moll, Henrike, Koring, Cornelia, Carpenter, Malinda, & Tomasello, Michael. (2006). Infants determine others' focus of attention by pragmatics and exclusion. *Journal of Cognition and Development*, 7, 411-430.
- Grassmann, Susanne, Stracke, Marén, & Tomasello, Michael. (2009). Two-year-olds exclude novel objects as potential referents of novel words based on pragmatics. *Cognition*, 112, 488-493.