

# PRAGMATICS (4 ECTS)

Research Master in Cognitive Science and Humanities: Language,  
Communication and Organization

2013-2015

## Instructors:

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## 1. Description, motivations and aims

Pragmatics is probably the richest area in language studies in the second half of the twentieth century and beginning of the twenty-first. With solid grounds in philosophy –with the seminal contributions of Ludwig Wittgenstein, John L. Austin and H. Paul Grice–, it might be still considered as the youngest branch of linguistics, far behind its sisters (phonology/phonetics, (morpho-)syntax, and semantics) in terms of scientific maturity. Yet its relevance to language studies is beyond doubt. Anything doing with linguistic meaning, use and communication, belongs to the realm of pragmatics.

The main aim of the course is to offer a short but profound introduction to the philosophical roots of pragmatics (Austin and Grice) and its most recent developments (Relevance Theory and Critical Pragmatics), as well as some of its main topics and empirical studies (Experimental Pragmatics).

The course is designed in a way that should answer the different needs of students with different backgrounds:

- students with little or no background in philosophy or linguistics will get a crash-course in pragmatics, and a solid basis to pursue the study of the topics in pragmatics and to read the relevant literature
- students trained in semantics or pragmatics, already familiar with some of the issues to be discussed, will get a better insight into the theoretical assumptions underscoring them, and a better sense of the foundational issues.
- students trained in philosophy will get a course that addresses some classical issues, as well as contemporary approaches.

## Classical reading sources in pragmatics (recommended for the entire course)

Davies, Stephen (Ed.) (1991). *Pragmatics. A reader*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

## **2. Tentative course schedule**

### **2.1. Joana Garmendia**

#### 1<sup>st</sup> session

- Introduction
- Classical pragmatics I: Austin and Searle

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> session

- Classical pragmatics II: Grice

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> session

- Relevance Theory

### **2.2. Larraitz Zubeldia**

#### 1<sup>st</sup> session

- Critical Pragmatics I

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> session

- Critical Pragmatics II

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> session

- Critical Pragmatics III

### **2.3. Joana Garmendia**

#### 1<sup>st</sup> session

- Pretense and echoic theories of irony

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> session

- Gricean and neo-Gricean theories of irony

## **2.4. Larraitz Zubeldia**

1<sup>st</sup> session

- Issues in pragmatics

2<sup>nd</sup> session

- Experimental Pragmatics I

3<sup>rd</sup> session

- Experimental Pragmatics II

4<sup>th</sup> session

- Experimental Pragmatics III

## **3. Suggested readings**

Austin: *How to Do Things with Words*

Grice: *Logic and Conversation*

Korta & Perry: *Critical Pragmatics*

Noveck & Sperber (eds.): *Experimental pragmatics*

Sperber & Wilson: *Relevance*

## **4. Assignments, evaluation and grading**

Every student will be expected to actively participate in classroom discussions and write a final short paper (around 5 pages long) on any of the topics discussed during the course. The final version of the paper should be simultaneously submitted to both instructors within three weeks after the last lecture.