

Pragmatics 1: Syllabus

University of Konstanz

WiSe 2021-22

1 Course information

Instructor Dr. Natasha Korotkova
Contact n.korotkova@uni-konstanz.de
Language English; you're welcome to communicate with me in German
Class meets synchronously (mostly, see schedule); online; Thursday 15:15–16:45

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83360997496?pwd=U1g1MU1nVDRIUDNteUg3WE9ZaDJVQT09>
Meeting ID: 833 6099 7496
Passcode: Pragma2122

I prefer to be addressed on a first name basis (Natasha), but if you're more comfortable with the last name, then go for it. Do not, however, use my legal name (Natalia) that you might have seen in various university systems such as Zeus or Ilias.

In addition to lectures, there is also a Tutorium.

Tutor Jakob Sommer
Contact jakob.sommer@uni-konstanz.de
Language English/German
Tutorium meets in person, D 0433; Wednesday 15:15–16:45; starts on November 10

2 Course description

- Pragmatics: subfield of linguistics that studies how language is used in context and models linguistic communication as interaction of rational agents.
- Bulk of this course: classic topics in pragmatics including entailment, presupposition, implicature, common ground and speech acts.
- Prior knowledge of semantics: not required but will be very helpful.

3 Why study pragmatics

Linguists or not, we use language every day. How do we understand each other given that human language is notoriously imprecise? How do we infer what was said between the lines? How do we separate the important bits of the message from the rest? To what extent our non-linguistic knowledge about the world matters when we try to communicate? Those are the questions that

pragmatics, one of the core areas of linguistics, tries to answer. It is closely related to semantics, which uses tools from logic to study how the meaning of individual linguistic expressions are combined, and in many cases the line between what is said (the domain of semantics) and what is meant (the domain of pragmatics) can be fine. The study of pragmatics concentrates on how people can use sentences that convey more than their semantic meaning based on how humans generally interact.

4 Requirements

- Attendance per se will not be taken but not attending can harm you as you are responsible for the entirety of class content.
- Exercises discussed in class and at the Tutorium are optional but helpful.
- Some classes will start with ungraded quizzes that will cover the content of previous lectures. This is a good preparation for the two exams.
- Attending the Tutorium is not required but encouraged. As with semantics, pragmatics comes with certain procedural knowledge and the more practice you get, the better.
- Readings are optional but helpful. Everything will be posted on Ilias.
- Take-home midterm: posted on December 2, due on December 9 at midnight. It should be submitted to Ilias in as a PDF, other formats will not be accepted.
- Late submission will be penalized by taking 10% off the grade per late day. This does not apply to documented cases of illness and emergency.
- Final exam: due on February 3, format TBA (to be announced).
- You may discuss assignments with others but everyone should submit their own write-up. All cases of plagiarism will be reported.

ACTIVITY	CONTRIBUTION TO THE FINAL GRADE
Mid-term	50%
Final exam	50%

5 Schedule

October 28	Introduction and semantics/pragmatics divide
November 4	Sentence meaning, truth conditions, entailment
November 11	Presupposition
November 18	Gricean maxims and conversational implicatures
November 25	Quantity implicatures and scales
November 30 (asynchon)	Deixis, indexicality, perspective
December 2	Review for the mid-term; mid-term posted

December 9	Consolidation week: mid-term due
December 16	Assertion and the common ground
December 23	At-issueness and questions under discussion
December 30	No class, Christmas break
January 6	No class, Christmas break
January 11 (asynchron)	Speech acts
January 13	Non-canonical questions
January 20	Social meaning
January 27	Review for the final exam
February 3	Final exam

Readings:

- Birner, Betty J. 2012. *Introduction to Pragmatics*. Blackwell.
- Horn, Laurence R. & Gregory Ward (eds). *The Handbook of Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.
- Levinson, Stephen C. 1983. *Pragmatics*. Cambridge University Press.