



PLIN Modules – Module Information Sheet (2021/22)

1. General Information

- **Module Code:** PLIN0018
- **Title:** Issues in Pragmatics
- **Credits:** 15
- **Module Tutor:** Timothy Pritchard; **Contact:** t.pritchard@ucl.ac.uk
- **Module Available at the following levels:**
 - **Level 6 UG**
 - **Level 7 PG**

- **Module Description:**

The course addresses current debates within the field of pragmatics from the interdisciplinary perspective of cognitive science, linguistics and the philosophy of language. The specific topics may vary from year to year, but will fall within the following areas: the linguistic underdeterminacy of speaker meaning, the semantics/ pragmatics interface, pragmatic processes contributing to truth-conditional content, minimalist versus contextualist semantics, the role of context and the role of speaker intentions, similarities and differences in the aims of semantic theories and communication theories, relevance theory, lexical pragmatics and the nature of word meaning, the role of pragmatics in the interpretation of specific kinds of texts (e.g. legal texts, literary texts).

- **Prerequisites:** PLIN0010 (Pragmatic Theory) or equivalent
- **Timetable:** <https://timetable.ucl.ac.uk/tt/moduleTimet.do?firstReq=Y&moduleId=PLIN0018>
- **Summary:**
 - **Lecture 1. Contextualism introduced.**
 - Three accounts of linguistic underdetermination: ambiguity, conversational implicatures, contextualism. The case of definite descriptions.
 - **Lecture 2. Polysemy.**

- Different types of polysemy. Underdetermination of word meaning. Processing polysemes.
 - **Lectures 3. Polysemy and word meaning.**
 - What might polysemy tell us about word meaning? Literal meaning + adjustments. Rich and thin views of word meaning.
 - **Lecture 4. Thin views and insight from analogical cognition.**
 - Schemas and criticisms of thin views. Analogical cognition. Explaining extensions. Further evidence for word meanings as thin.
 - **Lecture 5. The (in)effability of meaning.**
 - Can we say what we mean? The principles of expressibility
 - **Lecture 6: Alternatives to contextualism: Semantic minimalism.**
 - Motivating semantic minimalism. Context shifting arguments. Minimalist responses to apparent underdetermination.
 - **Lecture 7: Minimalism, contextualism, and the miracle of communication.**
 - Can contextualism explain communication? Minimal propositions and speech act pluralism.
 - **Lecture 8: Indexicalism.**
 - The indexicalist challenge: does contextualism over-generate meanings? Free pragmatic effects and unarticulated constituents. The indexicalist alternative. Contextualist responses.
 - **Lecture 9: Compositionality and contextualism.**
 - Is contextualism consistent with compositionality? Is language compositional?
 - **Lecture 10: More on polysemy and word meaning.**
 - Polysemy and wrong format views.
- **Information for students on other programmes and Affiliate/intercollegiate students:**

If you want to take this module, you should select it on Portico as usual. Any general queries about taking the module can be addressed to pals.lingteachingoffice@ucl.ac.uk.

2. Teaching

- **Teaching methods and tutorial/lab arrangements:**

One 1-hour lecture and one 1-hour backup class per week.

Backup size: up to about 12 students

- **Communication:**

Students should communicate with Tim or the backup tutor by email or via moodle.

We'll respond as soon as we can (and no later than 3 working days).

- **Workload:**

As well as attending the lectures and backups, students are expected to spend an average of 8 hours per week in term time reading and thinking for the course, and a further 40 hours on researching and writing the essay(s).

- **Core Texts:** n/a

- **Libraries and other resources:**

Full bibliographic details of recommended readings for classes and coursework will be given on the relevant handouts.

- **Additional Information:**

Late work and extenuating circumstances

Any requests for extensions to deadlines, or for extenuating circumstances to be taken into consideration by examiners, should be made by completing the relevant form. Instructions are available on the Moodle page for this module, under the Assessment tab. No extensions or special consideration can be given outside of this process, and there is a grading penalty for late submission of coursework. Again, information about this policy can be found on the course Moodle page, under the 'Assessment' tab.

- **Recording:** Lectures for this module are recorded via the UCL Lecturecast system, and a link to recordings will be made available via the Moodle page for this module.

3. Assessment

- Level: 4/5/6/7 UG/PG

Mode of Assessment	Weight	Format
Coursework	100%	Essay, 2500 words.
Coursework (Level 7)	100%	Essay, 3000 words.

Table 1. Assessment Formats and Weightings

4. Types of Feedback

Types of feedback students on this module can expect to receive.

4.1 Generic Tutor Feedback

Type of Feedback	Provided
Oral feedback is given to the whole class (e.g. this may be about coursework, an in-class or online task).	No
Electronic feedback to the whole group (e.g. see oral feedback above).	No
Printed feedback to the whole group (e.g. answers to an exercise done in class, feedback relating to general performance on coursework or a task etc).	No
Coverage of topics in class which have been raised by members of the class (e.g. in areas where students ask for clarification/elaboration, these topics are addressed in class).	Yes
Electronic responses to the whole group via the VLE or via email (eg sending replies to individual queries to the whole group).	Yes

Table 2. Generic Tutor Feedback

4.2 Automated Feedback

Type of Feedback	Provided
Tests / quizzes within Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). These are tests which do not count towards the module mark, but serve to inform students of how well they are understanding materials taught.	No
Personal Response Systems used within class (e.g. to test that students understand a concept, to survey which topics students would like elaborated).	No

Table 3. Automated Feedback

4.3 Specific Targeted Tutor Feedback

Type of Feedback	Provided
Oral responses within class (e.g. demonstrators talking to students in lab, stats and computing classes).	Yes
Oral responses outside class (e.g. students are invited to telephone or meet with module staff with individual queries regarding topics taught).	No
Electronic responses to queries from individual students are provided (as above)	Yes
Summative comments on coursework (e.g. handwritten feedback at the end of a written assessment which counts towards the module mark).	Yes
On-script comments in the body of individual summative coursework	Yes
Indication of achievement against set marking criteria (e.g. for an individual essay or a lab report).	No
Feedback using a standard feedback form (e.g. essay feedback form or lab marking forms)	No
Oral feedback on coursework talking to individual students about their coursework on the phone or in person, this could be summative points or specific comments on parts of the essay / lab report / project.	No
Electronic feedback on coursework. This could be via email or within VLE (e.g. using Gradebook on Moodle).	Yes

Table 4. Specific Targeted Tutor Feedback

4.4 Feedback From People Other Than Module Staff

Type of Feedback	Provided
Peer feedback: fellow students commenting on/marking each other's work, or working together on a task (e.g. group work providing students with feedback on their ideas/understanding).	No
Self-feedback (e.g. students evaluating their own coursework, worksheet answers, etc.)	No
Feedback from seminar tutors: Students may receive feedback on their understanding of topics/answers to queries/feedback on coursework from their tutor (e.g. poster, Research Project presentations etc)	No

Table 5. Feedback from People other than Module Staff

4.5 Feedback related to examinations

Type of Feedback	Provided
A mock examination is given to help students prepare for the final exam.	No
Marks for the previous year provided online, with a breakdown of marks for individual questions	No
Samples of real student work, such as coursework, exam essays, and projects from previous students on the module.	No

Table 6. Feedback related to examinations

5. Specific Transferable Skills

Transferable skills students on this module can expect to develop, categorised into skill areas.

5.1 Academic

Type of transferable skill	Provided
Learning Actively – Able to approach learning as an active agent, taking responsibility for the process and outcomes.	Yes
Analysing Data – Able to filter and organise information to develop an argument and work toward a conclusion, applying numerical analysis where appropriate.	Yes
Thinking Critically – Able to consider claims made against the evidence available and to develop one's own view systematically	Yes
Using Sources – Able to locate and use appropriate books, journals, websites and other sources to gather relevant data	Yes
Solving Problems – Able to use systematic approaches to overcome difficulties in producing a desired outcome	No
Managing Projects – Able to plan a coordinated set of tasks and enact over time to produce a substantial result	No

Table 7. Academic transferable skills

5.2 Self-Management

Type of transferable skill	Provided
Reflecting on Learning – Able to review dispassionately one's approaches to learning and the outcomes and progressively improve the process	Yes

Managing Time – Able to prioritise tasks and commitments to achieve optimum results in a designated timeframe	Yes
Being Creative/Innovative – Able to generate and apply original approaches to tasks and problems and produce improved outcomes	No
Assessing Oneself – Able to identify one’s own strengths, weaknesses, progress made and action needed to improve effectiveness	Yes
Being Independent – Able to work at own initiative with minimal supervision, taking responsibility for action and outcomes	Yes
Managing Resources – Able to allocate and conserve funds and other resources on a day to day basis and to support projects	No

Table 8. Self-management transferable skills

5.3 Communication

Type of transferable skill	Provided
Writing – Able to communicate in textual forms (essay, reports, journal entries, web pages etc.) in an appropriate style with a clear narrative flow	Yes
Listening – Able to hear and appreciate the content, background and purpose of what someone else is communicating to you	Yes
Using Information Technology – Able to use digital technology for managing information and to mediate communication for learning and other purposes	Yes
Presenting – Able to speak to an audience, using visual aids as appropriate and respond to questions	No
Communication globally – Able to understand and manage factors affecting communication across cultures, including means of monitoring progress	No
Planning and making decisions – Able to identify steps needed to work towards global and communicate them, including means of monitoring progress	No

Table 9. Communication transferable skills

5.4 Working with others

Type of transferable skill	Provided
Working in teams – Able to co-operate with others, to contribute your strengths and learn from theirs with a common purpose	No
Negotiating – Able to respect the needs and interests of others when they differ from your own and to find common ground	No
Leading – Able to galvanise a team into cooperative action, to manage, guide or facilitate a group to maximise success	No

Understanding others – Able to recognise the variety of ways in which people can think and approach tasks, adjusting your own to suit	No
Assessing self and peers – Able to assess your own performance objectively and to give and receive constructive feedback with others	Yes
Managing change – Able to adapt to changing circumstances and maintain focus on the group's declared goals	No

Table 10. Working with others transferable skills