# The Department of Linguistics
### is pleased to present

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### speaking on

## Emergent positional privilege in blend formation

### Thursday, February 16, 2017
### 1:30 PM
### Location: HUM 1 - Room 210

**Abstract:**
In many languages, sounds in certain "privileged" positions preserve marked structure which is eliminated elsewhere.  Does that happen because learners are predisposed towards grammars which protect those positions, or because sounds in those positions are less likely to suffer misperceptive sound change?  To test directly for predisposition towards positional faithfulness, a lexical blending task was used to force a choice of which source word to be more unfaithful to.  Given source words which could be blended in two ways (e.g., flamingo + mongoose -> "flamingoose" or "flamongoose"), participants preferentially matched the blend that preserved more second-word phonology ("flamongoose") to a definition which made the second word privileged.  The experiments tested for two kinds of faithfulness --- to segments and to main-stress location --- and in three privileged positions: morpho-semantic heads (vs. non-heads), nouns (vs. verbs), and proper nouns (vs. common nouns). Results from English and, in one experiment, Spanish speakers show both segmental and stress privilege effects in heads, proper nouns, and, to a lesser extent, nouns generally.  We interpret these results as evidence for the universal availability of positional-privilege constraints protecting any phonological property of any privileged position.