The Department of Linguistics
is pleased to present

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speaking on

Locality and anti-locality: two case studies

Thursday, January 23, 2020
1:30 PM
Location: HUM 1 - Room 202

Abstract:

Much work in syntax suggests that there is a strong preference --- given two or more options --- for shorter dependencies over longer dependencies, often referred to as a locality condition.
Cases where these conditions are apparently violated are therefore a general topic of interest.

This talk presents two case studies of apparent violations of locality in A-movement which prove problematic for current approaches to the phenomenon.
In both Luganda and Haya [Bantu, Uganda/Tanzania], as well as Tongan [Austronesian, Tonga], A-movement is able to cross no more than one other argument.
This pattern proves to be a serious problem for the state-of-the art, which cannot be straightforwardly emended to capture this particular restriction.

The analysis developed involves a mechanism of conflict resolution between two conflicting requirements: the aforementioned locality condition, and an "anti-locality" condition, which mitigates against dependencies which are in some sense too short.
When these conditions come into conflict, the locality condition may be minimally violated, so that the anti-locality condition may be maximally satisfied.
We will see that this analysis straightforwardly delivers the "skip no more than one" pattern observed in both case studies, and discuss how the analysis answers a number of "big picture" questions about the architecture of the grammar.