The Department of Linguistics
is pleased to present

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speaking on

Disentangling the binding knot: Locality, logophoricity and subjecthood in Picture Noun Anaphors

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1:30 PM
Location: HUM 1 - Room 210

Abstract:
I will discuss a long-standing binding theoretic puzzle: the distribution of anaphors within so-called Picture Noun Phrases in English. Traditionally, such instances of anaphors are assumed to be exceptional because they seem to escape Condition A, the standard structural condition on anaphors. Instead, I will conclude that Picture Noun Anaphors do not have any special theoretical status, and that their apparently exceptional behavior is due to the complex interaction of three factors: locality, logophoricity and subjecthood.

I will propose that all anaphors (whether interpreted logophorically or not) are subject to Condition A, including Picture Noun Anaphors. The apparent exemption of Picture Noun Anaphors from Condition A is due to the presence of silent binders. In particular, they can, as can all anaphors, be bound by implicit logophoric pronouns (in which case their phrase must express the perspective of their antecedent). In addition, they can be bound by covert subjects of NPs (in which case they must refer to the creator of the picture). The overall picture is further complicated by a general principle of competition between weaker and stronger forms, which constrains these binding possibilities.

In sum, the descriptively heterogeneous behavior of anaphors in Picture Noun Phrases, which makes them appear exceptional, derives from: (i) the heterogeneity of their binders; (ii) a competition among these binders; (iii) whether or not the subject of NP projects.