1 Background

Pragmatics is the study of the ways we enrich the conventionalized meanings of the things we say and hear into their fuller intended meanings. In class, we’ll focus on the principles that govern this enrichment process, with special emphasis on the extent to which it is systematic and universal.

Levinson’s analogy (*Presumptive Meanings*, p. 2–4):

2 Group task

Work through the examples in section 5. Each one is accompanied by some questions. Answer those as a group. There’s no rush to get through them. You can pick which ones you want to start with.

3 Goals

- Get better acquainted with pragmatic data.
- Begin thinking about pragmatic enrichment.
- See if we can develop generalizations that get at our implicit knowledge of pragmatics.

4 Final products

- Each group turns in a completed worksheet with all the group member’s names at the top.
- We will go around the room to hear about what the groups discovered. So you should think about what your group will present, and you might designate a spokesperson.
5 Examples

(1) Two friends are having a culinary adventure:

A: Have you made fondue in this pot yet?
B: Not chocolate fondue.

i. Does B's answer entail (in our semantic sense) that B has made fondue in the pot?

ii. Do you regard B's answer as cooperative?

(2) John and Mary have recently started going together. Valentino is Mary's ex-boyfriend. One evening, John asks Mary, “Have you seen Valentino this week?” Mary answers, “Valentino's been sick with mononucleosis for the past two weeks.” Valentino has in fact been sick with mononucleosis for the past two weeks, but it is also the case that Mary had a date with Valentino the night before. (From Speaking of Crime.)

i. What is your guess about what Mary intended to communicate with her answer?

ii. Did Mary lie?
A and B are talking about their mutual friend Jones. That’s all we know about the context.

A: Does Jones have a new girlfriend?
B: He's been spending a lot of time in New York.

i. What is your guess about what Speaker B intended to communicate with his answer?

ii. What might have stopped Speaker B from just replying “‘Yes” or “No”?

Bart and Lisa Simpson have both taken the same test at school. It is well-known that Lisa does better in school than Bart.

Marge: Did Lisa pass the test?
Teacher: Well, LISA passed. You do the math!

i. What is your guess about what the teacher intended to communicate?

ii. What facts about the context and the utterance conspire to communicate this?
From the detective show *Monk* (approximate from ‘Mr. Monk goes to the Carnival’). The subject is whether Mr. Monk, who earlier had a nervous breakdown, is ready to be put back on the police force. Stottlemeyer is Monk’s friend and former captain.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commission member</th>
<th>Is Mr. Monk ready to be put back on the force?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Stottlemeyer</td>
<td>Mr. Monk has <em>excellent</em> instincts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commission member</td>
<td>Yes, but is he ready to be reinstated?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stottlemeyer</td>
<td>He is an <em>excellent</em> investigator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commission member</td>
<td>Captain, please. . .</td>
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i. What is Stottlemeyer's strategy here? How is he hoping to be understood?

During the 2000 presidential race (before U.S. politicians were more or less free to admit to past marijuana use), the *Dallas Morning News* asked candidate George Bush how he would answer the questions about drug use on the application for getting a high-level government security clearance. Bush replied, ‘As I understand it, the current form asks the question, ‘Did somebody use drugs within the last seven years?’, and I will be glad to answer that question, and the answer is ‘No’.”

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<tr>
<th>Commission member</th>
<th>What does this answer suggest about Bush’s history of drug use?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i. What’s a good, or likely, follow-up question?</td>
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