The Department of Linguistics
is pleased to present

Mia Gong
Cornell University
speaking on

Scrambling Revisited: Deriving Condition C Connectivity via Dependent Case and Late Merger

Tuesday, March 8, 2022
11:40 AM
HUM 1 – 202
Or remotely via Zoom
https://ucsc.zoom.us/j/99963411183?pwd=WHNDVUdsckt4L0tPYkVEUW5SR0hhdz09

Abstract:
It is well-known that A-movement typically does not display Condition C connectivity, whereas some instances of A'-movement do (e.g., Chomsky 1993, Lebeaux 1988). Because of this, Condition C connectivity effects have been frequently used as a diagnostic for A/A'-properties in the study of scrambling. However, the nature of the surface correlation between Condition C connectivity and movement types remains unclear and has been called into question in recent research (e.g., Takahashi & Hulsey 2009, Bhatt & Keine 2019, Miyagawa & Oikonomou 2021). In this talk, I argue that Condition C connectivity does not track the A/A'-movement distinction, and is instead tied to case assignment. I present a detailed study of Mongolian scrambling in which Condition C connectivity is systematically dissociated from A/A'-movement properties: Intermediate scrambling (IS) has A-properties, but some instances of IS display connectivity; Long distance scrambling (LDS) has A'-properties, but some instances of LDS do not show connectivity. In Mongolian, depending on how Condition C is violated at the base order, the same type of scrambling shows distinct connectivity patterns. Departing from previous accounts, I argue that the complexity of the phenomenon reveals that Condition C connectivity is neither related to the position of underlying binders, nor to A/A'-properties – Scrambling bleeds Condition C, so long as the case requirement of the late-merged NP can be satisfied. Building on Takahashi and Hulsey's (2009) Wholesale Late Merger (WLM), I motivate a hybrid case system for Mongolian in which accusative case is assigned as a dependent case, which controls Late Merger. I show that this is both necessary and independently motivated, thereby introducing a fine-grained view of case into the WLM mechanism. My case-based analysis suggests that Condition C is independent of the A/A'-distinction, and that variation in Condition C connectivity effects across languages is ultimately tied to variation in case systems. Finally, I discuss a series of predictions made by the case-based analysis, and how this type of approach fits into a larger research agenda that aims to derive the A/A'-distinction from independent properties of grammar.