



LINGUISTICS

Department Colloquia

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

**Jim McCloskey
(UC Santa Cruz)**

speaking on

Clauses without verbs - The Irish landscape and beyond

Friday, November 8, 2024

1:20 - 3:00 PM

in HUM 1 - 210

Abstract:

One of the ways (perhaps the principal way) in which contemporary Irish departs from the typological profile of a Standard Average European (SAE) language is in its intricate and rich subsystem of finite verbless clauses. This subsystem will be the focus of my talk.

There is existing work on the topic, but that work focuses almost exclusively on clauses which express copular relations (predicative, identificational, specificational). This talk will focus instead on the very large (and largely unstudied) class of predications which are verbless in their syntax but not copular in their semantics. It turns out that this sub-grouping includes many kinds of predication which have been of interest and importance in contemporary formal semantics and philosophy of language -- almost all of the familiar modal expressions, comparative clauses, propositional attitude predicates, subjective attitude ascriptions, structures of weak quantification, predicates of temporal duration and frequency, predicates of knowledge, acquaintance and many other psychological states (but not physical states).

The first goal of the talk will be descriptive -- to provide an overview (syntactic and semantic) of these predication types -- with a view ultimately of answering the typological-theoretical question of what predication-types can in principle be expressed in a verb-free syntactic frame.

The second goal will be to develop a syntactic framework which can accommodate these patterns and make the correct distributional predictions and connections within the language.

The third goal will be to consider theoretical implications (some syntactic, some semantic), especially for the theory of extended projection and for the question of how roots are integrated into larger structures.