

DOCTORAL PROGRAM *VARIAFORMEA*

Macolin, November 27-29, 2017

Argumentation in Linguistic Theory and Experimental Pragmatics

The 2017 *VariaForMea* winter school (27-29 November) will be devoted to argumentation in linguistic theory (syntax and pragmatics) and experimental pragmatics.

Most of the assessments of scientific work are based not on background assumptions, but on the nature and the quality of arguments provided. Descriptions and explanations, both at the theoretical and experimental levels, are based on the ability to provide arguments relying on different sources (data, linguistic tests, etc.) towards the support of a general conclusion.

Linguistics, as a scientific theory and practice, relies heavily on this capability from researchers to provide their work with sound argumentation, be it from a theoretical or an experimental perspective. Mastering argumentative strategies has become of extreme importance, and stands as a prerequisite for any young scholar in the field today. Consequently, the 2017 *VariaForMea* doctoral program aims at providing concrete examples of these skills in both theoretical and experimental studies.

The meeting represents a unique opportunity to interact with three researchers of international fame in theoretical linguistics and experimental pragmatics. It will consist in three lectures and two workshops. As customary, a student session will allow PhD students to present their work and benefit by comments from the lecturers and the audience.

The main issues to be raised during the meeting are the following:

- What is a valuable topic/problem to work on in linguistics?
- How does one begin with the analysis of a given phenomenon?
- How does one avoid the most common and frequent troubleshooting?
- How does one find good arguments? With which methods?
- What is the logic of an argumentation?
- Concerning experimental studies: What can be deduced from their results, and how are they to be discussed? What is the relation between the hypotheses, the results and the conclusions to be drawn?

Invited speakers:

Liliane Haegeman (Universiteit Gent)

Diana Mazzarella (ISC Marc Jeannerod, Lyon)

Nausicaa Pouscoulous (UCL, London)

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Venue

November 27-29, Swiss Olympic House, Macolin, Switzerland.

Travel and accommodation

Accommodation and meals are included in the school. Your travel expenses will be refunded on the basis of the SBB/CFF *demi-tarif* rate (round trip to Magglingen/Macolin).

How do I get there?

Train to Biel/Bienne, and then cable car from the [Magglingen/Macolin Seilbahn](#) station, running every 15 minutes. The Swiss Olympic House proudly faces the Alps at a 5min. Walking distance to the right on the *Hauptstrasse*. You can't miss it!

How do I apply?

First applicants to the VFM program should provide the following:

- A full academic CV;
- A motivation letter.

If you attended one of the previous schools, just send a confirmation email to david.blunier@unige.ch.

Student session

Day 2 will feature a student session, where graduates will have the opportunity to present their work to a wide audience consisting of specialists of the field, as well as other PhD students and post-docs from all over Switzerland. The talks will be 30 minutes long (20' presentation + 10' for Q&A). 5 slots are available: note that priority will be given to second-timers (VFM rule: if it's your second time, you have to present!) and newcomers who wish to introduce their work.

Articles workshop

On day 3, a mini-workshop about the argumentative features of three papers suggested by the lecturers will take place. Each participant will be asked to read and jointly prepare a very short presentation focusing on the argumentative outline of the paper, and link it to what was said during the school. Lecturers will then comment the presentations and the articles altogether.

Each participants will receive all three articles and be asked to choose one. They will then be assigned a working group, which will reunite in the morning of day 3 in order to put together their insights and comments, and prepare a short presentation. The articles will deal mainly with syntactic theory or pragmatics. When your mind is made up, please communicate your choice to david.blunier@unige.ch, so the groups can be defined.

PROGRAM

Monday 27

11h-12h Arrival and check-in

12-14h Lunch

14h-15h30 Lecture 1 (Diana Mazzarella) : TBA (Argumentation, XPRAG)

16h-17h30 Lecture 2 (Nausicaa Pouscoulous) : TBA (XPRAG)

19h Dinner at *La fin du monde*

Tuesday 28

9h30-12h Student session

12-14h Lunch

14h-15h30 Lecture 3 (Liliane Haegeman): *Central adverbial clauses in main clause external positions in V2 languages*

16h-17h30 General discussion on argumentation in LT and XPRAG

19h Apéritif & Dinner

Wednesday 29

9h-12h30 Article mini-workshop and wrap-up comments

12h30-14h Lunch and check-out