

**Lisa Matthewson (University of British Columbia)**  
**Harvard Linguistic Circle GSAS Workshop/MIT Colloquium**  
**Friday, November 2, 3:30 – 5:00 pm**  
**Location: MIT 32-155**

**Micro-variation in discourse particles: From St'át'imcets to German (joint work with Henry Davis)**

**Abstract:**

Discourse particles convey information about the discourse status of propositions and the belief states of interlocutors. They are cross-linguistically understudied, and there is little understanding of what makes a possible vs. impossible particle meaning.

Investigating micro-variation offers a route towards eventually answering the big-picture questions. In this talk we examine the St'át'imcets (Salish) 'frustrative' particle, and compare it to similar elements in Tohono O'odham, Kimaragang and German. We argue that the particles micro-vary in properties including whether the prejacent is entailed, (lack of) reference to the common ground, (lack of) reference to a salient proposition, and (a)symmetry of contrast entailments.