

Alan Yu (University of Chicago)

**Thursday, December 1, 5:45pm
Sever Hall 106**

Title: Reconceptualizing phonologization

Efforts in the past decades to identify variation in speech have provided important insights into a range of potential precursors of widely attested cross-linguistic sound changes. Yet, the nature of phonologization remains largely a mystery. In this talk, I argue that, rather than asking how intrinsic phonetic variations (i.e. the aforementioned phonetic precursors) transition to extrinsic features of particular contrasts, the question of phonologization might be better addressed by asking how speech processing and production might vary across individuals in such a way that individuals who exhibit perceptual and production strategies outside of the normal range of practice within a speech community may serve as innovators who can sustain the introduction of stable new phonetic variants. I substantiate this approach by offering examples of cross-individual variation from the perception and production of coarticulation and cue weighting.