

The Department of Linguistics

is pleased to present

Drew J. McLaughlin

**Basque Center on Cognition, Brain and
Language**

speaking on

The Psycholinguistics of Accented Speech

Tuesday, February 6, 2024

11:40 AM

Location: HUM 1 - Room 210

Abstract:

Spanish spoken in Santa Cruz is not the same as Spanish spoken in Buenos Aires or Madrid, just as Spanish spoken by early Spanish learners is not the same as that spoken by late Spanish learners. Although accent variation of these types can prove challenging to listeners, it also reflects a rich cultural heritage that ought to be celebrated. In this talk, I will present research that examines how listeners accommodate talker and accent variation, classically referred to as the “lack of invariance problem.” I will begin by discussing a line of pupillometry research that has shown that switching between talkers can be cognitively costly – especially when talkers have different accents. Next, I will present evidence that (1) listeners recalibrate their phonemic category boundaries to adapt to second language (L2, or “foreign”) accent, and (2) multilingual listeners, in particular, leverage their pre-existing knowledge when processing L2 accent. Finally, I will discuss how sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic methods can be integrated to examine whether listeners may anticipate a speaker’s accent based on their race or ethnicity. Across these interdisciplinary lines of research, the common aim is to improve our theoretical understanding of the psycholinguistic processes that support L2 accent perception.