# The Department of Linguistics

### is pleased to present

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## University of Massachusetts

### speaking on

## How do reflexives find themselves an antecedent? Insights from Tagalog

### Thursday, February 22, 2024
### 11:40 AM
### Location: HUM 1 - Room 210

**Abstract:**
Psycholinguists who are interested in the role of Principle A in resolving an anaphor's reference in real-time investigate the extent to which non-compliant NPs (distractors) are considered as antecedents when an anaphor is being processed. While earlier reading studies have failed to find interference (i.e., no evidence that distractors are being considered as antecedents), more recent reading studies show that interference is detectable—but quite small. Skeptics of earlier studies might attribute those results to non-grammatical sources. For example, the shape of the items might have given Principle A-compliant NPs (targets) an advantage in activation, making them prime candidates for retrieval when comprehenders search for the antecedent in memory. Furthermore, the small effect sizes of interference in reading studies, coupled with low statistical power of earlier studies, create a perfect storm for failing to find interference. In either case, the failure to find interference might not be because of Principle A per se, but because of something else. In this talk, I take these concerns seriously and address them. I leverage the word order of Tagalog to create a configuration where targets are given no advantage. I also use an alternative methodology, the Visual World Paradigm, to run a high-powered investigation. The emerging picture is one where Principle A does guide resolution, but it does so in a violable way—it does not categorically eliminate distractors from consideration when they match the reflexive's features.