

NCCR - CISA SEMINARS

**Wednesday,
May 6th 2015**

17:00 - 18:30

CISA Conference
Room

Campus Biotech
9, chemin des Mines
Geneva

How To Do Things With Emotions: Introducing Affective Pragmatics

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It is common knowledge that emotional expressions are rich communicative devices. We can learn much from the tears of a grieving friend, the smiles of an affable stranger, or the slamming of a door by a disgruntled lover. What has been missing so far is a systematic analysis of what can be communicated by emotional expressions of different kinds and of how exactly such communication takes place. The primary purpose of this talk is to introduce a general theory of the communicative moves the expression of emotions makes available. To provide such analysis, I will build upon the taxonomy Austin and Searle have developed for speech act theory. This may seem surprising, because not every emotional expression is an act of speech. Yet, I will argue that there are important and so far largely unexplored analogies between the communicative dimensions of emotional expressions and speech acts. In particular, emotional expressions are means of not only expressing what's inside, but also of representing what the world is like, directing other people's behavior, and committing to future courses of action. Since expressing, representing, directing and committing are four of the fundamental dimensions of linguistic communication, an implication of my analysis is that much of what we can do with language we can also do with non-linguistic communication ■



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