I. Administration

A. Reading for next week – Lepore & Stone

B. Questions?

II. Coherence Theory

A. “Why would a speaker say that?”

B. Versus relevance theory

C. Allows a lot of room to maneuver – this underwrites the pluralism they champion in thinking about utterance interpretation

III. Linguistic Conventions

A. Grice maintains that we generate interpretations by layering pragmatic content on semantic content while constrained by general principles of rationality.

   1. Horn and Levinson argue that at least some of this is due to rules that are part of language – the generalized conversational implicatures

   2. Sperber and Wilson argue that expanding interpretations are made possible by general psychological principles operative in all of us

B. In each case, the idea is that there is the semantic contribution (which might be bigger, e.g., explication) that is an input into a functional process that generates a pragmatically enhanced output

   1. This might be something we calculate, or something that is determined at some level by the rules of language

   2. L&S reject this – they argue that many of these supposedly “pragmatic” additions are in fact linguistic conventions

C. The idea is that conversation is all about solving coordination problems in which there are equally good options that are not determined by principles of rationality
1. In order to explain how it is that we arrive at the same interpretation in these cases can only be explained in terms of the existence of a convention

2. That convention should be understood as part of our grammatical knowledge (i.e., our knowledge of language)

IV. Grammatical Diagnostics – A Comment on Method

A. Lepore & Stone use various tests, or “diagnostics”, to generate evidence for their view. These tests are intended to reveal that what we take to be pragmatic content is really better thought of as a conventional part of the meaning of the language

B. Diagnostics introduce in Ch. 6:

1. The “please” diagnostic – for requests

2. The “non-detachability” diagnostic – to demonstrate that what is thought of as a CI is not a CI

3. The “translation” diagnostic – to demonstrate that content thought to be generated by appeal to rationality constraints is really rooted more firmly in the grammar and semantics of specific languages

V. The “Knock-down Argument”

A. In Ch. 6, Lepore & Stone discuss speech acts, and in particular, indirect speech acts. The party line is that these are statements or questions that generate requests as CIs

B. Against this view, Lepore & Stone run three arguments involving the aforementioned diagnostics:

1. Please:

P1. ‘Please’ attaches to request sentences, direct or indirect

P2. If Grice is correct about how indirect requests are generated – viz., by calculation relative to rationality constraints based on what is said by a sentence – then ‘please’ should attach to all sentences that can be used to generate this implicature

P3. ‘Please’ cannot be attached to all sentences that can be used to generate this implicature (e.g., ‘I’m thirsty’)

C. Grice is incorrect
2. Non-detachability:

P1. **Non-detachability:** If $X$ is a CI, then if $S_1$ generates $X$ in context $C$, a sentence that says the same thing as $S_1$—call it $S_2$—will also generate $X$ in $C$.

P2. The sentence, CAN: “Can I have the French toast?”, says the same thing as ABLE: “Am I able to have the French toast?” on the Gricean view that the possibility reading of these questions is the semantic reading.

P3. CAN generates the indirect request in the context where a patron is responding to a waiter’s inquiry, “What will you have?”, but ABLE does not.

4. Thus, but P3 and non-detachability, the indirect request is not a CI.

P5. If the indirect request is not a CI, then it must be a conventional part of the meaning of CAN.

C. The CI is a conventional part of the meaning of CAN.

3. Translation:

P1. If indirect requests are generated by listeners in context using principles of rationality which are a part of our endowment as *homo sapiens*, then we should find two sentences in different languages that mean the same thing should generate the same implicature in the same context for people who understand them.

P2. CAN generates the indirect request for English speakers, but when translated into Polish it does not generate that request for Polish speakers.

3. Indirect requests are not generated by listeners in context using principles of rationality.

P4. If indirect requests are not generated by listeners in context using principles of rationality, then they must be a conventional part of the meanings of the sentences that generate them.

C. Indirect requests are a conventional part of the meanings of the sentences that generate them.

VI. **Speech Acts as Discourse Relations**

A. Thus, Lepore & Stone reject the Gricean view of indirect speech acts.
B. Instead, they argue that speech acts are *discourse relations*, understood as relations that provide the structure of discourse (e.g., provide the structure that makes sense of argumentative moves by interlocutors)