

# SCHOOL OF ANTHROPOLOGY

## **DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES**

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Sciences**

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**2:00 pm**

**Haury 216**

### **Looking for Meaning in all the Right Places**

Sociolinguistic variation is a design feature of language, a system of signs for the non-propositional expression of social concerns. It calls on a variety of resources to express everything from emotions to attitudes to personal characteristics and qualities. The macro-sociological correlations that have until recently dominated thought about the distribution and meaning of variables are a reflection of the life constraints that give rise to differential social expression across social positions. I will examine some kinds of variables that emerge when one approaches variation from the perspective of social semiosis rather than as a tool for studying linguistic change, and when one focuses on everyday expression rather than macro-sociological structure.

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