Im Rahmen des Projekts C4 des SFB 732 findet am **28.02.2011** um **10.15h** in Raum **1.036** (Keplerstraße 17) ein Vortrag von Stefan Hinterwimmer (Universität Osnabrück) statt. Alle Interessierten sind herzlich eingeladen.

**The Metalinguistic Use of Vague Predicates in Conditionals**  
Stefan Hinterwimmer (University of Osnabrück)

**Abstract**  
The talk deals with an at first sight surprising reading that indicative conditionals whose antecedents contain vague predicates receive under certain conditions. I argue that the existence of this reading can be explained if indicative conditionals are allowed to receive a special kind of metalinguistic interpretation. According to this reading, the worlds quantified over do not (possibly) differ from the world of evaluation with respect to some extralinguistic state of affairs, but only with respect to the standards according to which the vague predicates in the antecedents are interpreted. I show that the availability of the metalinguistic reading can be accounted for if both the epistemic modal bases and the selection function relative to which the worlds quantified over are determined are allowed to operate in a more flexible way than is standardly assumed.

Consider the conditionals in (1). They all have prominent readings that can be paraphrased as in (2):

\[\text{(1) a. If I hate anything, it’s bad acting. b. If anyone was drunk at last night’s party, it was Mary. c. If any book impressed me, it was Ulysses.}\]

\[\text{(2) a. What I hate most is bad acting. b. The drunkest person at last night’s party was Mary. c. The book that impressed me most was Ulysses.}\]

As the paraphrases suggest, the sentences are compatible with, i.e. can be true in a situation where it is clear that there is more than one thing that the speaker hates, more than one person that was drunk at last night’s party, etc.