



The Center for Gesture, Sign, and Language presents:



**Pamela Perniss
(University of Brighton)**

**Talking about space with space:
Insights from cross-linguistic
comparison and development.**

**Thursday, February 1, 9:30 - 11:00am
Rosenwald Hall 329, 1101 E 58th St., 3rd floor**

To RSVP, click here:

<https://cgsl.wufoo.com/forms/rsvp-for-cgsl-winter-workshop/>

Sign languages use the hands and the space in front of the body for linguistic encoding. For spatial relationships, e.g. cup on table, this affords the direct and iconic expression of a real-world relationship in the signing space: one hand, curved to represent the shape of a cup, is placed on top of the other hand, flat to represent the shape of a table. Such analogical representation of spatial relations seems straightforward. Indeed, these direct mapping affordances of the visual modality have been assumed to give rise to a high degree of similarity between sign languages in the spatial domain. However, the use of space to talk about space poses a number of challenges. For example, how are more complex spatial scenes represented in space, when the mapping between referents and articulators is no longer straightforward? How are viewpoint-dependent spatial relationships, e.g. cup to left of table, represented? Signing interlocutors are canonically positioned face-to-face; for viewpoint-dependent relationships, this means that what a signer places on the left of signing space (e.g. a cup) is seen by the addressee as being on the right. In this talk, I explore encoding in the spatial domain in the visual modality. I offer cross-linguistic comparison of locative expression, as well as insights from children learning to sign on the effects of modality on encoding of spatial relations and on the interplay of spatial semantics and conceptual representation.

For more information about Pamela Perniss see <http://arts.brighton.ac.uk/staff/pamela-perniss>

Free and open to the public. Refreshments will be provided. ASL-English interpreting will be provided. Persons with disabilities who need an accommodation in order to participate in this event should contact Laura Tharsen at ltharsen@uchicago.edu.

Organized by CGSL's Modalities of Language Reading Group