Tkach, Colleen

From: Inform
Subject: EM: DNS Seminar Announcement - Friday, Feb 6

From: Lauran Soto

DNS SEMINAR ANNOUNCEMENT:

Language Models, Language Processing, and the Structure of Human Language

Dr. Richard Futrell
Associate Professor
University of California, Irvine
Dept of Language Science

Friday, February 6, 2026
Burns Lecture Hall
(Nucleus East - E007)
12:15pm-1:15pm

Abstract: What can language models tell us about how human language works? I show that neural network language models, like the ones underlying ChatGPT, process language in a way that is similar to humans. This is because both language models and the human brain have a core task of predicting upcoming input based on previous input. The fact that humans process language this way imposes constraints on the structure of human language: it must be structured in a way that makes incremental prediction easy. I show that this constraint explains universal properties of languages across the world, and I show that it explains language models' ability to learn humanlike and non-human-like languages.

DNS and Chemistry Seminars can be found here: https://natsci.claremont.edu/student-resources/seminars/

Department of Natural Sciences
Seminar Series

Language Models, Language Processing, and the Structure of Human Language

Dr. Richard Futrell
Associate Professor
Department of Language Science
University of California, Irvine

February 6, 2026| 12:15-1:15 PM
Nucleus E007 (Burns Lecture Hall)

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For more information, contact Pete Chandrangsu (pchandrangsu@natsci.claremont.edu))

Best,
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