Substance Free Logical Phonology

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In this mini-course we will discuss a number of topics in phonological theory, pretty much all of which grow out of basic set-theoretic reasoning:

- the application of philosophical notions such as Fodor's "epistemic boundedness" to work in phonology
- concepts and tools of the Logical Phonology (LP) approach to phonological computation, such as the use of set subtraction and unification to compute intrasegmental feature changes, and the formulation of segment insertion and deletion rules
- variable subsumption: natural classes and alpha notation
- how LP can simplify many accounts of exceptionality and morphological conditioning, including the extension of Sharon Inkelas' use of underspecification/prespecification to rule triggers
- the Argument from the Poverty of the Stimulus in phonology
- the Subset Principle and the richness of rule formulation—arguments against Minimum Description Length
- phonology pedagogy using set theory and formal logic—the analysis of neutralization processes using modus tollendo ponens and reductio ad absurdum
- substance free-ness versus markedness in phonology
- the plausibility of innate features
- combinatoric explosion in simple phonological models
- What do we mean by Universal Grammar?