Assignment 2 (due Thursday, February 7 in class)

I. Conversational implicatures in the wild

For this part of the homework, you will do some semantic "fieldwork". Specifically, I want you to find **two** naturally occurring examples of utterances that give rise to conversational implicatures. For each example, say what the implicature is. Then, use our entailment tests to confirm that your example illustrates an implicature rather than an entailment.

Your illustrative examples can come from anywhere: your own conversations, eavesdroppings, television shows, movies, and even published materials like books, magazines, web pages, etc. (We will construe the term 'utterance' to include the written word.) Whatever your source is, be sure to **explicitly cite it**. For instance, if you find your examples in a newspaper, give the name of the paper, date of publication, and article and page number of the example; if you find your examples online, give the URL, etc.

II. Reasoning from Grice's maxims

Consider the following conversation between Christina and Liz.

(1)   **Christina:** Can I borrow your textbook?
        Liz: I'll be done with it by 2pm this afternoon.

From Liz's response, Christina will likely infer that she can borrow Liz's textbook after 2pm. Is this inference an entailment or a conversational implicature of Liz's response? Make sure to justify your answer to this question with our entailment tests.

If the inference is a conversational implicature of Liz's response, then state as precisely as you can how the implicature arises. In other words, you should provide a precise and thorough description of the reasoning process which would lead a hearer to the implicature. Be sure to explicitly identify the conversational maxim(s) that figure into this reasoning, and to show how exactly they figure into the reasoning.

III. *Nothing* **and** *something*

Consider the following two conversations. In each of them, Pete manages to implicate something to Nora by "flouting" (i.e., deliberately and blatantly violating) one of the conversational maxims.

(1)   (Nora enters the living room. Pete is on the couch with the remote control, idly flipping through various TV channels.)
        Nora: What's on TV tonight?
        Pete: Nothing.

(2)   (Pete comes home carrying a shopping bag. Nora knows that Pete has been shopping for her upcoming birthday.)
        Nora: So…what's in the bag?
        Pete: Something.

Choose **one** of these conversations, and answer the following two questions. First, what does Pete's response implicate? Second, how does the implicature arise? To answer this second question, you should again provide a precise and thorough description of the reasoning process which would lead a hearer to the implicature. Be sure to explicitly identify the conversational maxim that figures into this reasoning, and to show how exactly it figures into the reasoning.

Extra Credit: Answer the same two questions for the other conversation in Pt. III.

IV. (Son of) conversational implicatures in the wild

Your task in this problem is to explain how the following corporate slogan:

> *We have over twenty locations in the Metro-Boston area* (*to serve you*)*.*

allows us to infer that the company does <u>not</u> have <u>30</u> locations in the Metro-Boston area. (In other words, we are allowed to infer that the company has fewer than 30 locations in the Metro-Boston area.) In particular, is this inference an entailment or a conversational implicature of the slogan? Justify your answer to this question with our entailment tests.

If the inference is a conversational implicature of the slogan, then provide a precise and thorough description of the reasoning process which would lead a hearer (or reader) to the implicature. Be sure to explicitly identify the conversational maxim(s) that figure into this reasoning, and to show how exactly they figure into the reasoning.

Note: If at any point in your response, you claim that one sentence is more informative than another, then you must support your claim with the results of **at least one** of our entailment tests (please specify which test you are applying).