Overview.
This seminar is about underapplication: significant phonological generalizations that are opaque because they are not surface-true. The kinds of phenomena that we will discuss will be more or less the range identified in Baković (2011, §3): counterfeeding, various forms of blocking, restrictions to classes/levels, exceptions, and variation/optionality. We’ll be looking at these phenomena through the lens of output-driven (phonological) maps, defined by Tesar (2013:13) as follows: “A phonological map [= the set of input-output mappings generated by a phonological grammar] will be said to be output-driven if, for any mapping from an input to an output, any other input that has greater similarity to the output also maps to the same output.” Tesar defines “greater similarity” as follows: “One input, B, has greater similarity to an output than another input A if the disparities [= differences of the kind assessed by faithfulness constraints in OT] between B and the output are a subset of the disparities between A and the output.”

Readings
The first four chapters of Tesar’s book (Output-Driven Phonology: Theory and Learning, Cambridge, 2013) will serve as a kind of backdrop for the seminar. Chapters 1 and 2 define output-driven maps (and distinguishes them from opacity), and chapters 3 and 4 elaborate on the relation between OT and output-driven maps. We will complement this reading with additional readings, a selection of which is listed below. The rest of Tesar’s book discusses how “output-driven maps impose structure on the space of inputs [which] has significant consequences for learning: if a learner knows in advance that possible grammars all produce output-driven maps, it can exploit the imposed structure to great effect in learning” (Tesar 2013:173). You’re welcome to join me in a reading group that I plan to devote to this interesting topic next quarter.

Part I. Opacity and output-driven maps
Generally speaking, opaque interactions between phonological rules (as originally defined by Kiparsky 1971/1973) result in maps that are not output-driven. However, there are some opaque interactions among phonological generalizations (by Kiparsky’s definition; see Baković 2007, 2011) that are output-driven, so opacity and output-driven maps are not the same thing. We will spend the first couple of weeks teasing opacity and output-driven maps apart.

Selected readings, in addition to Chs. 1 and 2 of Tesar (2013) — to be amended:

Part II. OT and output-driven maps.
Tesar (2013: 83ff) concludes that an OT system will exclusively define output-driven maps if it meets two conditions: (1) that the candidate generator (= GEN) be correspondence uniform, and
(2) that all members of the set of constraints (= CON) be output-driven preserving. We will spend the next few weeks struggling to understand these complex conditions.

Selected readings, in addition to Chs. 3 and 4 of Tesar (2013) — to be amended:
Kirchner, Robert. 1996. Synchronic chain shifts in Optimality Theory.

Part III. Underapplication case studies.
The remainder of the quarter will be devoted to the discussion and focused analysis of case studies of several if not all the kinds of underapplication noted earlier (counterfeeding, various forms of blocking, restrictions to classes/levels, exceptions, and variation/optionality). Which ones we will discuss (and which readings will introduce each one) will be determined later in the quarter; much will depend on your individual interests and the amount of time we have left.

Week-by-week plan.
Each week will involve extensive discussion of the reading for that week. Preparedness for and participation in these discussions is not optional! For each of the additional readings, one of you will volunteer to lead the discussion. As discussion leader, you should come to class prepared with a simple one- or two-page handout summarizing what you take to be the main points of the reading and the ways in which these points relate (or don’t relate) to the issues under larger discussion in the seminar, as well as highlighting any additional items for discussion.

Research project.
A two-page proposal for an individual research project is due by 5pm on Friday of Week 4, October 31.¹ The proposal should provide at minimum: (1) a description of the problem to be addressed, (2) a demonstration that the problem is relevant to the course content, and (3) an outline of what you hope to accomplish and how, both in the short term for the purposes of this seminar and, if applicable, in the longer term. A one-page abstract of your project results is due by 5pm on Monday of Week 10, December 8. We will convene one last time during final exam week (date and time to be negotiated) for brief presentations of your work on the project. The final write-up (squib-length; 8-12 pages) is due by 5pm on Friday, December 19.

Assessment.
Final grades will be determined based upon an assessment of your class participation and discussion (both in the leadership role and otherwise) and of your performance on the research project.

Checking in.
You should plan to schedule at least two meetings with me outside of class during the quarter: once sometime before the two-page research project proposal is due on October 31, to run the idea by me, and a second time sometime before the one-page abstract of your project results is due on December 8 to fill me in on your progress. I will count on you to either drop in during one of my office hours or to schedule these meetings with me separately.

¹ If you have big Halloween plans, consider it due a day earlier.