

Quinn Harr  
University of Maryland  
6<sup>th</sup> MACSIM presentation

**Title:**

In What Sense Is *Might* an Epistemic Modal?

**Abstract:**

When someone makes a modal claim, we can explain what makes that claim true. We can do this with both epistemic modal claims and non-epistemic ones. However, the claims made with one apparently epistemic modal—*might*—do not support the sort of epistemic explanations that other epistemic modal claims do. I consider possible reasons able to be offered by existing truth-conditional accounts of *might* for why this might be so but find none of them convincing. Such accounts take *might* to somehow have information states encoded into its semantics, but I propose to replace these with sets of circumstances and to explain the apparent epistemicity of *might* in purely pragmatic terms. In so doing, I argue, we can account for the explanations that bare *might* claims do and do not support while also accounting for data that motivated a truth-conditional account of *might* in the first place.