

Philosophy 28010/38010

Introduction to Philosophy of Language

Autumn 2010

MW 1:30-2:50

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course aims to provide an introduction to some major topics and issues in contemporary philosophy of language. The topics of the course will fall into three categories. First, we will be interested in a variety of proposals regarding the nature of meaning, including views connecting meaning to abstract representational entities, to truth-conditional theories, to communicative intentions. Second, we will consider a number of specific problems in reaching an adequate understanding of the function of natural language, including the principle of compositionality, context dependency, and modality. Finally, we will consider the implications of philosophical considerations on language for a number of broader philosophical issues such as the a priori and the nature of truth.

BOOKS

The following text is required for the course, available for purchase at the Seminary Coop Bookstore (in the basement of 5757 University Ave.):

— Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press (1980)

The remaining course readings will be available through the course's Chalk website. The following anthology contains several of the course readings in addition to a wide range of useful secondary materials (available for purchase at the Seminary Coop Bookstore):

— Martinich, *The Philosophy of Language*, 5th edition, New York: Oxford University Press (2006)

All of the above books as well as some other useful material are on reserve at Regenstein.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

There will be two short paper assignments (5 pages each) and one final exam (2 hours):

First paper	due October 25 th , in class	worth 30%
Second paper	due November 22 nd , in class	worth 30%
Final Exam	December 10 th , 10:30-12:30	worth 40%

Paper topics will be uploaded to the Chalk site in advance of the due dates. Late papers will be docked a grade per day (e.g., B+ to B) unless you have received approval ahead of time. Room assignments for final exams will be announced by the Registrar during the quarter and can be obtained at <http://registrar.uchicago.edu/courses/final-exams.shtml>

Philosophy graduate students may, if they wish, opt to write a term paper in place of the final examination; interested persons should consult with me no later than the end of Eighth Week.

Attendance of discussion sections is mandatory.

ROADMAP

The following schedule provides an overview over the topics that we will address during this semester as well as the assigned readings. Readings may change as the semester goes on. Updated versions of this syllabus will be posted on Chalk as changes are made.

Date	Topic	Readings
<i>Week 1</i>	<i>Introduction</i>	
09/27	What is Philosophy of Language?	
09/29	Logic and Meaning	
<i>Week 2</i>	<i>Frege's Project</i>	
10/04	Fregean Sense	Frege, "Sense and Reference"
10/06	Frege on Predication and Quantification	Frege, "On Concept and Object"
<i>Week 3</i>	<i>Descriptions</i>	
10/11	Russell's Theory of Descriptions	Russell, "On Denoting"
10/13	Strawson on Descriptions	Strawson, "On Referring"
<i>Week 4</i>	<i>Names</i>	
10/18	Kripke Against Descriptivism	Kripke, <i>Naming and Necessity</i> , Lecture I
10/21	Direct Reference, Causal Theory	Kripke, <i>Naming and Necessity</i> , Lecture II
<i>Week 5</i>	<i>Indexicals</i>	
10/25	Kaplan on Demonstratives	Kaplan, "Demonstratives"
10/27		
<i>Week 6</i>	<i>Background on Meaning and Truth</i>	
11/01	Tarski on Truth	Tarski, "The Semantic Conception of Truth"
11/03		
<i>Week 7</i>	<i>Meaning Scepticism</i>	
11/08	Quine on Translation	Quine, <i>Word and Object</i> , Chapter 2
11/10	Davidson on Interpretation	Davidson, "Radical Interpretation"
<i>Week 8</i>	<i>Davidson's Theory of Meaning</i>	
11/15	Truth and Meaning	Davidson, "Truth and Meaning"
11/17	Holism	Davidson, "Reality Without Reference"
<i>Week 9</i>	<i>Grice's Project</i>	
11/22	The Varieties of Meaning	Grice, "Meaning"
11/24	Meaning and Intentions	Grice, "Utterer's Meaning and Intentions"
<i>Week 10</i>	<i>Pragmatics</i>	
11/29	Implicatures	Grice, "Logic and Conversation"
12/01	Discourse Dynamics and Pragmatics	Stalnaker, "Assertion"