

Philosophy of Language

Spring 1998

Class meeting time: M W 2:20-3:35 PM
Class location: Wadsworth 204
E-mail: Liu@uno.cc.geneseo.edu

Instructor: JeeLoo Liu
Office hours: M W 10am-12pm
 or by appointment
Telephone: 245-5231 (O)

Text: *Philosophy of Language* (third ed.) ed. A.P. Martinich

Course Description: The goals of this course are: (1) to introduce the student to the main topics and theories in 20th century Anglo-American philosophy; (2) to develop a theory of linguistic communication; (3) to teach the student some important philosophical techniques of argumentation; and (4) to improve the student's ability to read critically and to write clearly and precisely.

Grading:

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| Class participation: | 10 % |
| Mid-term | 25 % |
| Final | 25 % |
| One final paper (10 pages) | 20 % |
| Homework (1-2 pages) | 20 % |

General Policies:

1. To succeed in this course, you should keep pace with the syllabus. Your regular attendance is strongly emphasized, and you are also expected to finish the reading assignments prior to each class.
2. All written assignments must be typed, double-spaced.
3. The completely revised final paper is due on **May 11**. **1/2 grade deduction will be made for each day delayed.** You are free to choose your paper topics as long as they are related to the reading materials. I will also suggest some topics as the semester proceeds. You should hand in a one-page description of your paper topic on **April 15**, and then submit a final draft for the paper on **April 27**. It is strongly recommended that you start working on your paper as early as possible.
4. Homework must be handed in **on the assigned date and in person**. Each piece of homework should comprise both an explanation and an evaluation of the author's view. **Do the best you can even when you find the article too difficult to summarize.** Homework will be graded.
5. To receive a final grade for the course, all assignments must be completed.

Syllabus

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Content of discussion</u> | <u>Assignments for this class</u> |
|-------------|---|--|
| W 1/28 | Introductory Remarks | None |
| M 2/2 | What Is the philosophy of language ? | Read <u>PL</u> , pp. 3-8; 18-19 |
| | I. The Nature of Language | |
| W 2/4 | Can there be a private language? | Read <u>PL</u> , pp. 493-499 |
| M 2/9 | Locke: Of Words | Read <u>PL</u> , pp. 500-505 [Homework #1] |
| | II. Language and Communication | |
| W 2/11 | Speech Acts Theory | Read <u>PL</u> , pp. 117-119 |
| M 2/16 | J.L. Austin: Performative Utterances | Read <u>PL</u> , pp. 120-129 [Homework #2] |
| W 2/18 | Cont'd | |
| M 2/23 | John Searle: What Is a Speech Act? | Read <u>PL</u> , pp. 130-140 [Homework #3] |
| W 2/25 | Cont'd | |
| | III. Meaning and Truth | |
| M 3/2 | H.P. Grice: Meaning | Read <u>PL</u> , pp. 85-91 [Homework #4] |
| W 3/4 | P.F. Strawson: Meaning and Truth | Read <u>PL</u> , pp. 104-114 |
| M 3/9 | Donald Davidson: Truth and Meaning | Read <u>PL</u> , pp. 92-102 [Homework #5] |
| W 3/11 | Cont'd | |
| M 3/16 | Review | Bring your questions |
| W 3/18 | Mid-term Exam | |
| M 3/23 | Spring Break | |
| W 3/25 | Spring Break | |
| | IV. Language and Reality | |

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| M 3/30 | Gottlob Frege: On Sense and Nominatum | Read <u>PL</u> , pp. 186-197 [Homework #6] |
| W 4/1 | Cont'd | |
| M 4/6 | Bertrand Russell: On Denoting | Read <u>PL</u> , pp. 199-207 [Homework #7] |
| W 4/8 | Bertrand Russell: Descriptions | Read <u>PL</u> , pp. 208-214 |
| M 4/13 | P.F. Strawson: On Referring | Read <u>PL</u> , pp. 215-230 [Homework #8] |
| W 4/15 | Cont'd | [One-page description of your paper topic due] |
| M 4/20 | Keith Donnellan: Reference and Definite Descriptions | Read <u>PL</u> , pp. 231-242 [Homework #9] |
| | V. Proper Names and Common Names | |
| W 4/22 | John Searle: Proper Names | Read <u>PL</u> , pp. 249-254 |
| M 4/27 | Saul Kripke: Naming and Necessity | Read <u>PL</u> , pp. 255-268 [Paper due] |
| W 4/29 | Cont'd | |
| M 5/4 | Hilary Putnam: Meaning and Reference | Read <u>PL</u> , pp. 284-291 [Homework #10] |
| | VI. Propositional Attitudes | |
| W 5/6 | Saul Kripke: A Puzzle about Belief | Read <u>PL</u> , pp. 382-402 |
| M 5/11 | Review; Conclusion | [Revised paper due] |

FINAL EXAM: May 19 (Tuesday) 3:30 - 6:30 PM