

Philosophy C127C: Philosophy of Language  
*Meaning in Analytic and Feminist Philosophy*

Mondays and Wednesdays, 10:45a.m.-12:50p.m.  
Bunche 3117

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Office Hours: W 1:00-2:00 p.m.

### **Course Overview**

This class engages some of the central issues in the philosophy of language. Our focus will be on the nature of meaning. We will consider two divergent approaches: one concerned chiefly with *reference* and the other more concerned with linguistic *activity*. In the first unit, we will engage the set of problems and ideas about language at the foundation of 20<sup>th</sup> Century philosophy. For example: How is the reference of a proper name determined? Does it depend on the speaker's knowledge? How do names for things that don't exist have a meaning? Why isn't my belief that Barack Obama is powerful the same as my belief that the President of the United States is powerful? In the second unit, we will focus on the kinds of acts we perform in using language. Of particular interest will be the ways in which this approach is more illuminating with respect to various phenomena of interest to feminist philosophy, including subordinating speech and silencing.

Students will become familiar with the major traditions of philosophical theorizing about meaning in and surrounding the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and how they can be applied to oppressive language and criticized from a feminist perspective.

## Course Materials

*Required:* Kripke, Saul (1980). *Naming and Necessity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

*Optional:* Lycan, William (2000). *Philosophy of Language*. New York, NY: Routledge

All other readings will be made available on the CCLE website. Please check the course website frequently for updates.

## Difficulty

This course *\*no longer\** has logic (Phil 31) as a prerequisite. It does require sustained engagement with the ideas and arguments of the course, careful and critical reading of difficult texts, and the development and exercise of the skills of philosophical writing.

In short, to excel in this course, you should expect to:

- Do all assigned readings *and engage* (take notes, evaluate, etc.)
- Attend lecture *and engage* (take notes, ask questions, etc.)
- Complete all of the online quizzes (see below)
- Work hard on papers (and submit them on time)

## Course Requirements

1. Online quizzes, to be completed **before class** on Mondays.
2. Two writing assignments (2-4 pages, 4-6 pages).

The final grade for the course will be determined as follows:

- *Online quizzes:* 15%
- *Short paper:* 30%
- *Final Paper:* 55%
  
- Students needing an academic accommodation because of a disability should notify the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) within the first two weeks of quarter.
  - OSD is at A255 Murphy Hall; their phone number is (310) 825-1501.
  
- Late assignments will be docked by **one-third of a letter grade**, and docked an additional third of a letter grade every twenty-four hours after the due date.

## **Quizzes**

Quizzes will be on the CCLE course website. Quizzes must be completed **before class**. Usually, they will contain two questions that should be easy to answer if one has both *done the reading* and *attended the previous lecture*. Quizzes can only be accessed once and have a time limit, so do the reading *before* attempting the quiz.

## **Papers**

SHORT PAPER (4-6 pages)

Due August 27<sup>th</sup> at 12:01 a.m. to Turnitin.

FINAL PAPER (6-8 pages)

Due September 9<sup>th</sup> at 12:01 a.m. to Turnitin.

## **Academic Integrity**

Be familiar with and abide by UCLA's policies regarding academic and intellectual integrity: <http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Academic-Integrity>

In accordance with these policies, any suspected plagiarism will be forwarded to the Dean of Students. Do not plagiarize. Cite *all* of your sources.

## Course Schedule (subject to change)

### UNIT 1: MEANING AND REFERENCE

Week 1: Frege, the problem of cognitive significance

Read: "On Sense and Reference" (1892) by Gottlob Frege.

Read: "Thoughts" (1918) by Gottlob Frege.

Week 2: Russell: denoting concepts

Read: Chapter 5, *Principles of Mathematics* (1903) by Bertrand Russell

Read: "On Denoting" (1905) by Bertrand Russell

Week 3: Russell: Definite descriptions and logical form

Read: "On Referring" (1950) by P.F. Strawson

Read: "Reference and Definite Descriptions" (1966) by Keith Donnellan

Week 4: Kripke, semantic externalism

Read: Lecture 1, *Naming and Necessity* (1980) by Saul Kripke

Read: Lecture 2, *Naming and Necessity* (1980) by Saul Kripke

Week 5: Meaning, Thought, and Reference

Read: "The Meaning of 'Meaning'" (1975) by Hilary Putnam

Read: "Intellectual Norms and Foundations of Mind" (1986) by Tyler Burge

Read: "What's truth got to do with it?" (2008) by Paul Horwich

### UNIT 2: LINGUISTIC ACTS AND FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

Week 6: Speech Act Theory and Subordinating Speech

Read: "How to do Things with Words" (1953) excerpts, J.L. Austin

Read: "Speech Acts and Unspeakable Acts" (1993) by Rae Langton

**\*\*ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE \_\_\_\_\_ AT 12:01 a.m. TO TURNITIN\*\***

Week 7: Silencing

Read: "Disempowered Speech" (1995) by Jennifer Hornsby

Read: "Scorekeeping in a Language Game" (1979) by David Lewis

Read: "Scorekeeping in a Pornographic Language Game" (1999) by Rae Langton  
and Caroline West

Week 8: Hate Speech

Read: “The Authority of Hate Speech” (2017) by Rae Langton

Read: “Hate Speech and the Epistemology of Justice” (2016) by Rae Langton

Week 9: Slurs

Read: “Expressivism and the Offensiveness of Slurs” (2013) by Robin Jeshion

Read: “Slurring Words” (2013) by Luvell Anderson and Ernie Lepore

Read: “The Pragmatics of Slurs” (2017) by Renee Jorgensen Bolinger

Week 10: What is Meaning?

Watch: “The Meaning of ‘Ouch’ and ‘Oops’”, David Kaplan’s 2008 Howison Lecture at UC Berkeley.

Read: “Languages and Language” (1975) by David Lewis

\*\*ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE \_\_\_\_\_ AT 12:01 a.m. TO TURNITIN\*\*