

Spring 2012: Introduction to Philosophy of Language (80380/80680)

Instructors: Prof. Simons & Dr. Schoubye

SESSION	TOPIC	READINGS	INSTRUCTOR
1.17.12 (Tuesday)	· Introduction to Philosophy of Language		
1.19.12 (Thursday)	· Frege's Puzzle, Sense and Reference	Frege (1892)	Simons
1.24.12 (Tuesday)	· Descriptions: Reference and Quantification I	Russell (1905)	Schoubye
1.26.12 (Thursday)	· Descriptions: Reference and Quantification II	Russell (1905)	Schoubye
1.31.12 (Tuesday)	· Descriptions: Reference and Quantification III	Russell (1905)	Schoubye
2.2.12 (Thursday)	· Truth Values and Presuppositions I	Strawson (1950)	Schoubye
2.7.12 (Tuesday)	· Proper Names and Direct Reference I	Kripke (1980)	Simons
2.9.12 (Thursday)	· Proper Names and Direct Reference II	Kripke (1980)	Simons
2.14.12 (Tuesday)	· Proper Names and Direct Reference III	Kripke (1980)	Simons
2.16.12 (Thursday)	· Proper Names and Direct Reference IV	Kripke (1980)	Simons
2.16.12 (Thursday)	Take Home Exam I: Questions distributed		
2.21.12 (Tuesday)	Take Home Exam I: Answers due		
2.21.12 (Tuesday)	· Descriptions and Direct Reference	Donnellan (1966)	Schoubye
2.23.12 (Thursday)	· Propositions and Verificationism		Schoubye
2.28.12 (Tuesday)	· Grice on Meaning	Grice (1957)	Simons
3.1.12 (Thursday)	· Austing on Meaning and Use	Austin (1979)	Simons
3.6.12 (Tuesday)	· Meaning and Truth Conditions I	Davidson (1967)	Simons
3.8.12 (Thursday)	· Meaning and Truth Conditions II	Davidson (1967)	Simons

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3.20.12 (Tuesday)	· Logic and Conversation I	Grice (1989)	Simons
3.22.12 (Thursday)	· Logic and Conversation II	Grice (1989)	Simons
3.22.12 (Thursday)	Take Home Exam II: Questions distributed		
3.27.12 (Tuesday)	Take Home Exam II: Answers due		
3.27.12 (Tuesday)	· Speaker's Meaning and Semantic Meaning I	Kripke (1977)	Schoubye
3.29.12 (Thursday)	· Speaker's Meaning and Semantic Meaning II	Kripke (1977)	Schoubye
4.3.12 (Tuesday)	· Semantics and Context-Sensitivity I	Kaplan (1989, 489-521)	Schoubye
4.5.12 (Thursday)	· Semantics and Context-Sensitivity II	Kaplan (1989, 489-521)	Schoubye
4.5.12 (Thursday)	Paper – Last date for submission of first draft		
4.10.12 (Tuesday)	· Conversational Implicature	Bach (1994)	Simons
4.12.12 (Thursday)	· Radical Contextualism I	Searle (1978)	Simons
4.17.12 (Tuesday)	· Radical Contextualism II	Searle (1978)	Simons
4.24.12 (Tuesday)	· Moderate Contextualism I	Stanley (2000)	Schoubye
4.26.12 (Thursday)	· Moderate Contextualism II	Stanley (2000)	Schoubye
5.1.12 (Tuesday)	· Semantic Minimalism I	Cappelen and Lepore (2005)	Schoubye
5.3.12 (Thursday)	· Summary & Discussion		
5.1.12 (Tuesday)	Paper – Last date for submission of final draft		
5.4.12 (Finals Week)	Take Home Exam III: Questions distributed		
5.10.12 (Finals Week)	Take Home Exam III: Answers due		

Introduction to Philosophy of Language

This course is an introduction to the philosophical analysis of language. Philosophy of language is an extremely broad field, but in constructing the syllabus, we have chosen to select a relatively small number of topics which we will investigate deeply, rather than skimming through a wider variety of topics. The three major topics for the semester will be:

- I. The meaning of names and descriptions
- II. Theories of linguistic meaning
- III. Context and interpretation

Our investigations will be guided entirely by the philosophical literature: at each class meeting we will discuss a particular paper, in each case aiming to understand thoroughly the views expressed and, equally importantly, the arguments for those views. Competence in philosophy is not a matter of knowing the “right” answer to a given question, but—at the first stage—of understanding the different answers that have been given, and understanding the pros and cons of different views. This will be our focus in this course.

Class Requirements

I. Attendance

You are required to attend class and you are allowed at most two (2) unexplained absences in the course of the semester. Unexcused absences beyond this will result in a reduction of your participation grade. You are expected to be in class on time. Repeated late arrivals will also impact negatively on your participation grade.

II. Readings

You will be required to complete a substantial reading for each class. If you do not do the reading, you will not be properly prepared. You should be aware that the readings for this class are conceptually difficult and that properly grasping the material may well require multiple readings.

III. Exams

There will be three (3) take home exams in the course of the semester. These exams are intended to test your grasp of the course material. They will consist of short answer questions focussing on specifics of the claims and arguments in the various papers that we have read. In these exams, you will not be asked to present your own views or opinions, but to reproduce details of the views that we read about and discuss.

These exams will be take-home, because we want to allow you the opportunity to review the original papers and your notes in preparing your answers. However, it is completely disallowed for you to consult any other sources –

hard copy, digital, or human – in preparing your answers. See the note on plagiarism below.

The instructors and TA will be available for consultation prior to the exam, and we will provide any necessary clarification on the exam questions themselves once the exam is made available. However, we will not answer substantive questions about the material while you are working on the exam. This means that you need to make sure that you keep up with the material, and come and discuss with us any questions that you have, in the course of the semester.

IV. Short Paper

In addition to the exams, you will be asked to produce one piece of more extended written work for this class. The goal of this short paper is for you to develop the skills involved in analytical writing. To further this goal, you will write the paper in two stages: you will write a first draft, which the TA will review and comment on. His comments will address the content of the paper, the adequacy of the argumentation, and the quality of the writing and structure of the paper. You will then have the chance to work on a revised draft of the paper, which must address the TA's comments. Your final grade will depend both on the quality of the final paper and on the degree to which you have addressed the comments (which, by the way, will be inter-related).

The paper should be approximately 3-5 pages long (1500-2000 words). These must be 3-5 carefully thought out, well structured, and clearly written pages. If you have never written a philosophy paper before, you may want to consult with one of the instructors or the TA before writing your first draft.

We will suggest paper topics as the course progresses. Your first draft must be submitted no later than Thursday, March 29 (see schedule above), but *may* be submitted as early as you like. In fact, we strongly recommend that you try to submit your first draft in the first half of the semester.

Once you receive comments on your first draft, you may submit the revised version at any time, but no later than Tuesday, May 1 (the Tuesday of the last week of classes).

Required Readings and Supplementary Texts

The required readings for this class will be made available to you through Blackboard. However, we encourage you to buy or borrow a copy of the following book:

- William G. Lycan: "The Philosophy of Language: A Contemporary Introduction" (2008, second edition) Routledge, New York .

Several of the topics covered in class are presented in a very accessible way in Lycan's book and throughout the semester we will make reference to the chapters in Lycan's book that are relevant to the material we are discussing.

Reading and Writing Philosophy

Students should be aware that the readings for this class are difficult and that properly grasping the material will often require reading through it several times. Since grades will depend on class participation, you are expected to come to lectures thoroughly prepared and to participate actively in discussions.

Writing philosophy papers is hard work and requires time and effort, but the by far most important part of writing a philosophy paper is clarity. Make sure that you yourself understand what you are writing and if something is unclear to you, make an effort to explain why. Two very useful guides to reading and writing philosophy papers, which we strongly encourage you to read, can be found here:

- **Reading Philosophy:**

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html>

- **Writing Philosophy:**

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

Grading

Grades will be calculated on the basis of the following distribution:

Class Participation	10%
Exam I	20%
Exam II	20%
Exam III	20%
Final Paper	30%

Plagiarism

Use of material that does not originate with you or whose source is not acknowledged constitutes plagiarism. This is a serious offense and the offense is the same whether the source is a fellow student, a web page, or a library book, and whether or not the author of the material agrees to your use of it. We will deal very seriously with any cases we encounter.

Office Hours

INSTRUCTORS:

- **Mandy Simons:** Thursdays 2.30-3.30 (or e-mail for an appointment)
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- **Anders Schoubye:** Tuesdays 1.30-2.30 (or e-mail for an appointment)
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TEACHING ASSISTANT

- **Hanti Lin:**
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References

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