

PHILOSOPHY 409

PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:30–4:00 pm

2271 Angell Hall

INSTRUCTOR

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FOCUS OF THE COURSE

How can a sentence, a belief, or a picture represent something? This problem—the problem of intentionality—is of fundamental importance to analytic philosophy. We will discuss the problem of intentionality as it presents itself in language, focusing in particular on reference. In so doing we will compare the semantics of proper names ('Fido'), quantifier phrases ('most dogs'), definite descriptions ('the dog in the corner'), and demonstratives ('this').

PREREQUISITES

Phil 345 or Phil 383, and one course in formal logic. If you haven't satisfied these prerequisites—especially the logic class—you're likely to find this course very challenging and frustrating. Please talk to me if you have concerns or questions.

COURSE WEB SITE

Go to <http://ctools.umich.edu>.

GRADING

- Several one to two page writing assignments, assigned roughly biweekly: 25% total
- Midterm exam (given in class on 2/22): 25%
- A term paper (due at the end of the term, about 8 pages): 25%
- In-class participation: 25%

You get credit for late work only if you give a really good explanation for its being late. All assignments except the midterm exam must be typed, double-spaced, and in a legible font. Anything you hand in that is more than one page must be stapled. I encourage you to discuss the material with your classmates. However, all work you turn in must be your own.

SCHEDULE  
(subject to change)

1/4	Introduction
1/9	Martinich, "Introduction"
1/11	Tarski, "The Semantic Conception of Truth and the Foundations of Semantics"
1/16	Davidson, "Truth and Meaning"
1/18	<b>No class</b> (I'll be away at a conference)
1/23	Davidson, continued
1/25	Grice, "Logic and Conversation"
1/30	Frege, "On Sense and Nominatum"
2/1	Frege, continued
2/6	Russell, "On Denoting" Russell, "Descriptions"
2/8	Russell, continued
2/13	Strawson, "On Referring" Russell, "Mr. Strawson on Referring"
2/15	Donnellan, "Reference and Definite Descriptions"
2/20	Review for midterm
2/22	<b>Midterm exam</b>
2/27, 3/1	<b>Spring break</b>
3/6	Quine, "Three Grades of Modal Involvement" Quine, "Reference and Modality" (both available on CTools)
3/8	Quine, "Quantifiers and Propositional Attitudes"
3/13	Kripke, <i>Naming and Necessity</i>
3/15	Kripke, <i>Naming and Necessity</i>
3/20	Kripke, <i>Naming and Necessity</i>
3/22	Kripke, <i>Naming and Necessity</i>
3/27	Putnam, "Meaning and Reference"
3/29	Kaplan, "Dthat"
4/3	Evans, "The Causal Theory of Names"
4/5	<b>No class</b>
4/10	Stalnaker, "Reference and Necessity" (available on CTools)
4/12	Stanley, "Names and Rigid Designation" (available on CTools)
4/17	Stanley, continued
4/21	Final papers due