

PHILOSOPHY 409: PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:40–4:00, in Angell Hall 2271

CONTACT INFORMATION

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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 a special case: the problem of intentionality 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 questions or concerns.

COURSE WEB SITE

Available at <http://ctools.umich.edu>.

BOOKS

Martinich, *Philosophy of Language*, 5th ed., and Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*.

GRADING

- Two short papers (3–4 pages): 20% each
- Midterm exam: 15%
- Final paper (7–8 pages): 30%
- A problem set or two: 5%
- Attendance and in-class participation: 10%

Homework and papers are due at the start of class (in some cases, over email by that time). You get credit for late work only if you give a really good explanation for its being late. I do give extensions, though, when appropriate. If you think you might need an extension, please ask early. 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

1/3	Introduction
1/8	Martinich, "Introduction"
1/10	Tarski, "The Semantic Conception of Truth and the Foundations of Semantics"
1/15	Frege, "On Sense and Nominatum"
1/17	Frege, "On Sense and Nominatum" continued
1/22	Russell, "On Denoting," "Descriptions," "Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description" (this last paper on CTools)
1/24	Russell continued
1/29	Searle, "Proper Names" (on CTools)
1/31	First short paper due, no class
2/5	Strawson, "On Referring"
2/7	Donnellan, "Reference and Definite Descriptions"
2/12	Kripke, <i>Naming and Necessity</i> , Lecture I
2/14	Kripke, <i>Naming and Necessity</i> , Lecture II
2/19	Kripke, <i>Naming and Necessity</i> , Introduction Putnam, "Meaning and Reference"
2/21	Midterm exam
2/26	Winter break; no class
2/28	Winter break; no class
3/4	Evans, "The Causal Theory of Names"
3/6	Stalnaker, "Semantics for Belief"
3/11	Stalnaker, continued
3/13	Stalnaker, "Reference and Necessity" (this paper on CTools)
3/18	Stanley, "Names and Rigid Designators" (this paper on CTools)
3/20	Second short paper due, no class
3/25	Locke, "Of Words" Burge, "Individualism and the Mental" (this last paper on CTools)
3/27	Wittgenstein, <i>Philosophical Investigations</i> §1-§64
4/1	Wittgenstein, <i>Philosophical Investigations</i> §65-§133
4/3	Wittgenstein, <i>Philosophical Investigations</i> §134-§242
4/8	Wittgenstein, <i>Philosophical Investigations</i> §243-§268
4/10	Lewis, "Languages and Language"
4/15	Lewis, "Putnam's Paradox" (this paper on CTools)
4/18	Final paper due by 5 pm