

Philosophy of Logic and Language (5AANB011)

1. Module Description

This course will introduce students to the central topics in the Philosophy of Logic and Language. Topics to be studied will be drawn from the following: names, descriptions, sense and reference, necessity, truth, meaning, conditionals. This module aims to acquaint students with the chief ideas of some leading philosophers of logic and language including Frege, Russell, Strawson, Davidson, Grice and Kripke. By the end of the module, the students will be able to demonstrate intellectual, transferable and practicable skills appropriate to a Level 5 module and in particular will have become familiar with some of the central concepts in philosophy of logic and language. They will also have learned how to relate some of the issues studied in the course to issues in other courses, such as metaphysics and philosophy of mind.

2. Secondary Texts

- Michael Devitt and Richard Hanley (eds.), 2006. *The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of Language*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- William Lycan, 2008. *Philosophy of Language: A Contemporary Introduction*, 2nd edn., London: Routledge.
- A.P. Martinich and David Sosa (eds.), 2012. *The Philosophy of Language*, 6th edn., Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Alexander Miller, 2007. *Philosophy of Language*, 2nd edn., London: Routledge.

3. Outline of Seminar Topics and Readings

N.B. This schedule is tentative and is likely to be adjusted as the term progresses.

- Weeks 1–3: Truth and Meaning
 - Alexis Burgess and John Burgess, *Truth*
 - Donald Davidson, “Truth and Meaning” (reprinted in *Inquiries*)
 - “Radical Interpretation” (reprinted in *Inquiries*)
 - “Reply to Foster” (reprinted in *Inquiries*)
 - *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*, 2nd edn.
 - J. A. Foster, “Meaning and Truth-Theory”
 - Wolfgang Kühne, *Conceptions of Truth*, chapters 3.1, 3.2, and 4.1

- Mark Sainsbury, “Understanding and Theories of Meaning” (reprinted in *Departing from Frege*)
- P. F. Strawson, “Meaning and Truth”
- Alfred Tarski, “The Semantic Conception of Truth and the Foundations of Semantics”
— “Truth and Proof”
- David Wiggins. “Meaning and Truth Conditions: From Frege’s Grand Design to Davidson’s” (in *A Companion to the Philosophy of Language*)
- Weeks 4–5: Meaning and the A Priori
 - Gottlob Frege, “On Sense and Reference” (in *The Frege Reader*)
 - Saul Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*
— “Necessity and Identity”
 - Scott Soames, *Beyond Rigidity*, chapters 1–3
- Weeks 6–7: Meaning and Cognitive Significance
 - Walter Edelberg, “A New Puzzle of Intentional Identity”
 - Gottlob Frege, “The Thought” (in *The Frege Reader*)
 - Peter Geach, “Intentional Identity”
 - Saul Kripke, “A Puzzle About Belief”
 - Scott Soames, *Beyond Rigidity*, chapters 6–8
- Weeks 8–10: Meaning and Communication
 - Ray Buchanan, “Reference, Understanding, and Communication”
 - Robyn Carston, *Thoughts and Utterances*, chapter 2
 - Paul Grice, “Meaning” (in *Studies*)
— “Logic and Conversation” (in *Studies*)
— *Studies in the Way of Words*
 - Richard Heck, “Do Demonstratives have Senses?”
 - Brian Loar, “The Semantics of Singular Terms”

4. Sample Essay Topics

- Explain one of the motivations for deflationism. Is it convincing?
- Is truth prior to meaning or vice-versa?
- Can a theory of truth serve as a theory of meaning?
- What is cognitive significance? Can it be captured by a truth-conditional semantics?

- What does the problem of intentional identity tell us about semantics?
- Does understanding a sentence require more than recovering its truth conditions? (Pick one particular challenge to focus on.)
- Do demonstratives and pronouns have cognitive significance? What, if anything, does this entail for the theory of meaning?