

Topics in Philosophy of Language: Lying and Deception (6AANA048)

1. Module Description

What is a lie? How do we deceive each other with language? What does it mean to use language sincerely? In this module, we will address each of these questions from a non-traditional perspective: with an eye towards leveraging our understanding of how we deceive each other to come to better understand what words and sentences mean. In the course of our inquiry, a number of interesting puzzles will arise: (i) We can lie with things that we don't say, strictly speaking, but somehow communicate via an alternative means. And yet, it is hardly ever clear what exactly we otherwise communicate, or even how we do so. (ii) We can lie without being deceptive, and yet lying requires more than just saying something we believe to be false. (iii) We can speak sincerely while also speaking loosely, and while knowing that what we are saying is, strictly speaking, false. We shall also try to get some handle on when and why we might be justified in lying to each other, and when not. In other words, we shall probe the bounds of free speech.

2. Assessment

This course will run as a seminar. Assessment will be via a single, 4,500 word summative essay.

3. 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.
- Martin, Clancy (ed.), 2009. *The Philosophy of Deception*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- A.P. Martinich and David Sosa (eds.), 2012. *The Philosophy of Language*, 6th edn., Oxford: Oxford University Press.

N.B. I shall also make essays available from my forthcoming edited collection (edited with Andreas Stokke) for Oxford University Press, *Lying: Language, Knowledge, Ethics, and Politics* as they become available.

4. Outline of Weekly Topics and Readings

N.B. This schedule is tentative and is likely to be adjusted to accommodate class visits by philosophers working in the relevant areas.

- Week 1: Background 1
 - Elizabeth Camp, “Prudent Semantics Meets Wanton Speech-Act Pluralism”
 - Emma Borg, *Pursuing Meaning*, chapter 1

- Week 2: Background 2
 - H. P. Grice, “Logic and Conversation”
 - Robert Stalnaker, “Assertion”
- Week 3: Lying 1
 - Roderick Chisholm & Thomas Feehan, “The Intent to Deceive”
 - Jonathan Adler, “Lying, Deceiving, or Falsely Implicating”
- Week 4: Lying 2
 - Thomas Carson, “The Definition of Lying”
 - Roy Sorensen, “Bald-Faced Lies”
- Week 5: Lying 3
 - Don Fallis, “What is Lying?”
 - Jennifer Saul, *Lying, Misleading, and What is Said*, Ch. 1
- Week 6: Saying 1
 - Jennifer Saul, *Lying, Misleading, and What is Said*, Chs. 2–3
- Week 7: Saying 2
 - Robert Stalnaker, “Common Ground”
 - Andreas Stokke, “Lying and Asserting”
- Week 8: Deceiving 1
 - John Searle, *Speech Acts*, selections
- Week 9: Deceiving 2
 - Andreas Stokke, “Insincerity”
 - Jennifer Lackey, “Lies and Deception: An Unhappy Divorce”
- Week 10: Free Speech
 - Seana Shiffrin, *Speech Matters*, selections

5. Sample Formative Topics

- Does lying require deception?
- What can lying tell us about the bounds of semantics?
- What does it mean to assert? Is assertion necessary for lying?
- What is linguistic deception?
- Explain Grice’s notion of ‘what is said’. Is this notion helpful for understanding lying and/or deception?