PHILOSOP 4991F/ 9400L
Survey of Philosophy of Language

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Information including instructor contact details and course location can be found on the course Owl BrightSpace: https://westernu.brightspace.com/

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An introductory survey of theories of linguistic meaning, drawing principally on classic articles in Analytic philosophy of language which have served as a foundation. Topics will include: reference, truth conditions and possible worlds; assertions and other speech acts; speakers' reference; conversational implicature; metaphor; indexicals and demonstratives; pragmatic determinants of what is said.

Authors may include: J.L. Austin, Emma Borg, Robyn Carston, Donald Davidson, Keith Donnellan, H. Paul Grice, David Kaplan, Saul Kripke, David Lewis, John Searle, Dan Sperber & Deirdre Wilson, and Catherine Wearing.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The main objectives are to fine-tune students' skills as linguists and philosophers, and to introduce key concepts, positions and arguments in semantics/pragmatics. The focus, as noted, will be on philosophical foundations.

To make these objectives achievable, students should have a background in at least one of philosophy or linguistics. It is not required that stud21n1unstud21n1unSCHEDULE

I. <u>Introduction</u>
Aims and Logistics
Background: Frege and Russell

II. <u>Varieties of Reference</u>
Peter Strawson, "On Referring"
*Keith Donnellan, "Reference and Definite Descriptions"
Saul Kripke, "Speaker's Reference and Semantic Reference"
David Kaplan, "Demonstratives"

III. <u>Assertion and Other Speech Acts</u>
*J.L. Austin, "Performative Utterances"

David Lewis, "Scorekeeping in a Language Game"

IV. Pragmatics and What Is Said
H.P. Grice, "Logic and Conversation"
Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson, "Précis of *Relevance*"
*John Perry, "Thought without Representation"
John Searle, "Literal Meaning"
*Emma Borg, "Minimalism versus Contextualism in Semantics"

V. Metaphor
Donald Davidson, "What Metaphors Mean"
*Catherine Wearing, "Metaphor and What Is Said"

VI. Final Review

TEXTS
M. Ezcurdia and R.J. Stainton (eds.)(2013) *The Semantics-Pragmatics Boundary in Philosophy.*
    Peterborough, ON: Broadview.

METHOD OF EVALUATION
In-Class Participation: 10%
Two In-Class Team Debates: 15%
Four "Briefing Notes": 20%
Glossary Entries: 25%
Final Exam: 30%

- *Participation*: Because a main aim is inculcation of skills in philosophical and linguistic discussion, attendance and participation are mandatory. Students who regularly miss classes without justification will be requested to withdraw.
- *Debates*: Students will be divided into teams of about four or five, and each team will be assigned either the "pro" or "con" side of a resolution. There will be a group score which will then be modified based on peer reports of the individual student's contribution to the group.
- *Briefing Notes*: At the outset of the relevant classes, students will hand in two to three pages of typewritten notes on the chapter assigned. 750-1000 words is appropriate. These "briefing notes" will explain the main aims of the text and the main means by which those aims are met. In the usual case, the article's main aim will be to establish a conclusion, and the main means will be via an argument, but there can be exceptions. Outlining these means/aims is to be sharply contrasted with describing, sub-section by sub-section, what the author covers in the text. Use of secondary sources is encouraged but not required.
- *Glossary Entries*: As the course progresses, students will be assigned as homework "glossary entries" on key linguistic and philosophical terms. An entry must be both complete and accurate. Complete means a definition, some kind of extended explication, and an example where possible. Each entry should be a few paragraphs long. A compendium of glossaries

will be uploaded for grading at the end of the class, but entries should be completed before the next class.

- *Final Exam*: The exam will cover overarching themes from the entire class and will be essay-based. Its aim is to help student synthesize the material in the various readings and lectures into a coherent whole.

Submission instructions

- All written work must be submitted via the Assignment tab on OWL for plagiarism checking and also submitted in hard copy, either in class or via the Philosophy Drop Box outside the Philosophy office.
- Late submissions will not be accepted without explicit prior permission of the instructor. There is no "late penalty". In particular, because the glossary entries are homework, the compendium should not be uploaded late except under extraordinary circumstances.

ACADEMIC CONSIDERATION

Students may request academic consideration in cases of extenuating circumstances – that is, personal circumstances beyond the student's control that have a substantial but temporary

under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com http://www.turnitin.com.

ACADEMIC ADVISING
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