

01:730:210 Philosophy of Language
Spring 2011
Instructor: Pavel Davydov

Course Description

This is an introductory survey of some of the main topics in philosophy of language. Topics include: meaning, truth, reference, communication, names, descriptions, indexicals, the a priori, translation and propositional attitudes. The readings are drawn from the classical writings of Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell, P. F. Strawson, Paul Grice, W. V. O. Quine, Donald Davidson, David Lewis, Robert Stalnaker, Saul Kripke, and John Perry. They are supplemented by selections from a secondary source, *Philosophy of Language* by Scott Soames.

The class meets on Tuesdays and Fridays from 11:30am to 12:50pm, in 112 Murray Hall on College Ave. My office hours are by appointment. My office is 011 One Seminary Place. My email is pdavydov@philosophy.rutgers.edu.

Readings

We are going to be using two texts, both of which should be available at the Rutgers Bookstore:

- (1) A. P. Martinich, ed. (2008). *Philosophy of Language*, 5th edition. Oxford.
- (2) Scott Soames, (2010). *Philosophy of Language*. Princeton.

Assignments and Grading

The breakdown of assignments and their value for the final grade is as follows:

- (1) Five short (1-page) discussion pieces: 25% (5% each)
- (2) Midterm exam: 15%
- (3) Two 5-7-page papers: 20% (10% each)
- (4) Final Take-Home Exam: 20%
- (5) Attendance and participation: 20%

All the due dates will be announced at the beginning of the semester. All assignments must be submitted electronically to turnitin, via the course Sakai website, to be checked for plagiarism. It is your responsibility to be acquainted with the University policies concerning plagiarism. Both the hard copy and the electronic copy must be submitted by the beginning of class on the day they are due in order to not count as late. Both papers must be submitted and both exams taken in order to pass the course! Late penalties are one full letter grade per 24 hours!

Attendance is mandatory! Starting on the third week of the semester, every time you miss a class, you lose 1 point out of 100 from your final grade. In other words, your final grade

goes down by 1% every time you miss a class. Absences and late submissions with legitimate, documented excuses will not result in penalties, as per the University policies.

Outline of the Course

The following list of readings is not final. We may adjust it during the semester. Nevertheless, it should give you a good sense of the content of the course.

Section One: The Nature of Meaning

- Frege, 'The Thought' (Martinich, Chapter 1)
- Grice, 'Meaning' (Martinich, Chapter 6)
- Davidson, 'Truth and Meaning' (Martinich, Chapter 7)
- Soames, Chapter 2

Section Two: Sense and Reference

- Frege, 'On Sense and Reference' (to be posted on Sakai)
- Russell, 'On Denoting' (Martinich, Chapter 15)
- Strawson, 'On Referring' (Martinich, Chapter 17)
- Soames, Chapter 1

Section Three: Names, Indexicals, and Rigidity

- Donnellan, 'Reference and Definite Descriptions' (Martinich, Chapter 19)
- Kripke, from *Naming and Necessity* (Martinich, Chapter 21)
- Perry, 'The Problem of the Essential Indexical' (Martinich, Chapter 27)
- Soames, Chapter 4

Section Four: Attitudes and Attitude Reports

- Quine, 'Quantifiers and Propositional Attitudes' (Martinich, Chapter 28)
- Davidson, 'On Saying That' (Martinich, Chapter 29)
- Kripke, 'A Puzzle about Belief' (Martinich, Chapter 32)
- Stalnaker, 'Semantics for Belief' (Martinich, Chapter 33)

Section Five: Understanding and Its Limits

- Quine, 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism' (Martinich, Chapter 3)
- Quine, from *Word and Object* (Martinich, Chapter 38)
- Kripke, from *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* (Martinich, Ch. 43)
- Lewis, 'Languages and Language' (Martinich, Chapter 46)