

## **PHIL-36 - Philosophy of Language**

**Amherst College**

Spring 2009 – Visiting Prof. Kevin C. Klement (UMass faculty member)

Mondays and Wednesdays 12:30pm-1:50pm in Cooper House 201.

### **Course description:**

“Caesar was stabbed.” With those words, I can make a claim about someone who lived in the distant past. How is that possible? How do our words succeed in picking out particular portions of reality, even ones with which we have had no contact? How does language enable us to convey thoughts about everything from Amherst College, to the hopes of a friend, to the stars beyond our galaxy? What are the thoughts, or the meanings, that our words carry? And whatever they turn out to be, how do they come to be associated with our words: through some mental activity on our part, or instead through our shared use of language?

This course covers selected topics in 20<sup>th</sup> century analytic philosophy of language, including meaning, reference, naming, truth, speech acts, propositional attitudes, translation, and the nature of linguistic representation.

### **Contact info:**

You may e-mail me at [klement@philos.umass.edu](mailto:klement@philos.umass.edu), which is often the best way to reach me.

I have a mailbox in the Amherst College philosophy department office (208 Cooper House). My office at UMass is 353 Bartlett Hall, and I also have access to Prof. Alexander George’s Office (307 Cooper House) for meetings at Amherst College. My UMass office phone is 545-5784. My office hours there are Tuesdays 2:30-3:30pm, Thursdays 11am-12pm and other times by appointment. I am also happy to make an appointment to meet with you at AC instead.

### **Text (anthology):**

*The Philosophy of Language*, ed. A. P. Martinich (5th ed., Oxford, 2008). The text is available at Amherst Books at 8 Main Street in downtown Amherst.

### **Course requirements:**

Your final grade will be based on the following requirements: (1) in-class participation (10%), (2) three exams (20% each), and (3) a term paper (30%).

*Exams:* You will take three in-class essay exams, one in late-February, one in early-April and one during finals week. Each will deal with the material covered in the preceding third of the course. Study guides for each exam will be distributed beforehand.

*Term Paper:* Each student is expected to write an 8-12 page term paper that aims to contribute something original to the discussion of any of the philosophical issues discussed in the course. The amount of outside research done for the paper is left to your discretion. You are encouraged to speak to me about your paper in advance, and if possible, submit one or more rough drafts. The paper is due at the end of finals week.

## Reading Schedule

All of the following articles can be found in the Martinich anthology.

Note: this schedule is *subject to change*.

| Date        | Reading Selection(s)   |
|-------------|--|
| Mon, Jan 26 | Course introduction  |
| Wed, Jan 28 | Gottlob Frege, "On Sense and Nominatum" (pp. 217-229)  |
| Mon, Feb 2  | Gottlob Frege, "On Sense and Nominatum", continued   |
| Wed, Feb 4  | Bertrand Russell, "On Denoting" (pp. 230-238)  |
| Mon, Feb 9  | Bertrand Russell, "Descriptions" (pp. 239-245)   |
| Wed, Feb 11 | P.F. Strawson, "On Referring" (pp. 246-260);<br>Keith Donnellan, "Reference and Definite Descriptions" (pp. 265-277) |
| Mon, Feb 16 | Saul Kripke, "Naming and Necessity" (pp. 290-305)  |
| Wed, Feb 18 | Hilary Putnam, "Meaning and Reference" (pp. 306-313)   |
| Mon, Feb 23 | John Searle, "Proper Names and Intentionality" (pp. 326-342)   |
| Wed, Feb 25 | <b>EXAM #1</b>   |
| Mon, Mar 2  | J. L. Austin, "Performative Utterances" (pp. 136-143)  |
| Wed, Mar 4  | John Searle, "The Structure of Illocutionary Acts" (pp. 146-156)   |
| Mon, Mar 9  | H.P. Grice, "Logic and Conversation" (pp. 171-181)   |
| Wed, Mar 11 | W.V. Quine, "Quantifiers and Propositional Attitudes" (pp. 383-388)  |
| Mar 16-20   | ----- SPRING BREAK! No class. -----  |
| Mon, Mar 23 | David Kaplan, "Quantifying In" (pp. 399-419)   |
| Wed, Mar 25 | Jon Barwise and John Perry, "Semantic Innocence and Uncompromising Situations" (pp. 420-432)                         |
| Mon, Mar 30 | David Kaplan, "On the Logic of Demonstratives" (pp. 357-365)   |
| Wed, Apr 1  | Robert Stalnaker, "Semantics for Belief" (pp. 460-468)   |
| Mon, Apr 6  | <b>EXAM #2</b>   |
| Wed, Apr 8  | H.P. Grice, "Meaning" (pp. 108-113)  |
| Mon, Apr 13 | Carl Hempel, "Empiricist Criteria of Cognitive Significance: Problems and Changes" (pp. 50-62)                       |
| Wed, Apr 15 | W.V. Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" (pp. 63-76)   |
| Mon, Apr 20 | W.V. Quine, "Translation and Meaning" (pp. 546-575)  |
| Wed, Apr 22 | Alfred Tarski, "The Semantic Conception of Truth and the Foundations of Semantics" (pp. 85-107)                      |
| Mon, Apr 27 | Donald Davidson, "Truth and Meaning" (pp. 114-125) and "Belief and the Basis of Meaning" (pp. 576-584)               |
| Wed, Apr 29 | John Searle, "Indeterminacy, Empiricism and the First Person" (pp. 596-610)  |
| Mon, May 4  | Saul Kripke, "On Rules and Private Language" (pp. 626-638)   |
| Wed, May 6  | Ruth Millikan, "Truth Rules, Hoverflies, and the Kripke-Wittgenstein Paradox" (pp. 639-655)                          |
| Finals      | <b>EXAM #3; Paper due</b>  |