

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Graduate Course Outline 2018-19**

**Phil 4210G/Ling 9453B/Phil 9xxxB:
Survey of Philosophy of Language**

Winter Term 2019

Class Days and Hours: W 2:30-5:30

Classroom: TBA

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DESCRIPTION

A survey of foundational and highly influential texts in Analytic Philosophy of Language. Emphasis will be on three topics: contrasting conceptions of linguistic meaning; the semantics-pragmatics boundary; and two case studies (namely, definite descriptions and metaphor).

REQUIRED TEXT

Maite Ezcurdia & Robert J. Stainton (eds.)(2013) *The Semantics-Pragmatics Boundary in Philosophy*. Broadview Press.

OBJECTIVES

The twin objectives are honing of philosophical skills and enriching students' familiarity with some "touchstone" material in contemporary Analytic Philosophy of Language. In terms of skills, the emphasis will be on: professional-level philosophical writing; close reading of notoriously challenging texts; methodological reflection; and respectful but incisive philosophical dialogue.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Six "Briefing Notes": 50%

- On the day they are discussed in class, students will submit 2-3 page (i.e., 750-1000 words) "reader responses" to selected writings, consisting of an outline of the central

argument, along with the student's comments and questions. (This is to be sharply contrasted with an outline of the *paper*, section-by-section.)

- Each Briefing Note is worth 10%, and all are obligatory. However the lowest grade will be dropped

Short Term Paper: 35%

- Students will write a brief paper, the length and style of a conference paper (i.e., about 4000 words), on one of the topics addressed in the class.

Class Participation: 15%

COURSE READINGS

I. Four Approaches to Meaning

A. Reference and Truth Conditions

Gottlob Frege (1892), "On Sense and Reference"

Bertrand Russell (1919), "Descriptions"

B. Use Theory

Peter F. Strawson (1950), "On Referring"

J.L. Austin (1956), "Performative Utterances"

C. Dynamic Semantics

Robert C. Stalnaker (1978), "Assertion"

David Lewis (1979), "Scorekeeping in a Language Game"

D. Mentalistic Semantics

Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson (1987), "Précis of *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*"

II. The Semantics-Pragmatics Boundary

A. Foundations

H. Paul Grice (1967/1975), "Logic and Conversation"

B. Indexicals

David Kaplan, "Demonstratives" and "Afterthoughts" (1977/1989)

C. Pragmatic Determinants of Literal Truth Conditions

John Perry (1986), "Thought without Representation"

John R. Searle (1978), "Literal Meaning"

Robyn Carston (1988), "Implicature, Explicature, and Truth-Theoretic Semantics"

Emma Borg (2007), "Minimalism versus Contextualism in Semantics"

III. Two Case Studies

A. Definite Descriptions Revisited

Keith S. Donnellan (1966), "Reference and Definite Descriptions"

Saul Kripke (1977), "Speaker's Reference and Semantic Reference"

B. *Metaphor*

Donald Davidson (1978), "What Metaphors Mean"

John R. Searle (1979), "Metaphor"

Catherine Wearing, "Metaphor and What Is Said" (2006)