

# PHIL 4233: Philosophy of Language

University of Arkansas, Spring 2008

Professor: Eric Funkhouser

Office hours: TTh 9:00 – 10:30 a.m., and by appointment

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Class webpage: <http://comp.uark.edu/~efunkho/languageS08.html>

Class notes, handouts, and announcements will be posted on this website.

So, be sure to check it out from time to time.

Class meeting time: TTh 11:00 a.m. – 12:20 p.m.

Classroom: Old Main 329

## I. Texts (Required)

1. Martinich, A.P. (ed.). 2006. *The Philosophy of Language*, Fifth Edition (New York, NY: Oxford University Press).
2. Kripke, Saul. 1980. *Naming and Necessity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).

Both books are available at the campus bookstore.

## II. Course Description

The aim of this course is to cover some core readings and topics in the philosophy of language, in the 20th century analytic tradition. As the philosophy of language was central to much of 20th century analytic philosophy, this course also serves as a good introduction to analytic philosophy itself. Most of the articles we will read are considered to be “classics” in this tradition.

On the schedule of topics below, you will find that we will cover 5 topics. Our main focus is on semantics — the study of meaning (i.e., what it is for a linguistic expression to have a meaning). We will discuss how language

“latches onto” the world, how names and natural kind terms function, and the analytic/synthetic distinction. We will also study how we do things with language (speech acts) and how the philosophy of language relates to the philosophy of mind (propositional attitudes) and metaphysics (naming and essences).

### III. Grading

Your course grade will be determined as follows:

- Take-home midterm exam: 25%
- In-class final exam: 25%
- Shorter paper: 20%
- Longer paper: 30%

Class attendance and participation will also be considered, especially in borderline cases.

### IV. Miscellaneous

- Assignments are due as listed on the schedule below. Late assignments will not be accepted, but for *extreme circumstances*. Even in these extreme circumstances (death in family, hospitalization, imprisonment, etc.) you should notify me *before* the assignment is due. This holds for exams as well.
- Academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism or cheating on tests) is taken very seriously. Any violation may result in the most severe repercussions allowed by the University. For the University policy on academic dishonesty, see: <http://www.uark.edu:80/campus-resources/rlee/honesty.html>
- If you require special accommodations for test-taking and/or paper-writing, inform me of them by the first week of class (with proper documentation) so that the proper arrangements can be made.
- Inclement weather policy: Assume, until and unless you hear otherwise from me, that class will *not* be canceled due to inclement weather (even if the university’s inclement weather policy is in effect). If class must be canceled due to the weather, or for any other reason, I will send out a class email as soon as possible. In the worst case scenario, I will simply have a notice posted in the classroom.

## V. Schedule and Reading Assignments

Readings and assignments are due *by* the date on which they are listed. This schedule is subject to change.

- T January 15: No Assignment  
Th January 17: Martinich, Introduction, pp. 1–16, 18–19 (Subject and Predicate), and 22–23 (Identity)  
Also read: <http://www.rep.routledge.com/article/U017>

### Topic: Meaning and Reference (General)

- T January 22: Locke, “Of Words” (pp. 621–625)  
Th January 24: Frege, “On Sense and Nominatum” (pp. 217–229)  
  
T January 29: Russell, “On Denoting” (pp. 230–238)  
Russell, “Descriptions” (pp. 239–245)  
Th January 31: Strawson, “On Referring” & Russell “Mr. Strawson on Referring” (pp. 246–264)

### Topic: Names and Natural Kind Terms

- T February 5: Mill, “Of Names” (pp. 284–289)  
Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, Preface  
Th February 7: Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, Lecture 1  
  
T February 12: Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, Lecture 2  
Th February 14: Lecture 2, continued  
  
T February 19: Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, Lecture 3  
Th February 21: Lecture 3, continued  
  
T February 26: Putnam, “Meaning and Reference” (pp. 306–313)  
Th February 28: Evans, “The Causal Theory of Names” (pp. 314–325)  
**Midterm Distributed**

### Topic: Meaning and Truth

- T March 4: Hempel, “Empiricist Criteria of Cognitive Significance: Problems and Changes” (pp. 50–62)  
Th March 6: Hempel, continued  
  
T March 11: Quine, “Two Dogmas of Empiricism” (pp. 63–76)  
Th March 13: Quine, continued  
  
T March 18: **NO CLASS SPRING BREAK**  
Th March 20: **NO CLASS SPRING BREAK**

T March 25: Grice and Strawson, "In Defense of a Dogma" (online)  
Th March 27: Grice, "Meaning" (pp. 108–113)

**Topic: Speech Acts**

T April 1: Austin, "Performative Utterances" (pp. 136–145)  
Th April 3: Searle, "The Structure of Illocutionary Acts" (pp. 146–156)  
  
T April 8: Searle, "A Taxonomy of Illocutionary Acts" (pp. 157–170)  
Th April 10: Grice, "Logic and Conversation" (pp. 171–181)

**Topic: Propositional Attitudes**

T April 15: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/prop-attitude-reports/>  
Th April 17: Quine, "Quantifiers and Propositional Attitudes" (pp. 383–388)  
  
T April 22: Kaplan, "Quantifying In" (pp. 399–419)  
Th April 24: Kripke, "A Puzzle about Belief" (pp. 433–459)  
  
T April 29: Kripke, continued  
Th May 1: Review

**Final Papers Due**

**Final Exam:** Wednesday, May 7th; 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.; in our regular classroom