

# PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

Spring 2011, T/Th 11-12:15  
194 Mercer St., #305  
[http://tedsider.org/  
teaching/language.html](http://tedsider.org/teaching/language.html)

“No politician from Belgium has ever worn 23 hats at once.”—You have never seen that sentence before, yet you understood it. How? The answer must be that you know what its *words* mean (you’ve seen them before, after all). But what kinds of things do words mean? How do words get their meanings? And how exactly do word-meanings combine to generate sentence-meanings? We will study classic articles by Frege, Russell, Kripke, Putnam, Quine, Davidson, Lewis, Grice and others, on such topics as reference, descriptions, names, quantifiers, natural kind terms, propositional attitudes, conversational implicature, speech acts, logical positivism, analyticity, truth and meaning, meaning and use, and indeterminacy.

## OFFICE HOURS

Ted Sider ([ted.sider@nyu.edu](mailto:ted.sider@nyu.edu)): Thursdays, 2:00p-3:00p and by appointment. 5 Washington Place #506.

Jeff Russell ([jeff.russell@nyu.edu](mailto:jeff.russell@nyu.edu)): Tuesdays 1:00p-2:00p and by appointment. 5 Washington Place #313.

## READINGS

Required text: *The Philosophy of Language*, edited by A. P. Martinich, fifth edition. Additional required readings will be distributed.

## REQUIREMENTS

Two in-class exams, worth 35% each, **March 22, and May 12 at 10:00am**

Short paper (2-3 pages), worth 10%, **due in class on February 15**

Longer paper (4-7 pages), worth 20%, **due in class on May 5**

**SCHEDULE**      (*all readings are in Martinich unless otherwise noted*)

**Semantics**

- 1/25 Martinich's introduction, sections I–VI; Mill, "Of Names"
- 1/27 Frege, "On Sense and Nominatum"
  - 2/1 Frege continued
  - 2/3 Russell, "On Denoting", and "Descriptions"
  - 2/8 Kripke, "Naming and Necessity"
  - 2/10 Kripke continued
  - 2/15 Putnam, "Meaning and Reference" (may skip) (*short paper due*)
  - 2/17 Kripke, "A Puzzle about Belief"
  - 2/22 Quine, "Quantifiers and Propositional Attitudes" or Kaplan "Quantifying in"
  - 2/24 Kaplan, selections from "Demonstratives" (to be distributed)
    - 3/1 Perry, "The Problem of the Essential Indexical"
    - 3/3 catch-up

**Pragmatics**

- 3/8 Austin, "Performative Utterances"
- 3/10 Grice, "Logic and Conversation"
- 3/22 Exam 1
- 3/24 Stalnaker, "Assertion"
- 3/29 Lewis, "Scorekeeping in a Language Game" (to be distributed)
- 3/31 catch-up

**Foundations**

- 4/5 Frege, "The Thought"
- 4/7 Tarski, "The Semantic Conception of Truth..."; Davidson, "Truth and Meaning"
- 4/12 [Something on deflationism?][Something by Dummett?][Hempel?]

- 4/14 Grice, "Meaning"
- 4/19 Lewis, "Languages and Language" (maybe skip)
- 4/21 Quine, "Translation and Meaning"
- 4/26 Davidson, "Belief and the Basis of Meaning"
- 4/28 Kripke, "On Rules and Private Language"
- 5/3 Millikan, "Truth Rules, Hoverflies, and the Kripke-Wittgenstein paradox"
- 5/5 catch-up (*longer paper due*)