

PHILOSOPHY 37600-01
SELECTED TOPICS: PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE
SPRING 2008

Brendan Murday

E-mail: bmurday@ithaca.edu (This is the best way to reach me).
Course Webpage: via WebCT.
Office / Mailbox: Dillingham G9B
Office Phone: x47029. (Email is a much more reliable way to contact me).
Office Hours: MW 2:00 - 3:00, Th 11:00 - 12:00, and by appt.

Section 01: TR 9:35 am - 10:50 am Dillingham 6

Texts:

The Philosophy of Language, 5th edition, A.P. Martinich, ed., OUP 2008.
Philosophy of Language: A Contemporary Introduction, William G. Lycan, Routledge 2007.

Course Requirements:

You will be assessed in ONE of the following THREE ways; you will choose which option you wish to elect. [You will choose individually, not as a class]:

Option A:

- 1 term paper (approximately 3000 words). [44% of final grade]
- 4 weeklies (approximately 750 words each). [each counting 11% of final grade]
- class participation. [12% of final grade]

Option B:

- 1 term paper (approximately 3000 words). [44% of final grade]
- 2 exams (midterm and final). [midterm: 20%; final exam: 24%]
- class participation. [12% of final grade]

Option C:

- 4 weeklies (approximately 750 words each). [each counting 11% of final grade]
- 2 exams (midterm and final). [midterm: 20%; final exam: 24%]
- class participation. [12% of final grade]

Details about exams:

Times: they will take place in-class; the midterm will occur on the Thursday before Spring Break, and the final during the designated final exam slot.

Format: short-answer and essay.

Preparation: you will get some sort of review sheet in advance.

Details about the term paper:

Due date: the final exam slot for this class; the paper may be submitted by e-mail or in person.

The topic is your choice, though I would expect that you pick a topic from the ones we cover in class. If you wish to write on one of the topics we don't address in class, you should consult with me prior to submitting the paper.

I will be looking for original ideas in the paper. You are free to consult outside sources (though it would be wise to tell me in advance what sources you are considering, since I may be able to give you some suggestions), but this paper should *not* be a mere summary of other people's work, regardless how famous or dead they are. As a starting point, for many of the topics on the syllabus I will post additional sources on webCT that you could consult (in some cases, these sources are listed as optional readings on the syllabus). If you are having any difficulties getting your hands on a source, talk to me – in many cases I have the relevant book or article in my office already. [In particular, if there is an IC library book in philosophy of language that is listed as checked out, it is almost certainly me who has it.]

You are encouraged to discuss your ideas with other students, but your paper should be your own work.

All references should be properly documented. [The library website contains guides on bibliographies and in-text citations. I am not wedded to MLA or APA styles, but I expect that I will be able to easily find any reference you use (I shouldn't have to do detective work to determine the source), and any time you quote or refer to a reading you should indicate a page number.] You should review the college's policies on academic dishonesty, which I have appended to the syllabus.

If you wish to submit a draft, you should do so by the last day of classes.

If you are looking for further outside resources, there are two places I recommend: Philosopher's Index, a database accessible through the library website through the Databases portal, and the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, which you can find via google (or by typing in one of the corresponding URLs listed among the optional readings on this syllabus). Do NOT expect Wikipedia to be helpful – most of the philosophy pages on Wikipedia are of very poor quality.

Details about weeklies:

There are four due dates staggered throughout the semester to prevent excessive procrastination. The 750 word count is just a suggestion; you may exceed that if you find it necessary. But a 250 word paragraph does not constitute a good weekly.

Due dates:

- 1st weekly: Friday Feb 15th.
- 2nd weekly: Friday March 22nd.
- 3rd weekly: Friday April 11th.
- 4th weekly: Friday May 2nd.

Weeklies may be submitted by email.

I will expect that the topic for any given weekly will be something that we have already covered in class, but if you wish to write about something we haven't covered (or some topic not on the syllabus but within the discipline), I may be willing to accommodate you, so long as you discuss it with me in advance of submission. The topic need not be something we have just covered – you could write your final weekly on a topic covered early in the semester if you wish, for instance.

I do not typically take drafts for weeklies; they are not intended to be formal papers (though you should take care to express yourself clearly, which requires attention to grammar, spelling, and editing). But if you wish to run an idea by me in person or by email, I will be happy to discuss it.

Details about participation:

You will be graded according to the quantity and quality of your questions, comments, etc. participation incorporates attendance, talking in class, e-mailed questions/comments, and conversations with me outside of class. Because participation is an important element of a seminar-style class, absences from class will negatively affect your participation grade. The determination of the participation grade is naturally somewhat subjective, but the rough idea is that everyone starts with an 80 [equivalent to a B-], and you can bring it up (or down) from there by participating throughout the semester.

Accommodations:

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, reasonable accommodation will be provided to students with documented disabilities on a case by case basis. Students must register with the Office of Academic Support Services and provide appropriate documentation to the college before any academic adjustment will be provided.

Academic Dishonesty:

I encourage students to share philosophical ideas with one another. However, some practices are not permitted. The College states in the student conduct code:

“Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else's published or unpublished ideas, whether this use consists of directly quoted material or paraphrased ideas.

Although various disciplines follow styles of documentation that differ in some details, all forms of documentation make the following demands:

- * That each quotation or paraphrase be acknowledged with footnotes or in-text citation;
- * That direct quotations be enclosed in quotation marks and be absolutely faithful to the wording of the source;
- * That paraphrased ideas be stated in language entirely different from the language of the source;
- * That a sequence of ideas identical to that of a source be attributed to that source;
- * That all the sources the writer has drawn from in paraphrase or direct quotation or a combination of paraphrase and quotation be listed at the end of the paper under "Bibliography," "References," or "Works Cited," whichever heading the particular style of documentation requires.

A student is guilty of plagiarism if he/she fails, intentionally or not, to follow any of these standard requirements of documentation.”

Readings:

NOTE: I make no commitments about what we will get through. We will not cover everything listed here; how quickly we move through the topics, which ones we cover, and the order we cover them, will be determined in part by your interests. Starred topics will definitely be covered.

All primary readings are contained in the Martinich anthology unless otherwise noted; the Lycan readings are from the Lycan text.

*I. Sense and Reference

- reading: Frege, ‘On Sense and Nominatum’.
Russell, ‘On Denoting’.
Russell, ‘Descriptions’.
Donnellan, ‘Reference and Definite Descriptions’.
Mill, ‘On Names’.
Kripke, ‘Naming and Necessity’.
Putnam, ‘Meaning and Reference’.
Lycan, chapters 2-4.

Optional: Strawson, 'On Referring'.
Russell, 'Mr. Strawson on Referring'.
Loar, 'The Semantics of Singular Terms'. [webCT]
Evans, 'The Causal Theory of Names'.
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/reference/>
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/descriptions/>

*II. Theories of Meaning

reading: Grice, 'Meaning'.
Lycan, chapter 5.
Lycan, chapter 8.

Optional: Lycan, chapters 6-7, 9-10.
Quine, 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism'.
Hempel, 'Empiricist Criteria of Cognitive Significance: Problems and Changes'.

III. Theories of Truth

reading: Schmitt, *Truth: A Primer* (selections). [webCT]

Optional: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/truth-coherence/>
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/truth-correspondence/>
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/truth-deflationary/>

*IV. Propositional Attitudes

reading: Quine, 'Quantifiers and Propositional Attitudes'
Kripke, 'A Puzzle about Belief'.

Optional: Saul, 'Substitution and Simple Sentences'. [webCT]
McKay, 'On Proper Names in Belief Ascriptions'. [webCT]
Crimmins and Perry, 'The Prince and the Phone Booth: Reporting Puzzling Beliefs'. [webCT]
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/prop-attitude-reports/>

V. Meaning and Implicature

reading: Grice, 'Logic and Conversation'.
Lycan, chapter 13.

Optional: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/implicature/>

VI. Performative Utterances

reading: Austin, 'Performative Utterances'.

Optional: TBA.

VII. Metaphor

readings: Davidson, 'What Metaphors Mean'.
Lycan, chapter 14.

Optional: Martinich, 'A Theory of Metaphor'.

VIII. Indicative Conditionals

reading: Sanford, *If P, then Q* (selections). [webCT]

Optional: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/conditionals/>

[IX. Subjunctive Conditionals

readings: Bennett, *A Philosophical Guide to Conditionals* (selections). [webCT]]

X. Indeterminacy of Translation

reading: Quine, 'Translation and Meaning'.

Optional: TBA.

XI. Meaning Skepticism

reading: Kripke, 'On Rules and Private Language'.

Optional: TBA.

XII. Conceptual Holism / Atomism

reading: Fodor and LePore, *Holism: A Shopper's Guide* (selections). [webCT]

Optional: TBA.