This course will introduce you to some major issues in the theory of linguistic meaning from a quasi-historical approach. We will also look at the philosophical study of language as well as the philosophical problems that such studies purport to illuminate, solve, or dissolve. We will discuss referential theories of meaning originating with Frege and Russell, use-theories of meaning associated with Austin and Strawson, Grice’s theory of implicature, truth-conditional theories of meaning, and the theory of direct reference. Philosophical problems will include ontology and essence, knowledge of objects, the nature of truth, and necessity and a priority. The course will give you a strong grounding in the development of philosophy of language in the 20th century, as well as introduce you to the problems that philosophers of language study today.


Additional Articles on Blackboard Readings and E-Reserves.

**Requirements:** There will be two papers, about 2000 words each, and a take-home final exam. Study questions will be handed out in advance of the final exam. Students interested in the philosophy of language may write a 12-15 page paper in lieu of the final exam. Topics must be discussed with instructor.
Reading Schedule
(Any changes will be announced in class.)

Sept. 3rd, Overview of Philosophy of Language, Introduction to Frege’s metaphysical program.

Week 1: Sept. 8th, 10th, Sense Determines Reference
Sept. 8th: Frege’s “On Sense and Nominatum” (change “Nominatum” to “Reference” throughout the article), in Martinich.

Week 2: Sept. 15th, 17th, Referentialism and Ontology
Sept. 15th: Frege’s “The Thought: A Logical Inquiry” Skip §on Dr. Gustav Lauben, in Martinich.

Week 3: Sept. 22nd, 24th, Meinong, Russell and Definite Descriptions

Week 4: Sept. 29th, Oct 1st, Russellian Epistemology and Metaphysics
Sept. 29th: Russell’s “Appearance, Reality, and Knowledge by Acquaintance”, from Problems of Philosophy, on Blackboard E-Reserves, Excerpts from The Philosophy of Logical Atomism, pp. 49-63, on Blackboard E-Reserves.
Oct. 1st: Ayer, Chapters 1, 2, 3 from Language, Truth, and Logic.

Week 5: Oct. 6th, 8th, Verificationism and Meaning Holism
Oct. 8th: Quine’s “Two Dogmas of Empiricism” §1-3, 5-6 in Martinich. First papers due.

Week 6: Oct. 13th, 15th, Ordinary Language and Use-Theories
Oct 13th: More on Quine’s Two Dogmas

Fall Break

Week 7: Oct. 27th, 29th, Use-Theories of Meaning
Oct. 27th: Strawson’s “Meaning and Truth”, on Blackboard.
Oct. 29th: Austin, excerpts from Sense and Sensibilia on Blackboard E-Reserves.
Week 8: Nov. 3rd, Nov. 5th, Grice and Conversational Implicature
Nov. 3rd: Grice’s “Logic and Conversation” in Martinich. “Prolegomena” and “Further Notes” from Grice’s Studies in the Way of Words on Blackboard E-Reserves.
Nov. 5th: Second paper topics distributed.

Week 9: Nov. 10th, 12th, Semantics in light of Graice
Nov. 10th: Donnellan, “Reference and Definite Descriptions”, in Martinich.
Nov. 12th: Kripke’s “Speaker’s Reference and Semantic Reference” on Blackboard E-Reserves.

Week 10: Nov. 17th, 19th, Names and Rigid Designation
Nov. 17th: Kripke’s “Naming and Necessity”, in Martinich.
Nov. 19th: Kripke continued: Second papers due.

Week 11: Nov. 24th, 26th Indexicality and Context-Sensitivity
Nov. 26th: Lewis’ “Scorekeeping in a Language Game” on Blackboard. Second papers returned.

Week 12: Dec. 1st, 3rd, Direct Reference and the Problem of Propositional Attitudes
Dec. 3rd: Kripke’s “A Puzzle about Belief”, in Martinich.

Week 13: Dec. 8th, Speaking and Meaning

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities who are registered with the Office of Disability and Support Services. Students in need of disability accommodations should schedule an appointment with me early in the semester to discuss any accommodations for this course which have been approved by the Office of Disability and Support Services, as indicated in your DSS accommodation letter.