

Professor Elisabeth Camp

*Office:* 426 Cohen Hall

*Office Hours:* Wednesdays 12-2 and by appointment

*Email:* campe@sas.upenn.edu

The only book to be purchased is Kripke's *Naming and Necessity*, which will be available at the Penn Book Center. All other readings will be posted on Blackboard.

### Course Description

In this course we will ask how language works. How do speakers use sounds and shapes to make claims, promises, and threats? How do words and sentences connect to the world? In particular, what makes a word refer to an object or property, and what determines when a sentence is true or false? And how do speakers exploit conventional linguistic meaning for alternative ends, as in figurative speech, fiction, or lies or slurs? We will approach these questions by reading classic texts by Frege, Russell, Austin, Grice, Kripke, and others; but we will also apply these readings to actual, everyday linguistic contexts. Some comfort with basic first-order predicate logic will be required, but no previous experience with formal logic is assumed: I will explain all the relevant symbolism in class.

### Course Goals

What should you take away from this course in the long term: say, in five years? You should understand how philosophers today approach language: what they do (and don't) care about and why, and how this has played out in one central strand of the history of analytic philosophy. You should be able to read philosophical texts closely and critically, and be able to extrapolate and evaluate a dialectic among related papers. And most importantly, you should have learned to think more deeply and systematically about what language is and how it works, in a way that allows you to interact with discussions of language in neighboring fields, like linguistics, and with neighboring areas of philosophy, like mind and metaphysics.

### Course Requirements

- One short paper, 4-5 pages (20% of course grade).
- One medium paper, 5-6 pages (25% of course grade).
- One final paper, 12-15 pages (35% of course grade).
- Participation in class and on Blackboard (20% of course grade).
- Always bring the text to class, since we'll often be going through it in some detail.

As much as possible, this course will be conducted through vigorous discussion. The more effort you invest in preparing for class, the more useful and enjoyable class will be for everyone. I will post study questions for each reading on Blackboard; these should help you focus your attention and prompt your own questions. For *each* class, you should make sure you can answer these questions. You should also email me at least one question of your own, with the subject line '405 Question', by 8:00 the night before class. If you must miss class, you should make up the absence by writing a short response (less than a page) to one of the questions.

Except in extreme conditions, extensions on papers must be granted well before the due date and are granted at my discretion; late papers will be downgraded 1/3 letter grade per day.

You are expected to be familiar with and to abide by Penn's policy on academic and intellectual integrity: [upenn.edu/provost/PennBook/academic\\_integrity\\_code\\_of](http://upenn.edu/provost/PennBook/academic_integrity_code_of)

*Some useful online resources:*

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: [plato.stanford.edu](http://plato.stanford.edu)

A Glossary of Linguistic Terms: [sil.org/linguistics/GlossaryOfLinguisticTerms/](http://sil.org/linguistics/GlossaryOfLinguisticTerms/)

Language Log: [languagelog.ldc.upenn.edu/nll/](http://languagelog.ldc.upenn.edu/nll/)

**Schedule of Readings (*very much subject to revision!*)**

- W 1/11     **Introduction**  
 Carroll: *Through the Looking Glass*, ch. 6  
 Wittgenstein: *Investigations*, §§1-16

**Meaning, Convention, and Communication**

- W 1/18     Locke: "Of Words"  
 Mill: "Of Names"  
 M 1/23     Grice: "Meaning"  
 W 1/25     Grice cont'd  
 M 1/30     Austin: "Performative Utterances"  
 Searle: "A Taxonomy of Illocutionary Acts"  
 W 2/1      Brandom: "Asserting"  
 M 2/6      Brandom cont'd

**First Paper Topics Handed Out****Sense, Reference, and Descriptions**

- W 2/8      Frege: "On Sense and Reference"  
 M 2/13     Frege cont'd  
 W 2/15     Frege: "Function and Concept"  
 M 2/20     Russell: "On Denoting," "Descriptions"  
**FIRST PAPER DUE**  
 W 2/22     Russell cont'd

**Semantics and Pragmatics**

- M 2/27     Strawson: "On Referring"  
 Russell: "Mr. Strawson on Referring"  
 W 2/29     Donnellan: "Reference and Definite Descriptions"  
**3/5-7      SPRING BREAK**  
 M 3/12     Kripke: "Speaker's Reference and Semantic Reference"  
**Second Paper Topics Handed Out**  
 W 3/14     Grice: "Logic and Conversation"  
 M 3/19     Grice cont'd  
 W 3/21     Davidson: "A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs"

**Names and Metaphysics**

- M 3/26     Kripke: *Naming and Necessity*, Lecture 1  
**SECOND PAPER DUE**  
 W 3/28     Kripke ch. 1 cont'd  
 M 4/2      Kripke: *Naming and Necessity*, Lecture 2  
 W 4/4      Kripke ch. 2 cont'd  
 M 4/9      Kripke: *Naming and Necessity*, Lecture 3

**'Other' speech (e.g. slurs, lies, metaphor, sarcasm, fiction; TBD by group)**

- W 4/11  
 M 4/16  
 W 4/18  
 M 4/23  
 W 4/25     Review and Conclusion  
**Final Paper Topics Handed Out**  
**W 5/8      FINAL PAPERS DUE**