Creativity in Language Use  
Elisabeth Camp, Ernie Lepore and Matthew Stone  
Crosslisted as 730:570 (Seminar in the Philosophy of Language) and  
185:601 (Seminar in Cognitive Science)

Course Meeting:  
Thursdays, 1:10-4:10  
106 Somerset St (Gateway Building), 5th floor seminar room, room 524B

Instructor Contacts:  
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Course Outline:  
This course will explore ways in which speakers and listeners (and authors and readers) act creatively in using language. We will pay special attention to the ways in which they respond to and manipulate nuanced aspects of syntactic, lexical, and discourse structure in order to achieve communicative, aesthetic, and other ends. Topics include ambiguity resolution and neologisms, figurative speech (metaphor, sarcasm and irony), and linguistic art (poetry and fiction). We welcome students with a broad range of interests, though some familiarity with standard theories of meaning (in particular, Grice and Lewis) will be assumed.

All readings will be posted on Sakai.

Course Requirements:  
• Weekly readings; attendance; and active, sustained participation—even for auditors.  
• A substantial paper, 20-25 pages long; electronic submission preferred. We will consider accepting a project in lieu of a paper for students from technical or artistic disciplines. Contact us if you are interested in pursuing this option.

Schedule of Topics and Readings (subject to change!)

1/23. Introduction

1/30. Creativity [MS]  

2/6. Creativity [EC]  
2/13. Creativity in AI and Language [MS]

2/20. Intentions in meaning [EL]

2/27. Conventions in meaning [EL]

3/6. Ambiguity resolution [EL]
[Hobbs: Long MS with formal details for “Abduction in Natural Language Understanding”]

3/13. Neologism [MS]

3/20: NO CLASS; Spring Break

3/27. Irony and Sarcasm [EC]


4/3. **Projective Meaning and Literary Creativity [MS]**


4/10. **Metaphor [EL]**


4/17. **Poetry [EC]**


4/24. **Fiction and Narrative Structure [EC]**


Cumming: “Narrative and Point-of-View”

[Mink: “History and Fiction as Modes of Comprehension,” *New Literary History* 1:3 (1970), 541-558.]

5/1: **Wrap-up**