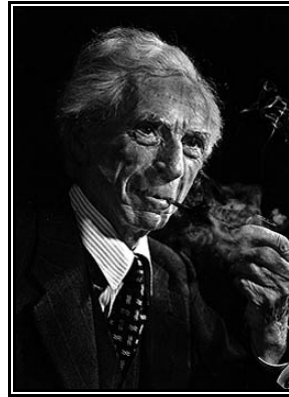
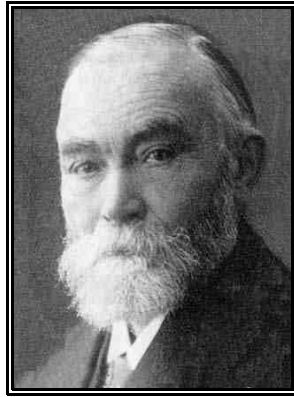


Logic & Philosophy of Science 145/245 Philosophy 145/245
PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

Robert May
SST-779; x. 45442
<http://kleene.ss.uci.edu/~rmay>

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Office Hours: T/Th 3:30 - 4:10
RMAY@uci.edu



There's an amazing thing about language. By its use, we can come to believe something just by hearing about it, just by having it asserted to be the case, without ever experiencing it. Why does language have this magical and wonderful property? The standard answer is that this is possible because language is meaningful. The philosophy of language is concerned with explicating this answer. It goes about this task by analyzing language so as to understand (i) its logical structure, and (ii) how it may be used to satisfy the communicative intentions of speakers. It is thus concerned with such things as what can be significantly said in language about the world, and how people function linguistically so as to express their thoughts. The analysis of language so conceived has been taken over time as a window to such things as the nature of thought, reasoning, action, and science, as well as being intimately intertwined with views of metaphysics and epistemology. Thus, the philosophy of language is set at the intersection of diverse areas of inquiry, including the philosophies of mind, action, and science, logic, and linguistic theory. But, although there are many crosscurrents in the philosophy of language, there is a recognized historical development of the area, as well as a canon of literature. While there are any number of ancient, medieval and modern threads, it is universally recognized that the starting points of contemporary thought are the ideas formulated by Frege and Russell around the turn of the 20th century. It is this tradition that we will be exploring in this course, in which we will trace the development of ideas about the issue that has been at the core of the philosophy of language, the nature of meaning, and its relation to truth and reference.

COURSE STRUCTURE: The class will be conducted in the form of discussion of the assigned readings. *It is imperative that students have read the assigned reading prior to the class in which it is to be discussed.* Students are expected to regularly contribute to, and at times lead, the class discussion.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: All students are to choose two papers from the Ludlow reader that have not been discussed in class, and write short (no more than 5 page) critical reviews of each. (Papers not in the Ludlow reader may be used instead with approval of the instructor.) One paper is due October 26th, the other November 30th (last day of class). You must submit for approval the title of the paper you wish to write about for the first paper, along with an alternate selection, on October 12th; for the second paper on November 16th.

Graduate students: An additional term paper on a topic of your choosing. Title, outline and short bibliography are due for approval October 26th; paper is due last day of exam week.

Course grading will reflect quality of both written material and classroom participation.

Drop cards normally will not be signed after the third week of classes.

READINGS: Most of the assigned readings to be discussed will be found in P. Ludlow ed., *Readings in the Philosophy of Language*, (MIT Press, 1997). Readings marked with † can be downloaded via links on the web version of the syllabus.

SYLLABUS:

I. *What are meanings?* (Week 1 - 3)

1. Frege "The Thought" (*See warning below*)
2. Wittgenstein Excerpt from *The Blue and Brown Books*
3. †Tarski "[The Semantic Conception of Truth and the Foundations of Semantics](#)"
4. Davidson "Truth and Meaning"

II. *Fregean & Russellian Foundations* (Week 4 - 5)

1. Frege "On Sense and Reference"
2. †Russell "[On Denoting](#)" (*See warning below*)

III. *Descriptions & Demonstratives* (Week 6 - 7)

1. Strawson "On Referring"
2. Donnellan "Reference and Definite Descriptions"

IV. *The "New" Theory of Reference* (Week 7 - 9)

1. †Kripke "[Identity and Necessity](#)"
2. Kripke "Speaker's Reference and Semantic Reference"
3. Kripke "A Puzzle About Belief"

V. *Language and Conversation* (Week 10)

1. †Grice "[Logic and Conversation](#)" and "[Further Notes on Logic and Conversation](#)"

VI. *TBA* (Week ??)

Warning: Frege's "The Thought" and Russell's "On Denoting" each contain a famously difficult and confusing passage. In "The Thought" it is the passage about Dr. Gustav Lauben and friends; in "On Denoting" it is the "Grey's Elegy Argument." Please read over these when reading the essays, but do not get bogged down in them; we will spend time going over both in class.