PHIL 353: Philosophy of Language
Fall 2018

Professor M. Glanzberg
T/TH 12:30-1:50
Kresge 2-430
Office Hours: T 2:00-3:00, TH 11:00-12:00

Department of Philosophy
Office: Kresge 3433
847-491-4452
m-glanzberg@northwestern.edu

Overview
Language is a familiar part of our everyday lives, but it is also an important topic in philosophy. In this course, we will explore some of the fundamental philosophical issues that surround language. We will investigate what makes a language what it is, by investigating the nature of linguistic meaning, the range of special actions we can perform in virtue of having a language, and the ways language can frame thoughts about the world around us. We will also investigate what it is to know something so complicated as a human language, by investigating the nature of linguistic rules, and the kinds of cognitive states that comprise knowledge of language. As time permits, we will also examine some additional topics, such as how language can express vague or imprecise ideas.

Course Objectives
Students will be expected to understand the basic issues and ideas in philosophy of language, and to master a range of tools and techniques used in philosophical approaches to language. They will be expected to able to apply these to specific problems in philosophy of language.

Books

Grades
Final grades will be based on two midterms (30% each) and a final project (40%). Final project options will include a final paper (of about 7 pages), a take-home final exam, or other options you may discuss with professor Glanzberg.

Policies
All papers and take-home projects must be submitted via Turnitin on the course Canvas site. Unexcused late papers will be penalized a half-grade for every twenty-four hours late. (This includes the weekend, since electronic submission is always available to you.)

Final projects due: Wednesday, December 12.

Any student with a disability requesting accommodations is required to register with Services for Students with Disabilities (ssd@northwestern.edu; 847-467-5530) and present an accommodation letter from SSD to his/her professor, preferably within the first two weeks of class. All discussions will remain confidential.
Tentative Schedule (we can change this if we like)

1. September 27  
   Introduction, Chomsky, Language and Problems of Knowledge

2. October 2  
   Chomsky, continued  
   October 4  
   Davidson, Truth and Meaning

3. October 9  
   Davidson continued  
   October 11  
   Partee, Semantics: mathematics or Psychology (TBP)

4. October 16  
   Midterm 1  
   October 18  
   Kripke, Excerpts from Naming and Necessity

5. October 23  
   Austin, Performative Utterances  
   October 25  
   Grice, Logic and Conversation

6. October 30  
   Grice continued  
   November 1  
   Grice, Meaning

7. November 6  
   Grice continued  
   November 8  
   Wittgenstein, from Philosophical Investigations

8. November 13  
   Midterm 2  
   November 15  
   Lewis, Languages and Language

9. November 20  
   Lewis continued  
   November 22  
   Thanksgiving. No class

10. November 27  
    Fara, Shifting Sands  
    November 29

    December 4  
    Reading period  
    December 6  

    December 12  
    Final paper/project due