

PHIL 4510

PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

Instructor Info

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Office Hours: 11:30 am to 12:30 pm Tuesday and Thursday
and by appointment.

Topics & Readings

Topic: The main focus will be controversies over truth-in-virtue-of-meaning, analyticity, the a priori, logical necessity, conceptual necessity, metaphysical necessity, natural necessity, etc. We will consider whether there are such things and how they are different from each other and from plain old truth. Other issues such as the following will be considered as they relate to this general problem area: meanings of proper names, rigid designators, the nature of meaning, 2-dimensional semantics, etc.

Reading: Saul Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, plus a selection of articles

Course Work

Due Date

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| 1. Short critique: approx 5-8 pp.
Topic: Analytic, A Priori, etc. | 30% | October 26 |
| 2. Longer term paper: approx 8-15 pp.
Your choice of topics | 60% | December 14 |
| 3. Class participation: | 10% | |

Nature of Assignments

Essays: See separate handout. Marks for essays will be influenced both by philosophical content and by writing skills. You can expect comments on both.

Class Participation: Primary weight goes to the *quantity* of relevant participation, i.e., how frequently do you ask relevant questions and make relevant comments? Lesser weight goes to *quality* of participation, i.e., how brilliant and/or incisive are your comments and questions? In practice, class participation often decides borderline cases where the marks on essays are close to the border between two different letter grades.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. *What is the final deadline for handing in essays?* No essays will be accepted for credit after Dec 14, 2011 (i.e. one week after the last class).
2. *Must my essay be typed?* Essays must be typewritten. *Untyped papers lose 1/2 letter grade.*
3. *Do you grade on a curve?* No. But final marks in all Philosophy courses are subject to review by the departmental Vetting Committee.
4. *What is your policy on plagiarism?* If you have not already done so, you should read the sections in the University General Calendar entitled 'plagiarism and cheating' and 'examination impersonation'. All suspected cases of plagiarism are referred to the Head of the Philosophy Department.