

The Philosophy of Language

PHIL 3321-001 Philosophy of Language
PHIL 6394-001 Topics in Systematic Philosophy

Spring 2015

Instructor: K. Williford

Meeting Time: MW 4:00PM-5:20PM

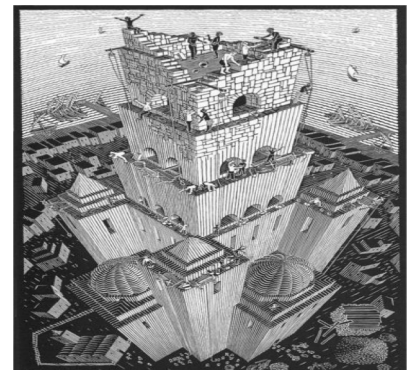
Meeting Place: Preston Hall (PH) 302

Office Hours:

MW 2:00-3:30PM & by appointment

Dr. Kenneth Williford
Carlisle Hall 305
(817) 272-0505
williford@uta.edu

Department of Philosophy and Humanities
Carlisle Hall 305
(817) 272-2764
<http://www.uta.edu/philosophy/>



Tower of Babel, M.C. Escher
Woodcut, 1928

Course Description: This course is a high-level introduction to the themes and theories of analytical philosophy of language. We will cover theories of reference, theories of meaning, and theories of truth. We will cover the tripartite distinction between semantics, syntax, and pragmatics from a philosophical point of view. We will discuss general theories about the nature of language and linguistic representation. We will discuss the complicated relationship between linguistic meaning and psychological meaning. We will discuss the complicated relationship between logical forms and grammatical forms. We will discuss the role of the philosophy of language in the history of analytical philosophy, its relation to linguistics, psychology and neuroscience, and its relation to the philosophy of mind and to phenomenology. Among the philosophers, linguists, and logicians whose work we will read or discuss are Bertrand Russell, Gottlob Frege, Edmund Husserl, Ludwig Wittgenstein, W.V.O. Quine, Alfred Tarski, Rudolf Carnap, J.L. Austin, Paul Grice, Donald Davidson, Hilary Putnam, Saul Kripke, David Lewis, and Noam Chomsky.

Student Learning Outcomes: Successful students will gain an understanding of the history of modern philosophy of language, from the late 19th century to the present and be able to articulate and critically evaluate the major theories of reference, meaning, truth, speech acts, and metaphor. Successful students will be able to apply the concepts and theories they have mastered in this course in their efforts to understand other areas of philosophy (especially metaphysics, epistemology, and philosophy of mind) and be able to demonstrate this grasp in their argumentative essays. Successful students will also be able to articulate and critically evaluate a variety of views about the relationships between philosophy of language, psychology, neuroscience, and linguistics. They will also be able to articulate and assess different views about the traditional tripartite distinction between syntax, semantics, and pragmatics.

Prerequisites: None, but courses in Philosophy, Logic, and Linguistics are helpful.

Required Texts:

Philosophy of Language: A Contemporary Introduction (2nd ed.) by William G. Lycan

This text should be available at the UTA Bookstore.

Other readings will be made available through Blackboard. See the Tentative Schedule for a listing of the other readings.

Evaluation:

There will be multiple, small in-class “pop” quizzes over the reading material, one take-home mid-term exam, an in-class final exam, and two small (3-5 page) argumentative papers. Attendance and participation will also figure into the final grade.

Attendance: If you have three unexcused absences, you cannot get a higher grade than a B in this class. If you have four unexcused absences, a C is the highest possible grade. If you have five, a D. If you have six, you cannot pass. In order for an absence to be excused you must provide me with documentation demonstrating that your absence was for a legitimate reason.

Quizzes, Attendance & Participation: Your quiz average and attendance and participation score will constitute 20% of your final grade.

Exams: There will be a take-home midterm exam and an in-class final exam. Each exam will count for 20% of your grade.

Small Argumentative Papers: There will be two small (3-5 page) argumentative papers. Each paper will count for 20% of your final grade. Details about my expectations for the papers will be given in class.

IMPORTANT POLICIES OF MINE

Blackboard: I will be using Blackboard in this class to post the syllabus, handouts, announcements, links, supplementary readings, slides, class notes, and any class recordings. Be sure to check it regularly. (<https://elearn.uta.edu/>)

Late Work: All late work will be docked a full letter grade for every day that it is late.

Laptops and Phones: In my class I do not allow students to use laptops, smartphones, or other electronic devices without special permission. Any note taking must be done the old fashioned way. If I see laptops or smart phones out during class, I will ask you to put them up. If you won't put your device away, I will ask you to leave class.

Homework for Other Courses: Students are not allowed to read for or do homework for other courses while in my class.

Incompletes: I will not give a student a grade of Incomplete (I), unless he or she has a compelling, and documented, reason (e.g., a medical emergency).

Plagiarism: No student should have any doubt about what counts as plagiarism. I will assume that every student in this class has seen this tutorial provided by the UTA library and have taken the quiz embedded in it: <http://library.uta.edu/plagiarism/index.php>. All cases of plagiarism will be turned over to the Office of Student Conduct.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Drop Policy: Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance.** Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://web.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

Americans with Disabilities Act: The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

Title IX: The University of Texas at Arlington is committed to upholding U.S. Federal Law "Title IX" such that no member of the UT Arlington community shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. For more information, visit www.uta.edu/titleIX.

Academic Integrity: Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.

I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents' Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university's standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the University.

Electronic Communication: UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

Student Feedback Survey: At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as "lecture," "seminar," or "laboratory" shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student's feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington's effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

Final Review Week: A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition,

instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

Emergency Exit Procedures: Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit, which is located [insert a description of the nearest exit/emergency exit]. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

Student Support Services: UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to resources@uta.edu, or view the information at www.uta.edu/resources.

Writing Center: The Writing Center, 411 Central Library, offers individual 40 minute sessions to review assignments, *Quick Hits* (5-10 minute quick answers to questions), and workshops on grammar and specific writing projects. Visit <https://uta.mywconline.com/> to register and make appointments. For hours, information about the writing workshops we offer, scheduling a classroom visit, and descriptions of the services we offer undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty members, please visit our website at www.uta.edu/owl/.

Subject Librarian:

Philosophy Stephanie Noell 817-272-7047 noell@uta.edu

<http://libguides.uta.edu/philosophy>

Tentative Schedule

As the instructor for this course, I reserve the right to adjust this schedule in any way that serves the educational needs of the students enrolled in this course. –Kenneth Williford

Abbreviation:

PL: *Philosophy of Language* by W. Lycan

All other readings listed here will be available on Blackboard.

Week 1

W1/21 Course Introduction, PL Ch.1

Week 2

M1/26 Definite Descriptions, PL Ch.2

W1/28 B. Russell's "On Denoting" and "Descriptions"

Week 3

M2/2 Proper Names and Descriptions, PL Ch.3

W2/4 G. Frege's "On Sense and Reference"
(**Paper #1 Assigned**)

Week 4

M2/9 Proper Names and Direct Reference, PL Ch.4

W2/11 S. Kripke's *Naming and Necessity*, Lects. 1&2 (**Paper #1 Due**)

Week 5

M2/16 Traditional Theories of Meaning, PL Ch.5

W2/18 B. Russell's "On Propositions"

Week 6

M2/23 "Use" Theories of Meaning, PL Ch. 6

W2/25 L. Wittgenstein, from *Blue and Brown Books* (**Take-Home Midterm Assigned**)

Week 7

M3/2 Grice's Program, PL Ch.7

W3/4 H.P. Grice's "Meaning"
(Midterm Due)

March 9-14 Spring Vacation**Week 8**

M3/16 Verificationism, PL Ch.8 & C.G. Hempel's
"Empiricist Criteria of Cognitive Significance"

W3/18 W.V. O. Quine's "Two Dogmas of
Empiricism"

Week 9

M3/23 Davidson's Program, PL Ch.9

W3/25 D. Davidson's "Truth and Meaning"

Week 10

M3/30 Intensional Semantics, PL Ch.10 & David
Lewis' "General Semantics" pp. 18-40

W4/1 D. Lewis' "General Semantics" pp. 40-67

F4/3 Last Day to Drop**Week 11**

M4/6 Semantic Pragmatics, PL Ch.11

W4/8 D. Kaplan's "Dthat"
(Paper #2 Assigned)

Important Dates

1/20 First Day of Classes

3/9-14 Spring Vacation

4/3 Last Day to Drop

5/8 Last Day of Classes

5/13 Our Final Exam

Week 12

M4/13 Speech Acts, PL Ch.12

W4/15 J.L. Austin's "Performative Utterances"
(Paper #2 Due)

Week 13

M4/20 Implicative Relations, PL Ch.13

W4/22 H.P. Grice's "Logic and Conversation"

Week 14

M4/27 Metaphor, PL Ch.14

W4/29 D. Davidson's "What Metaphors Mean"

Week 15

M5/4 Noam Chomsky's "Language and the
Problems of Knowledge"

W5/6 Noam Chomsky's "Language and the Brain"

F5/8 Last Day of Classes**Exam Week 5/9-15**

Final Exam: W5/13 2-4:30 in 302 Preston Hall

Emergency Phone Numbers: In case of an on-campus emergency, call the UT Arlington Police Department at **817-272-3003** (non-campus phone), **2-3003** (campus phone). You may also dial 911.