

Graduate Courses » Spring 2009

525 Philosophical Analysis: Speech Act Theory

Section	Day	Time	Instructor	Room	Reg Number
KEA	Tuesdays	1:00-2:50 PM	John Kearns	Park 141	159204

Although it may be possible to trace a concern with language and acts of using language to philosophers in earlier periods, and in non-English-speaking countries, we will understand speech act theory to have originated in the mid-twentieth century, primarily among English-language philosophers. We'll look at the problems, and the phenomena, to which speech act theory is a response. And we will consider the theories articulated and developed by J L Austin and John Searle, both to gain an understanding of these theories, and to determine how well they address the problems and capture the phenomena. We will also consider other, more recent, discussions of speech acts and of their importance for understanding language and its use.

528 Philosophy of Language

Section	Day	Time	Instructor	Room	Reg Number
MCG	Tuesdays	4:00-5:50 PM	Michael McGlone	Park 141	275943

This seminar will focus on propositional-attitude-ascribing sentences—e.g., ‘Copernicus believed that the planetary orbits were circles’ and ‘George IV wished to know whether Scott was the author of Waverly’—certain puzzles regarding such sentences, and the manner in which these puzzles are related to issues concerning the semantics of singular terms and the foundations of semantic theorizing.

There will be two parts to the course.

The first part will focus on historically significant discussions of attitude-ascribing sentences and related issues. Our first focus will be Gottlob Frege's (1889) views regarding such sentences, the nature of propositions, and the nature of semantics. Our second will be Bertrand Russell's (1905) views regarding these same matters. After that, we will discuss

W. V. Quine's (1957) attack on the coherence of sentences involving quantification into the complements of attitude-ascribing sentences—e.g., ‘Some man is such that Ralph believes that he is a spy’—and Saul Kripke's (1979) puzzles about belief. To wrap up this first part of the course, we will cursorily discuss a miscellany of further background issues. In doing so, we will (i) contrast Frege and Russell's conception of propositions with the more recently endorsed view that propositions are sets of possible worlds, (ii) contrast Frege and Russell's conception of semantics with various alternatives to it, and (iii) discuss David Kaplan's (1989) strategy for modifying Frege and Russell's conception of semantics so as to accommodate indexical and demonstrative expressions.

The second part of the course will focus on more recent accounts of attitude-ascribing sentences and the manner in which these accounts attempt to resolve certain classical puzzles discussed in the first part of the course and various additional ones as well. Where appropriate, we will discuss the consequences these accounts bear for the semantics of singular terms and the foundations of semantics. In this part of the course, we will discuss the views of such philosophers as Kent Bach, David Braun, Mark Crimmins, Graeme Forbes, David Lewis, Peter Ludlow, Ruth Barcan Marcus, John Perry, Mark Richard, Nathan Salmon, Stephen Schiffer, Scott Soames, David Sosa, and Robert Stalnaker.

Course Requirements

Students taking the seminar “intensively” will be required to take an exam on the theories of Russell and Frege, give at least one presentation, and complete a term paper that displays significant mastery of material discussed in seminar and course readings. Students taking the seminar “extensively” will be required to do the first two things just mentioned, but not the third.

References

Frege, Gottlob. “On Sense and Reference.” *Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Philosophische Kritik* 100 (1889): 25-50.
Kaplan, David. “Demonstratives.” J. Almog, J. Perry, and H. Wettstein, eds. *Themes from Kaplan*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.
Kripke, Saul. “A Puzzle About Belief.” *Meaning and Use*. Ed. A. Margalit. Dordrecht: Reidel, 1979: 239-83.

Quine, W. V. "Quantifiers and Propositional Attitudes" *Journal of Philosophy* 53 (1956): 177-187.
Russell, Bertrand. "On Denoting." *Mind* 14 (1905): 479-493.

535 Ethical Theories

Section	Day	Time	Instructor	Room	Reg Number
SHO	Mondays	3:00-4:50 PM	Kenneth Shockley	Park 141	211027

The subject matter of metaethics generally revolves around two basic issues: the objectivity of values and the truth-aptness of value claims. In this course we will consider these issues with an eye toward the particularism debate. In ethical theory particularism is the position that moral principles do not play a central role in ethical theories. Traditionally it has been thought that morality consists in the application of general principles to particular cases. Particularist approaches invert this relationship. Given the importance of relying on principles to typical models of moral judgment and discussions on the truth-aptness of value claims, the particularism debate provides an excellent lens through which a broad set of metaethical considerations can be examined.

544 Aesthetics

Section	Day	Time	Instructor	Room	Reg Number
KOR	Wednesdays	2:00-3:50 PM	Carolyn Korsmeyer	Park 141	083134

This seminar is designed to introduce advanced students to contemporary aesthetics. Like many philosophical problems, the major issues in aesthetics have been on the books for hundreds of years, though how they are addressed changes at different periods in history. This seminar will consider a number of such problems, pairing traditional theories with contemporary approaches, with the main focus on contemporary theory.

Topics to be covered include: (a) the concept and ontology of art (What is art? How is it different from "ordinary" artifacts?) (b) The nature of representation (Does art refer? Can it be true or false? How does it achieve meaning?) (c) The role of emotional arousal in aesthetic apprehension. (The appreciation of tragedy or horror requires the arousal of fear and disgust. But are we actually afraid or disgusted? Of what?) (d) What is artistic authenticity and [why] is it important? (Many museums replace fragile artifacts with replicas for the viewing public. Are replicas aesthetically equivalent to genuine works?) (d) The relation between aesthetic and other values.

Historical figures to be covered briefly include Plato, Aristotle, Burke, Kant, Nietzsche. Contemporary philosophers to be covered in more depth include Arthur Danto, Nelson Goodman, Kendall Walton, Jenefer Robinson, Noel Carroll, Walter Benjamin. Sundry additional writers will also be discussed.

(This course satisfies a breadth requirement in contemporary philosophy for philosophy PhD students.)

556 Topics in History of Philosophy

Section	Day	Time	Instructor	Room	Reg Number
KOC	Thursdays	12:00-1:50 PM	Hylarie Kochiras	Park 141	373851

This seminar focuses upon some problems addressed by early modern figures, particularly those related to the philosophy of science. Among those problems are the nature of substance, action, and causation, the proper extent of empiricism, and the role of rationalist or metaphysical principles in knowing about the world. Student presentations will figure prominently in the seminar.

The seminar is open to graduate students only.

579 Emmanuel Levinas: Ethics (Special Topics)

Section	Day	Time	Instructor	Room	Reg Number
COH	Wednesdays	12:00-1:50 PM	Richard Cohen	Park 141	063038

Emmanuel Levinas is recognized not only for being one of the greatest phenomenologists of the twentieth century but even more so for being the foremost ethical thinker of twentieth century continental philosophy. We will examine both dimensions of his thought, the phenomenological and the ethical, and do so by locating his

contributions within their proper intellectual context. We will also examine how Levinas's phenomenology challenges every one of Martin Heidegger's phenomenological analyses and, more profoundly, how his ethics fundamentally contests the entire Heideggerian project.

588 (Contemporary European Philosophy) Topics in Cont. Philosophy - Gadamer: Truth and Method

Section	Day	Time	Instructor	Room	Reg Number
CHO	Mondays	1:00-2:50 PM	Kah Kyung Cho	Park 141	096946

With Gadamer's Truth and Method, the long tradition of hermeneutics as an auxiliary discipline for text interpretation, including classical literature and Biblical exegesis, underwent a fundamental evolution in the 20th century. It secured a major niche in the edifice of philosophy with its bold claim that hermeneutic truth and knowledge are communicated "outside of the boundary of the method of science".

Gadamer does not reject the importance of methodological concerns. We can certainly clarify the implied plurality of methods practically employed in Gadamer's own thinking. He evokes Aristotle's authority to show that in phronesis "another kind of knowledge" is at work. At one point, he even openly declares that the method he largely identifies with is phenomenological.

Though Gadamer eventually elevates "practical philosophy" to the paradigm of all human sciences, his priority is not one of establishing scientific methodology for humanities. His primary concern is not about knowing what we do and how we do, but rather to understand what is happening to us in spite of our subjective intention of what we are doing. The opening of ourselves to this event(ful) character of happening is what distinguishes hermeneutic understanding from the subjective consciousness that strives to achieve objectivity, leaving nothing to chances. Hermeneutic understanding plays itself out in the open space of dialogue, in which fusion of our familiar horizon with the unfamiliar horizon of others occurs.

Thus the hermenutical experience of understanding necessarily entails the transformation of the inquiring subject on account of our situated acting in the medium of linguisticity and historicity.

Text: Hans-Georg Gadamer, Truth and Method, trans. Weinsheimer and Marshall,
Crossroad, New York, 2nd Edition
Other occasional handouts