PH 463/663 Philosophy of Language, Fall 2016

Professor Juliet Floyd, Boston University

Meetings: Tues., Thurs. 11-12:30pm, 745 Commonwealth Avenue, STH 541

Professor Juliet Floyd
Department of Philosophy, 745 Commonwealth Avenue, Room 503
617 353-3745, jfloyd@bu.edu
Office hours: Tues. 10-11am, Thurs. 2-4pm and by appointment.

Course Description:
A survey of classic and contemporary issues and debates in the philosophy of language. Topics include the nature of propositions and the nature of truth; literal vs. figurative uses of words; meaning, describing, and referring; prosody; language acquisition; speech act theory and communication pragmatics; gender in language, lying, bullshitting, misleading, and the uses of testimony.

Featured Visiting Speakers, Presenting Works and Research in Progress:

- Sudha Arunachalam (BU Sargent College of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, Linguistics, Psychological and Brain Sciences), Thursday, December 1, 2016. Professor Arunachalam is an expert on child language acquisition, especially nouns and verbs (http://www.bu.edu/sargent/profile/sudha-arunachalam-phd/).

- Yrsa Neumann (˚Abo Akademi, Finland, Faculty of Humanities, Psychology and Theology) Tuesday, November 1, 2016. Dr. Neumann is editor-in-chief of The Nordic Wittgenstein Review and Swedish editor and co-ordinator of Filosofia.fi/se, the Finnish national philosophy portal; she is also an expert on ordinary language philosophy generally, and issues of open access in the Humanities (http://www.abo.fi/fakultet/sv/Content/Document/document/34777).

Prerequisites:
PH 463: At least one philosophy course, PH 310, PH 360 or consent of instructor.
PH 663: None.

Website/URL: Go to learn.bu.edu. Please refer to this website for course handouts, announcements, readings, and the course syllabus.
Required Texts: (available at BU Barnes and Nobles in Kenmore Square):
• *How to Do Things With Words*, by J.L. Austin (Oxford, online at BU)
• *The Myth of Mars and Venus* by Deborah Cameron (Oxford University Press, 2009, on reserve at Mugar Library; not on OUP online)

Recommended Texts:
• *The Philosophy of Language*, eds. A.P. Martinich and David Sosa, 6th ed. (Oxford 2013, not online at BU)
• *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Language*, eds. Gillian Russell and Delia Graff Fara (Routledge 2012, on reserve)
• What is this Thing Called Philosophy of Language?, Gary Kemp (Routledge 2013)
• *A Companion to Philosophy of Language*, eds. Hale and Wright (Blackwell, 1997, on reserve)

Other Required and Recommended Texts are available on the Blackboard Site. None of the recommended readings are mandatory for undergraduates, though all are urged to read and comment on at least one contemporary piece in the course of the semester. Graduate students will be expected to read and comment on at least three contemporary pieces.

Helpful Websites:
Philosophy Compass, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Oxford Scholarship Online, PhilPapers, JSTOR

Requirements/Grades:

1. Postings
   Four short (1 page single-spaced) postings, at least one posted in each month of the course (no delayed postings will count). All will relate to class discussion, will be posted at least two days before the class meeting on the Blackboard website (hence, before 5pm Monday for Thurs. class), and will be judged on the basis of their role in our intellectual discussion, and in furthering argumentation and analysis. (30% of grade)

2. Exams
   • In-class exam, for PH 424 only Thursday, October 13, 2016 (10% of your grade)
   • Take-home Final Exam (8-10 pages PH 424, 15-25 pages PH 624) due Thursday December 15, 2016 by noon by e-mail to Professor Floyd. (30% of your grade). Graduate students in PH 622
will submit outline research material for their final essay project and meet with Prof. Floyd before the end of October to settle on a topic.

3. **Participation**
   All are expected to have done the reading before class, and to have read the Blackboard postings. Bring readings to class, as they will be discussed in detail. **Once a week, each student must post a question at least 2 days before class meets.** Each student should be prepared in each class with at least one question, and be prepared to participate in oral discussion. Students may also make further postings with comments and replies on the Blackboard site. You will be judged on the clarity, interest, and helpfulness of these contributions (30% of your grade). **PH 622** students are expected to pay the role of **Presenter** in at least one class, initiating and pursuing 15 minutes or so of discussion of the topic (10% of grade for this presentation). Signup for date is on Blackboard, on a Wiki.

4. **Optional Journal** Keep your journal in an electronic file, writing up thoughts about readings, discussion, or arguments as you go. Your journal cannot hurt your grade, but if showing serious work and thought, it can help it, boosting your final grade up to two steps.

**Late Policy** Unless arrangements are made in advance, Prof. Floyd will deduct 1/2 letter grade per day.

**Absences** More than two absences will affect a student’s grade, and should be discussed with Professor Floyd. Attendance is defined as signing the sign-in sheet distributed in class.

**Bookkeeping**

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**Electronic Submission Only** All work must be electronically submitted on the website or by e-mail to Professor Floyd.

**Formatting/Naming of Your Submissions:** For Postings: Please name each post in the form e.g. “lastnamePost1PH463.pdf”, last name and number of post in the title. Attach the file in PDF form to the thread point in the discussion where you are posting, and also copy and paste the content into the visible thread entry itself. Your name and e.g. “Post2PH463” should also be printed inside the text at the top of these files. For Questions: Not necessary to attach the pdf file, but again place your Name and “Question” at the top of the entry.

**Policies on written work and grading**
Ordinarily each student is expected to do B- level work; this is considered an
average grade in PH 424. Excellence is rewarded with higher grades. Students are reminded of B.U.’s policy concerning cheating on examinations and plagiarism in one’s written work, and are expected to know and understand the BU CAS Academic Conduct Code:

http://www.bu.edu/academics/cas/policies/academic-conduct/
or the Graduate School’s Academic Discipline Procedures

http://www.bu.edu/cas/students/grad-resources/forms/.

All cases of suspected academic misconduct will be referred to the Dean’s Office; Professor Floyd reserves the right to assign a failing grade on any plagiarized papers. Students are encouraged to discuss their work among themselves, and to share in the editing of one another’s writing, but all papers are expected to be single-authored.

**Schedule:**
May change in light of class discussion.

1. **9/6, 9/8/16: Logical Preliminaries, Frege’s Logic, Logicism**
   
   *Reading:*
   - Wittgenstein *Philosophical Investigations*, §§1-2
   - Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*, Chap. 6 “Humpty Dumpty”
   - Frege, *Begriffsschrift* (1879), selections, in Beaney, ed. *The Frege Reader*
   - Frege, *Foundations of Arithmetic*, Beaney ed. pp. 84-105 (through §54)
   
   *Recommended:*

2. **9/13, 9/15/16 Classical Descriptivism: Frege, the Context Principle**
   
   *Reading:*
   - Frege, “On Sinn and Bedeutung”
   
   *Recommended:*
   - Frege “Function and Concept”

3. **9/20, 9/22/16 Classical Descriptivism: Russell and Direct Reference**
   
   *Reading:*
   
   *Recommended:*
   - Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy* V, “Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description”; *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy* Chap. on Descriptions

   **BU Fall Lecture Colloquium, Qian Hu (MITRE), “Speech Technology and Applications”, 5:30pm in KCB (565 Comm. Ave. Room 101)**
4. 9/27, 9/29 Modal Scepticism, Essentialism, Reference
   Quine, “Reference and Modality” (1953), “Speaking of Objects” (1958)
   Recommended: Carnap, The Logical Syntax of Language (1934), §§72-81,
   Bokulich, “Pluto and the ‘Planet Problem’: Folk Concepts and Natural
   Kinds in Astronomy”, Perspectives on Science 224 (2014): 464-90

5. 10/4, 10/6 Classical Anti-Descriptivism:
   Modal, Epistemological and Semantic Arguments
   Reading: Kripke, Naming and Necessity, lecture 1, Putnam, “Meaning
   Recommended: Putnam, “The Meaning of ‘Meaning’” (1975), Soames,

6. 10/11/16 No class, Study/Workshop Day
   10/13/16 In-Class Exam for PH 422 only

7. 10/18, 10/20/16 Analyticity
   Reading: Quine, “Two Dogmas of Empiricism” (1953)
   Recommended: Grice and Strawson, “In Defense of a Dogma” (1956),
   Putnam, “The Analytic and the Synthetic” (1962), Quine “‘Two Dogmas’

8. 10/25, 10/27/16: A Priori/A Posteriori, Necessary/Contingent
   Kripke, Naming and Necessity, Lecture II
   Putnam “Rethinking Mathematical Necessity” (1990/1995)
   Recommended: Putnam, “It Ain’t Necessarily So” (1962), Soames, Philo-
   sophical Analysis in the 20th Century, vol 2, Chap. 16

9. 11/1/16 Yrsa Neumann (Bergen) Ordinary Language Philoso-
   phy
   186. Recommended Reading: Austin, “Performative Utterances”, in Col-
   lected Papers (Oxford), Chap VIII, “How to Do Things With Words”;
   “Performatives”, in Collected Papers

10. 11/3, 11/8/16 Indexicals, Demonstratives, Contextualism
    3-21; Wittgenstein, selections from Philosophical Investigations §§242-323;
    Travis, “A Day at the Supermarket” (work in progress)
    Recommended: Perry, “Frege on Demonstratives”, The Philosophical Re-
    view 86 (1977): 474-497, “Demonstratives” in Almog et.al. eds., Themes
    from Kaplan, May, “The Invariance of Sense”, Jour of Phil 102 (March

11. **11/10, 11/15/16** Implicature, Presupposition, Pragmatics

*Reading*: Grice, “Logic and Conversation”


12. **11/17, 11/22/16** Speech Acts

*Reading*: Austin, *How To Do Things with Words* Lecture VIII


Mark Richard, “Epithets and Attitudes”, from *When Truth Gives Out* (Oxford)


**11/24/2016** No Class, Thanksgiving Break

13. **11/29/16** Prosody, Gender and Language, Identity, Voice

See two Videos by Patel on Voice as a Unique Fingerprint (links on Blackboard site)

*Reading*: Cameron, *The Myth of Mars and Venus*


14. **12/1/16** Sudha Arunachalam (BU Sargent School, Linguistics)

Recent Work on Child Language-Acquisition: Nouns and Verbs

15. **12/6, 12/8/16** Norms of Assertion, Testimony, Lying, Deceiving, Misleading


*Recommended*: Frankfurt, “On Bullshit” (Princeton,2005), Lackey, “As-

16. 12/15/16 FINAL PAPERS DUE by noon