Meetings: Mondays 2:30-5:15pm, 745 Commonwealth Avenue, STH 115
Contact Information:
Professor Juliet Floyd, Department of Philosophy, 745 Commonwealth Avenue, #503
617 353-3745, jfloyd@bu.edu
Office hours: Tues. 3:15-4:15pm, Thurs. 3:15-5:15pm 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:
Liz Coppock (http://ling.bu.edu/people/coppock). Prof. Coppock’s research concerns the nature of meaning in natural language, and the principles yielding the meaning of a complex expression from the meanings of its parts. She approaches these questions through detailed study of particularly revealing phenomena including definiteness markers, exclusives, modified numerals, comparatives and superlatives, quantity words, egophors, and subjective attitude verbs. We will also attend up to three international conferences together that Professor Floyd is organizing.

Prerequisites:
PH 463: At least one philosophy course, PH 310, LX 331 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.

Reading:
Required Texts: (available at BU Barnes and Nobles in Kenmore Square):
- Cavell, Must We Mean What We Say?, 2nd ed. (Camb), ISBN 9781107534230
- Articles on website.

Recommended Texts:
- J.L. Austin, How to Do Things With Words (Oxford, 1979, online at BU)
- Deborah Tannen, You Just Don’t Understand! Women and Men in Conversation (Harper Collins, 1990)
- Charles Travis, Occasion Sensitivity: Selected Essays (Oxford 2008, Online at BU)
- Sandra Laugier, Why We Need Ordinary Language Philosophy Now (Chicago, 2013)

N.B.: 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.
Useful Anthologies for Further Reading in Standard “Philosophy of Language”:

- *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)
- *What is this Thing Called Philosophy of Language*?, Gary Kemp (Routledge 2013)

Helpful Websites:

Philosophy Compass, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Oxford Scholarship Online, PhilPapers

Requirements/Grades:

1. **Posts:**
   Three short (1 page single-spaced) postings in February, March and April (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 Saturday) and will be judged on the basis of their role in our intellectual discussion, and in furthering argumentation and analysis. (30% of grade) N.B.: Please name each posted document in the form e.g. “lastnamePost1PH463.pdf”, last name and number of post in the title. Attach the file in Word to the thread 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. “Post 1 PH463” should also be printed inside the text at the top of these files.

2. **Exams:**
   Take-home Final Exam (8-10 pages PH 463, 15-25 pages PH 663) due Friday May 10, 2019 by noon by e-mail to Professor Floyd. A 2-page research plan is due by Friday April 12, 2019 (feel free to meet with Prof. Floyd before this) (30% of your grade).

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 brief question on what we are to discuss (by Sat. evening). 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).

4. **Presentations.** All 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). Google Doc signup at: https://docs.google.com/document/d/154X9furOwE_YjnDvRt8iPjXSJR2q7F2BUPNTiasRY8U/edit

5. **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.
Expectations:

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

2. **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.

3. **Electronic Submission Only**: All work must be electronically submitted on the website or by e-mail to Professor Floyd, attaching a document named in a perspicuous way (e.g. “Smith PH 463 final exam”).

4. **Policies on written work and grading**: Ordinarily each student is expected to do B-level work; this is considered an average grade in PH 463. 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/](http://www.bu.edu/academics/cas/policies/academic-conduct/) or the Graduate School’s Academic Discipline Procedures: [https://www.bu.edu/cas/files/2017/02/GRS-Academic-Conduct-Code-Final.pdf](https://www.bu.edu/cas/files/2017/02/GRS-Academic-Conduct-Code-Final.pdf).

   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; **Conferences** marked with “*”.

I. **Lines in the Philosophy of Language: Pragmatism and Naturalism**

   1/28/19  Introduction, Overview of course. Two paradigms in philosophy of language.
   
   *Recommended*: Introduction to Laugier, *Why We Need Ordinary Language Philosophy Now*

   
   
   *Recommended*: Coming to conference Sunday afternoon; staying Monday through 6:15pm.

II. **Ordinary Language Philosophy: Connections with Literature and “High Words”**

   2/9-2/10/19*  *Recommended*: International **Conference**, *Must We Mean at Fifty? 50th anniversary celebration of Cavell’s Must We Mean What We Say?* Both days 9:30-5:30pm, KCILSE, 610 Commonwealth Ave, Room 101, conference website: [https://jfloyd11.wixsite.com/continuingcavell](https://jfloyd11.wixsite.com/continuingcavell)
   
   *Recommended*: Cavell, “Music Discomposed”, “Knowing and Acknowledging”, both in *Must We Mean What We Say?*

*Required:* Introduction, *The Matter of High Words* (online at BU, Oxford Scholarship Online)

- No class 2/18/19 – Monday Schedule at BU in light of President’s Day Holiday

2/19/19 Cavell, “Aesthetic Problems of Modern Philosophy” in *Must We Mean What We Say?*


### III. Frege: Logic and Truth

2/25/19 Frege, *Begriffsschrift* (1879); “Thought” (1918); Frege, “*Sinn* and *Bedeutung*” (1892)


- No classes 3/11/19-3/15/19, Spring Break at BU

### IV. Pragmatics


### V. Ethics and Ordinary Language Philosophy

3/25/19 *Required:* Austin, “A Plea for Excuses” (1956-7)


### VI. Indexicals and the First Person


Wittgenstein, selections from *Philosophical Investigations* §§242-323;

*Recommended:* Travis, “A Day at the Supermarket” (work in progress)

4/8/19 Liz Coppock, Presentation on *de se* knowledge.

*Required:* Reading Liz’s paper, preparing comments/questions for class.
VII. Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations*


**Final Paper Due: by noon, Friday May 10, 2019** by email to jfloyd@bu.edu. Please name your file in a perspicuous way.