

PHIL 398: Directed Study in Philosophy of Language

Time: Monday 11am
Room: French 104

Instructor: Robert Smithson
Email: rsmithson@rollins.edu
Office: French 104
Office Hours: By appt.

Course Description

This advanced independent study will provide an overview of topics in the philosophy of language, focusing especially on the concepts of *meaning*, *reference*, and *truth*. Throughout the course, we will consider how these concepts can help illuminate questions in other areas of philosophy, such as ethics, metaphysics, and philosophy of mind.

Course Goals

1. To provide the student with a conceptual framework for approaching questions in the philosophy of language; this framework is based on three main units: *names and reference*, *sentences and propositions*, and *meaning determination*.
2. To motivate the relevance of issues in the philosophy of language to other areas of philosophy, such as metaphysics, ethics, and philosophy of mind.

Course Texts

All texts for the course will be posted to the course's Blackboard site.

Honor Code

In this class, the Honor Code is taken very seriously and all infractions will be reported to the Honor Council. In particular, papers previously turned in for other classes are not eligible to be turned in for this class.

Grading

Participation and weekly preparation: 30%

Term paper: 70%

Participation

The professor will accommodate a reasonable number of excused absences for religious holidays and official off-campus college business such as academic conference presentations and athletic competitions. However, per the College's policy on excused absences (http://www.rollins.edu/catalogue/academic_regulations.html#class-attendance), students must discuss with the professor the dates of the anticipated absences no later than the last day of the drop period. Students must present to their professor written evidence of the anticipated absences and discuss with him/her how and when make-up work should be completed prior to missing the class. Students should not expect to receive allowance

for excused absences if they do not meet with the professor beforehand and clarify the dates as necessary.

Absences will be addressed by the professor in accordance with his attendance policy. The professor retains the right to determine what would be considered to be a reasonable number of absences (excused or otherwise) for the course. A student will not fail a course because the number of religious observances and/or college business absences exceed the number of absences allowed, except if excessive absences make it impossible to fulfill the expectations of the course. The student's class participation grade in the course, though, may still be affected.

Honor Code

Membership in the student body of Rollins College carries with it an obligation, and requires a commitment, to act with honor in all things. The student commitment to uphold the values of honor—honesty, trust, respect, fairness, and responsibility—particularly manifests itself in two public aspects of student life. First, as part of the admission process to the College, students agree to commit themselves to the Honor Code. Then, as part of the matriculation process during Orientation, students sign a more detailed pledge to uphold the Honor Code and to conduct themselves honorably in all their activities, both academic and social, as a Rollins student. A student signature on the following pledge is a binding commitment by the student that lasts for his or her entire tenure at Rollins College:

The development of the virtues of Honor and Integrity are integral to a Rollins College education and to membership in the Rollins College community. Therefore, I, a student of Rollins College, pledge to show my commitment to these virtues by abstaining from any lying, cheating, or plagiarism in my academic endeavors and by behaving responsibly, respectfully and honorably in my social life and in my relationships with others.

This pledge is reinforced every time a student submits work for academic credit as his/her own. Students shall add to the paper, quiz, test, lab report, etc., the handwritten signed statement:

“On my honor, I have not given, nor received, nor witnessed any unauthorized assistance on this work”

Material submitted electronically should contain the pledge; submission implies signing the pledge.

Credit Hour Statement for Rollins Courses

This course is a four-credit-hour course that meets three hours per week. The value of four credit hours results, in part, from work expected of enrolled students both inside and outside the classroom. Rollins faculty require that students average at least 2.5 hours

of outside work for every hour of scheduled class time. In this course, the additional outside-of-class expectations include the careful study of (i) the assigned readings, (ii) the class handouts posted to Blackboard, and (iii) the student's notes from lecture.

Accessibility Services

Rollins College is committed to equal access and inclusion for all students, faculty and staff. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 create a foundation of legal obligations to provide an accessible educational environment that does not discriminate against persons with disabilities. It is the spirit of these laws which guides the college toward expanding access in all courses and programs, utilizing innovative instructional design, and identifying and removing barriers whenever possible.

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of academic accommodations in order to fully participate in your classes, please contact the Office of Accessibility Services, located on the first floor of the Olin Library, as soon as possible. You are encouraged to schedule a Welcome Meeting by filling out the "First Time Users" form on the website: <http://www.rollins.edu/accessibilityservices/> and/or reach out by phone or email: 407-975- 6463 or Access@Rollins.edu.

All test-taking accommodations requested for this course must first be approved through the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) and scheduled online through Accommodate **at least 72 hours before the exam**. Official accommodation letters must be received by and discussed with the faculty in advance. There will be no exceptions given unless previously approved by the OAS with documentation of the emergency situation. We highly recommend making all testing accommodations at the beginning of the semester. OAS staff are available to assist with this process.

Title IX Statement

Rollins College is committed to making its campus a safe place for students. If you tell any of your faculty about sexual misconduct involving members of the campus community, your professors are required to report this information to the Title IX Coordinator. Your faculty member can help connect you with the Coordinator, Oriana Jiménez (TitleIX@rollins.edu or 407-691-1773). She will provide you with information, resources and support. If you would prefer to speak to someone on campus confidentially, please call the Wellness Center at 407-628-6340. They are not required to report any information you share with the Office of Title IX.

Sexual misconduct includes sexual harassment, stalking, intimate partner violence (such as dating or domestic abuse), sexual assault, and any discrimination based on your sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation that creates a hostile environment. For information, visit <http://www.rollins.edu/titleix/>.

Electronic Device Policy

In order to promote classroom discussion, no laptops, tablets, phones, etc. are permitted during class except by instructor permission.

In order to protect the integrity of the classroom experience, the use of recording devices is limited to either the expressed permission of the faculty member or with proper documentation from the Office of Accessibility Services. Information about accommodations through Accessibility Services can be found at <http://www.rollins.edu/accessibility-services/>. Recording without the proper authorization is considered a violation of the Rollins Code of Community Standards.

Course Schedule

The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus, depending on the progress of the discussion in the class. If there are changes, I will make note of them in class and will send out an email about the changes.

| Date | Topic |
|---------|---|
| | UNIT 1: NAMES, DEFINITE DESCRIPTIONS, AND REFERENCE |
| W 9/6 | The Millian theory of names, Fregean senses, descriptivism <i>Reading:</i> syllabus, John S. Mill (1881). "Of Names." Gottlob Frege (1892). "Sense and Reference." Bertrand Russell (1905). "On Denoting." |
| M 9/11 | Definite descriptions. <i>Reading:</i> P.F. Strawson (1950). "On Referring." Keith Donellan (1966). "Reference and Definite Descriptions." |
| M 9/18 | The direct reference revolution. <i>Reading:</i> Saul Kripke (1982). <i>Naming and Necessity</i> . (excerpts) Hilary Putnam (1975). "The Meaning of 'Meaning'." (excerpts) |
| M 9/25 | A counter-revolution. <i>Reading:</i> John Searle (1983). Proper Names and Intentionality. David Chalmers (2002). "On sense and intension." (excerpts) |
| | UNIT 2: SENTENCE AND PROPOSITIONS |
| M 10/9 | Theories of propositions <i>Reading:</i> Jeff Speaks (2014). "Theories of meaning." (excerpts) |
| M 10/16 | Two-dimensional semantics. <i>Reading:</i> David Chalmers (2002). "On sense and intension." (excerpts) |
| M 10/23 | Truth-conditional theories. <i>Reading:</i> Donald Davidson (1967). "Truth and Meaning." |
| M 10/30 | Use-based theories. Paul Horwich (1998). <i>Meaning</i> . (excerpts) |

UNIT 3: THE DETERMINATION OF MEANING

- M 11/6 The causal theory.
Reading: Saul Kripke (1982). *Naming and Necessity*. (excerpts)
- M 11/13 The qua problem, application conditions.
Reading: Amie Thomasson (2007). “Ordinary Objects.” (excerpts)
- M 11/20 Use-based accounts.
Reading: Donald Davidson (1973). “Belief and the Basis of Meaning.” (excerpts)
- M 11/27 Mentalist theories.
Reading: Paul Grice (1957). “Meaning.”
- W 11/29 Mentalist theories.
Reading: Paul Grice (1969). “Utterer’s meaning and intentions.” (excerpts)
- M 12/4 Truth-priority vs. reference priority, the context principle.
Reading: Michael Dummett (1995). “The Context Principle: Centre of Frege’s Philosophy.” (excerpts)