

## **PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE: LITERAL AND CONVEYED MEANING**

### Texts

Some articles online, some to be distributed in hardcopy. Also Lycan, *Philosophy of Language: A Contemporary Introduction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Routledge, 2008), to be distributed [L]. L readings are optional but advised.

### WGL contact

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### Written work

Option 1: Four short papers (ca. 1500 words) during the semester, due on September 11, October 9, November 13, and December 4. Topics will be of your own choosing, but I will offer suggestions.

Or 2: If you like, after September 11 you may substitute one 3000-word paper for two consecutive shorter ones.

Or, 3: Write just one short paper due September 11 and one term paper due December 4.

### Syllabus

August 28: Disparities between literal and conveyed meaning. “Literal” meaning. Main theories of literal meaning. [L, Ch. 1.] Russell’s Theory of Descriptions. “Use” theories of meaning; Strawson’s critique of Russell. *Reading*: Russell, “Descriptions”; Strawson, “On Referring.” [L, Ch. 2.] *Recommended*: Russell, “On Denoting”; Waismann, excerpt from *The Principles of Linguistic Philosophy*; Wittgenstein, excerpts from *Philosophical Investigations*. [L, Ch. 5.]

September 4: Davidson’s Truth-Condition theory of meaning. The Intensional Truth-Condition theory. *Reading*: Davidson, “Truth and Meaning.” [L, Ch. 9, Ch. 10.]

September 11: Implicature, conversational and conventional. *Reading*: Grice, “Logic and Conversation.” [L, Ch. 13, pp. 157-66.] **Short paper due from everyone.**

- September 18: Criticisms of Grice's account. *Reading*: W. Davis, *Implicature*, Ch. 3.
- September 25: Politeness. Pejoratives, epithets, and slurs. *Reading*: P. Brown and S.C. Levinson, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*, Ch. 3; P. Saka, *How to Think about Meaning*, Ch. 5; L. Anderson and E. LePore, "Slurring Words."
- October 2: Relevance Theory. *Reading*: R. Carston, *Thoughts and Utterances*, pp. 94-152; D. Wilson and D. Sperber, "Relevance Theory."
- October 9: "Explicature." *Reading*: R. Carston, "Relevance Theory and the Saying/Implicating Distinction"; R. Carston and A. Hall, "Implicature and Explicature." **Second short paper due.**
- October 16: Loosening and tightening. *Reading*: K. Bach, "Conversational Implicature"; R. Carston, "Enrichment and Loosening: Complementary Processes in Deriving the Proposition Expressed."
- October 23: The context-sensitivity debate. *Reading*: T. Donaldson and E. LePore, "Context-Sensitivity." [L, Ch. 11.]
- October 30: Performative utterances and illocutionary force. The Performadox. *Reading*: Austin, "Performative Utterances"; selections from *How to Do Things with Words*. [L, Ch. 12.]
- November 6: Indirect force. *Reading*: Searle, "Indirect Speech Acts"; R. Jacobsen, "The Interpretation of *Indirect Speech Acts* in Relevance Theory." [L, Ch. 13, pp. 168-70.]
- November 13: Metaphor. Davidson's skeptical view. *Reading*: Davidson, "What Metaphors Mean." [L, Ch. 14, pp. 175-79.] **Third short paper due.**
- November 27: Searle's Gricean theory of metaphor. *Reading*: Searle, "Metaphor." [L, Ch. 14, pp. 183-87.]
- December 4: Relevance Theory on metaphor. *Reading*: D. Sperber and D. Wilson, "A Deflationary Account of Metaphor"; D. Wilson and R. Carston, "Metaphor, Relevance and the 'Emergent Property' Issue." **Final paper due from everyone.**