

PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

PHL 34 Spring term Class meets TuTh 4:00 – 5:50 in Thornton 103

X hour is Monday 5:00-5:50

Instructor: Roy Sorensen

Phone: (603) 646-2113 Office: 304 Thornton

Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 3:00 - 4:00 or by appointment

Texts: Language and Reality Michael Devitt and Kim Sterelny.

Basic Topics in the Philosophy of Language Robert Harnish

Course Description: Most of the key developments in the last hundred years of philosophy are intimately connected with philosophy of language. The first goal of this course is to build an understanding of this connection as part of a general survey of the field. This survey will cover standard topics such as the relationship between thought and language, ideal language, Frege's doctrine of sense, the analytic/synthetic distinction, presupposition, speech acts, and conversational implicature. Special attention will be devoted to two current topics in philosophy of language: vagueness and demonstratives. Grades will be determined by performance on two papers (2000-3000 words), a mid-term, and final.

Grading and Assignments: The final grade is determined mechanically by the following scale:

A = 380, A- = 360, B+ = 340, B = 320, B- = 300, C+ = 280,

C = 260, C- = 240, D+ = 220, and F for below 220.

You are encouraged to submit a draft of your papers. The deadlines for the drafts is a week before the deadlines of the papers. Each essay is worth 100 points and should be between 2000 and 3000 words long.

The mid-term is 100 points and the final is 100 points. They are essay finals with the essay questions distributed ahead of time. Specifically, two class sessions before the test, you will be given a list of fifteen questions. All of the issues discussed by the time of the test are fair game.

On exam day you will receive a test containing eight of those questions. You will be instructed to choose five of those questions. Each answer will be worth twenty points. Your answers to those questions will be graded against the quality of answers of other students in the class (and past classes). During the class session before the test, I will set aside some time to answer clarificatory questions about the items on the list. That is, I will disambiguate, precisify, and in general respond to worries about misunderstanding the questions. Of course, I do not intend to provide substantive answers. On exam day, you need only bring a pen, I will supply the paper.