

**PHIL 353: Philosophy of Language**  
Fall 2018

Professor M. Glanzberg  
T/TH 12:30-1:50  
Kresge 2-430  
Office Hours: T 2:00-3:00, TH 11:00-12:00

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**Overview**

Language is a familiar part of our everyday lives, but it is also an important topic in philosophy. In this course, we will explore some of the fundamental philosophical issues that surround language. We will investigate what makes a language what it is, by investigating the nature of linguistic meaning, the range of special actions we can perform in virtue of having a language, and the ways language can frame thoughts about the world around us. We will also investigate what it is to know something so complicated as a human language, by investigating the nature of linguistic rules, and the kinds of cognitive states that comprise knowledge of language. As time permits, we will also examine some additional topics, such as how language can express vague or imprecise ideas.

**Course Objectives**

Students will be expected to understand the basic issues and ideas in philosophy of language, and to master a range of tools and techniques used in philosophical approaches to language. They will be expected to be able to apply these to specific problems in philosophy of language.

**Books**

A.P. Martinich and David Sosa, *The Philosophy of Language*, Sixth Edition.

**Grades**

Final grades will be based on two midterms (30% each) and a final project (40%). Final project options will include a final paper (of about 7 pages), a take-home final exam, or other options you may discuss with professor Glanzberg.

**Policies**

All papers and take-home projects must be submitted via Turnitin on the course Canvas site. *Unexcused late papers will be penalized a half-grade for every twenty-four hours late.* (This includes the weekend, since electronic submission is always available to you.)

**Final projects due:** Wednesday, December 12.

Any student with a disability requesting accommodations is required to register with Services for Students with Disabilities (ssd@northwestern.edu; 847-467-5530) and present an accommodation letter from SSD to his/her professor, preferably within the first two weeks of class. All discussions will remain confidential.

**Tentative Schedule** (we can change this if we like)

1. September 27 Introduction, Chomsky, Language and Problems of Knowledge
2. October 2 Chomsky, continued  
October 4 Davidson, Truth and Meaning
3. October 9 Davidson continued  
October 11 Partee, Semantics: mathematics or Psychology (TBP)
4. October 16 **Midterm 1**  
October 18 Kripke, Excerpts from *Naming and Necessity*
5. October 23 Austin, Performative Utterances  
October 25 Grice, Logic and Conversation
6. October 30 Grice continued  
November 1 Grice, Meaning
7. November 6 Grice continued  
November 8 Wittgenstein, from *Philosophical Investigations*
8. November 13 **Midterm 2**  
November 15 Lewis, Languages and Language
9. November 20 Lewis continued  
November 22 Thanksgiving. No class
10. November 27 Fara, *Shifting Sands*  
November 29
- December 4 Reading period  
December 6
- December 12 **Final paper/project due**