

Course	PHIL60421
Title	Issues in the Philosophy of Language: Pragmatics
Tutor	Dr Catharine Abell

Course Content:

This course will examine pragmatic approaches to the philosophy of language. Whereas semantics focuses on truth conditional approaches to understanding sentence meaning, and treats sentence meaning as independent of the particular contexts in which sentences are uttered, pragmatics focuses on the meanings utterances of sentences have in specific contexts of use, and emphasises the role of human intentions and other psychological states in determining utterance meaning.

We will address such questions as: What is communication, and how do we succeed in communicating with others? How do conventions arise and what role do they play in human communication? How can we use a sentence to communicate something other than its literal meaning? What kinds of acts can we perform with language? What are the differences between the various speech acts (e.g. of asserting and requesting)?

Teaching and Learning Methods:

After an initial meeting, there will be seven two-hour seminars, at which students will give presentations, and the tutor will lead a discussion of issues raised by texts that we have read. Students will also have the opportunity to discuss their private reading and writing assignments one-to-one with the tutor.

Assessment

1 essay of 5000 words 100%

Aims:

The course unit aims:

- To introduce students to the philosophical issues regarding pragmatic theories of language.
- To introduce students to seminal and recent literature on this topic.
- To equip students with the advanced research skills needed for dissertation writing and doctoral research.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

On completion of this unit successful students will be able:

- To complete a substantial piece of research in an area of analytical philosophy.
- To present a substantial piece of research to a critical audience.
- To demonstrate a broad knowledge of seminal and recent literature on an advanced topic in analytical philosophy.
- To conduct independent research, under supervision by an expert supervisor.
- To understand, critically assess, and respond to advanced philosophical writing.

Preliminary reading

Austin J. L. (1975/1955) *How To Do Things With Words*. Edited by J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa. London: Oxford University Press, 2nd edition.

H.P. Grice (1967) "Meaning" In *Philosophical Logic*, edited by Strawson. London: Oxford University Press.

H.P. Grice (1975), "Logic and Conversation" *Syntax and Semantics* 3

H.P. Grice (1978), "Further Notes on Logic and Conversation" *Syntax and Semantics* 9

Stephen C. Levinson (1983), *Pragmatics*. Edited by Allen and al., *Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lewis, D. (1969). *Convention*. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press.