

**Philosophy 3200**  
**Contemporary European Philosophy**  
**University of Guelph**

**Logistics**

Term: Winter 2013

Lectures: MWF 4:30-5:20pm, ROZH 105

Course Instructor: Daniel Griffin

Email: [griffind@uoguelph.ca](mailto:griffind@uoguelph.ca)

Office: MacKinnon 361

Office Hours: F 12-3pm, or by appointment

**Overview**

If a single issue dominated 20th century philosophy, it was an increasing concern with language. Debates over meaning, reference, grammar, communication, and interpretation dominated the philosophical landscape in both Europe and North America. Around the turn of the century, linguists, logicians, and philosophers, such as Ferdinand Saussure, Gottlob Frege, and Edmund Husserl, attempted to account for various enigmatic aspects of language, including the nature of linguistic signs, the relation of language to semantic truth, and the relation between meaning and subjective intentions.

These thinkers inspired a host of supporters and critics who have greatly influenced present understandings of language. We will investigate some of their texts as well as those of some of their European successors, including Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, and Julia Kristeva. We will attempt to analyze and evaluate their responses to three related questions: (1) What is the structure of language? (2) What makes language possible? (3) How are language and politics connected?

**Objectives**

The goals of the course are the following: expose you to a central debate in 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophy of language and European philosophy in general; analyze the argumentative structure and claims made in challenging “continental” philosophy texts; critically evaluate the ideas and arguments made by highly influential but often misunderstood philosophers; enable you to relate this controversial issue to other debates in philosophy of language (including early and current “analytic” approaches); improve your writing skills and capacity to translate heavily stylized and dense philosophical texts into your own clear and well-structured writing; and enable you to create new arguments and form new ideas in order to understand other ongoing philosophical problems and critique common assumptions about language, such as the basic goodness of dialogue, the special capacity of narrative to convey truth, etc.

## **Required Texts**

Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense* (Columbia)  
Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* (Minnesota)  
Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (Pantheon)  
Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language* (Columbia)  
Phil 3200 Course Pack

## **Classroom Etiquette**

**NO LAPTOPS, PHONES, OR OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES ALLOWED**

(except with valid note from Disability Services)

Please do not text or otherwise fiddle with your electronic devices in class.

I expect you to read the material before class and **BRING THE READINGS WE ARE DISCUSSING WITH YOU TO CLASS** because we will be doing a large amount of close textual analysis. I strongly recommend having a notebook to compile notes from your independent reading and lecture. I will not be posting my lecture notes online because in philosophy although we prepare our lectures carefully, what actually transpires in the classroom is organic and not simply read off a script. You are responsible for understanding the information conveyed in class, so if you miss a class, try to get the notes from one of your classmates.

The texts we will be analyzing and evaluating are very challenging. Even many professional philosophers consider them difficult and opaque. I have assigned between 20-50 pages of reading per week, and this will be a significant time commitment. You should be prepared to read the texts slowly, and it would probably be a good strategy to mark up the texts, noting technical terms and important claims made with those terms. In lecture, I will help to locate the central claims and concepts and decipher those in the context of the arguments and aims of each text. You will find the class incredibly challenging if you have not come to class prepared having familiarized yourself with the reading for that week.

## **Evaluation**

Each assignment has a due date on the weekly schedule below. I will discuss in class what I expect from you for each assignment, and I will post prompts and directions for each assignment online. Note that this is a writing intensive course with several small writing assignments, so you must be diligent in keeping up with your assignments.

Format for all writing assignments: 1" margins, Times New Roman font, 12 pt, no cover page, stapled

Six Reading Responses (1 page each, 300 words)	30%
Midterm Paper (5-6 pages, ~1500 words)	20%
Film Analysis/Pragmatic Writing (3-4 pages, ~1000 words)	15%
Final Paper (7-8 pages, ~2000 words)	35%

## Tentative Schedule

### **Part 1: The Structure of Language**

Week of Jan 6: Introduction to the course and the topic of language

Readings: Gadamer, “The Universality of the Hermeneutical Problem”  
(course pack)  
Frege, “On *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*” (course pack)

Week of Jan 13: Sense, Reference, and the Sign

Readings: Frege, “On *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*” (course pack)  
Saussure, excerpts from *Course in General Linguistics*  
(course pack)

Week of Jan 20: Generative Grammar and Meaning

Readings: Chomsky, excerpts from *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*  
(course pack)  
Husserl, excerpt from *Logical Investigations I* (course pack)

### **Part 2: The Possibility of Language**

Week of Jan 27: Experience and Language

Readings: Merleau-Ponty, “On the Phenomenology of Language” (course  
pack)  
Heidegger, excerpt from *Being and Time*: from “Understanding and  
Interpretation” to “Idle Talk” (course pack)

Week of Feb 3: Discourse and the Statement

Readings: Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Part II, Chapter 1:  
The Unities of Discourse, and Part III: The Statement and the Archive

Week of Feb 10: Sense and the Proposition

Readings: Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*: Third, Fifth, Sixth, Eighth, and  
Twenty-Sixth Series  
***Due: Midterm Paper, Must have turned in at least 3 Reading Responses***

Week of Feb 17: **Winter Break, No Classes**

Week of Feb 24: Semiotic and Symbolic

Readings: Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, Prolegomenon,  
Part 1, Chapters 1-6

Week of March 3: Genotext and Phenotext

Readings: Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, Part 1, Chapters 7-12  
Barthes, “From Work to Text” and “The Death of the Author”  
(course pack)

## **Part 3: The Politics of Language**

Week of March 10: Power and Rhizomatic Thinking

Video: “The Chomsky-Foucault Debate: On Human Nature” (online)

Readings: Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Appendix:  
“Discourse on Language”

Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, Introduction: Rhizome

Week of March 17: Order-Word, Minority Languages, and Pragmatics

Readings: Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, Chapter 4:  
Postulates of Linguistics

Week of March 24: Film, Time, and the Limits of Narrative

Film: *Last Year at Marienbad* (in class)

Readings: Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, Part I, Chapter 13

Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, Chapter 2, Part 1 and  
Chapter 5, Part 1 (course pack)

Week of March 31: Assignifying Signs and Course Review

Readings (if time allows): Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*,  
Chapter 5: On Several Regimes of Signs

***Due: Final Paper***

***Final Exam Day: Film Analysis/Pragmatic Writing Due***

## **Other Policies**

### **E-mail Communication**

As per University regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the university and its students.

### **When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement**

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the Undergraduate Calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

### **Drop Date**

The last date to drop one-semester Winter 2014 courses, without academic penalty, is **Friday, March 7, 2014**. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the Undergraduate Calendar:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

### **Copies of out-of-class assignments**

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

### **Student Rights and Responsibilities**

Each student at the University of Guelph has rights which carry commensurate responsibilities that involve, broadly, being a civil and respectful member of the University community. The Rights and Responsibilities are detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c14/c14-strightsrespon.shtml>

### **Academic Misconduct**

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and enjoins all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

### **Recording of Materials**

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded in any electronic media without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer.

### **Resources**

The Undergraduate Calendar is the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate programs. It can be found at:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/>

If you find yourself in difficulty, contact the undergraduate advisor in your program, or the BA Counselling Office: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/baco/contact.shtml>