Meeting Times / Venue

Wednesdays 2:30 – 5:30PM / Seminar Room 3 at NBS-S3 (S3-B3B-38)

Instructor Information

Prof. Andrés Luco (given name “Andrés”; family name “Luco”)
Office: HSS-06-03 (Humanities & Social Sciences Building, Level 6, Room 3)
Telephone: 6592 7827
Email: acluco@ntu.edu.sg
Consultation hours: Mondays 10:00AM – 12:00PM

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the philosophy of language. The philosophy of language is the study of the properties and workings of natural human language. It is a “core” branch of contemporary analytic philosophy, in the sense that concepts developed by philosophers of language have proven useful in many other areas of philosophy (including metaphysics, logic, philosophy of science, philosophy of religion, and ethics). The course will focus on three linguistic phenomena. We examine reference, and ask how a linguistic expression can refer to things in the world. In addition, we study the nature of linguistic meaning (otherwise known as “sense”), and ask how a verbal noise or written mark acquires meaning (sense). Furthermore, we explore pragmatics, and analyze the various uses of language exercised by speakers in everyday life.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the term, you (the student) will be able to:

1. Students will know and be able to explain some basic issues, figures, and concepts in the philosophy of language.
2. Students will improve their critical thinking skills by learning to analyze philosophical issues, to make and analyze meaningful arguments, and to produce critical evaluations of various philosophical positions.
3. Students will learn to develop, and articulate clearly, their own reasoned positions on some important philosophical issues.
**Required Textbooks and Readings**

One textbook must be purchased for this course:

Gary Kemp, *What is This Thing Called the Philosophy of Language?* (Routledge, 2014)

All students should purchase copies of this text at the Popular @ NIE bookstore (campus map: [http://maps.ntu.edu.sg/m?q=Popular%20Bookstore&fs=1](http://maps.ntu.edu.sg/m?q=Popular%20Bookstore&fs=1)). Apart from the textbook, additional required readings are to be downloaded from the NTULearn website. See the list of reading assignments below.

**Coursework**

- **Reading assignments (RAs).** The reading assignments (RAs) are listed below.
- **4 short-answer quizzes.** The quizzes will be conducted in class. You will be given 20 minutes to complete each quiz. Quizzes will consist of 3 or 4 short-answer questions requiring answers of approximately 100 words each. To find the dates of the quizzes, see the course schedule below.
- **2 typewritten essays.** Each essay will contain a maximum of 2000 words, excluding the bibliography. Essays must be submitted electronically through the NTULearn website. See the course schedule for the essay deadlines.

**Participation**

You will be graded on your participation in class discussions. The participation grade will be based not only on your attendance, but also on the quality of your contributions to class discussions. To truly learn a subject, you must be able to ask questions and speak competently about it. You must have the maturity to give and take constructive criticism.

The participation grade is worth up to 5% of the total grade.

**Participation grades:**

- Unsatisfactory class contributions: 0/5
- Satisfactory contributions: 3/5
- Excellent contributions: 5/5

*Unsatisfactory class contributions.* Students who do not come to class regularly, or who do not contribute regularly in class discussions throughout the term, will receive 0 marks for participation. More than two unexcused absences from class meetings will result in a participation grade of 0. Failure to participate in class discussions on a regular basis could also result in a participation grade of 0.
Satisfactory contributions. Students who contribute regularly in class discussions throughout the term will be awarded 3/5 percentage points for participation.

Excellent contributions. Students who regularly contribute relevant, informed, and reasoned comments in class discussions throughout the term will be awarded 5/5 percentage points for participation.

Attendance Requirement

More than two unexcused absences from class meetings will result in a participation grade of 0. Students who are more than 15 minutes late for a class meeting will be counted absent.

Students will sign their names on a register to document their presence in class. The attendance register is the official record of class attendance. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the register accurately reflects his or her class attendance throughout the term.

Whether or not to excuse an absence is the prerogative of the instructor. Students who give adequate explanations for an absence can expect to be excused. Ideally, explanations should be supported by documented evidence. In the case of illness, for example, a medical note signed by a healthcare provider would suffice. Notice of extracurricular commitments signed by a coach or other relevant authority is also acceptable. In extraordinary circumstances, absences explained without any documentation may sometimes be excused. However, in most cases—especially after repeated absences—such explanations will be regarded with skepticism.

Grade Assessment

The final grade for this course will be calculated as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Quizzes</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay 1</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay 2</td>
<td>40%</td>
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NTULearn Website

This course will rely heavily on an NTULearn website. Log in to NTULearn at https://NTULearn.ntu.edu.sg/images/ci/NTULearn/index.html.
The following sources information will appear on NTULearn:

- **Announcements.** Please check your email and NTULearn regularly.
- **Readings.** Readings to be downloaded from NTULearn are marked by the letter “E” in the section headed “Reading Assignments” below.
- **Course notes.** See details below.
- **Essay assignments**
- **Grades**

### Course Notes and Lectures

“Course notes” will be posted on NTULearn every week. They are the basis for the lectures, and they are designed to clarify and reinforce the most important ideas in each week’s topic. The course notes are not part of the required reading assignments, but they will still be made available as recommended readings. Students may find it particularly helpful to read the course notes in preparation for writing essays.

### Academic Integrity

It is the student’s responsibility to understand the Academic Integrity Policy at NTU. All students should familiarize themselves with “A Guide to Academic Integrity” (URL: [http://www.ntu.edu.sg/ai/ForEveryone/Pages/AGuidetoAcademicIntegrity.aspx](http://www.ntu.edu.sg/ai/ForEveryone/Pages/AGuidetoAcademicIntegrity.aspx)).

### Schedule

The schedule below lists the topic and the reading material that will be discussed in class meetings. For example, the class meeting in week 2 will cover the material in reading assignment (RA) 2.

This schedule is tentative. It is possible that some topics will take more than a single class session to cover. Also, some topics may be dropped in order to devote a sufficient amount of time to other material. Any changes to the schedule will be announced.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Week</th>
<th>Date of class meeting</th>
<th>Holiday or special event</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Test or Essay</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>12 August</td>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction and Naïve Semantics</td>
<td>RA1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>19 August</td>
<td></td>
<td>Frege’s Semantics</td>
<td>RA2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>26 August</td>
<td></td>
<td>Russell’s Semantics</td>
<td>RA3</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2 September</td>
<td></td>
<td>Names, necessity, and essence (Part I)</td>
<td>RA4</td>
<td>Quiz 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9 September</td>
<td></td>
<td>Names, necessity, and essence (Part II)</td>
<td>RA5</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>16 September</td>
<td></td>
<td>Indexicals</td>
<td>RA6</td>
<td>Quiz 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>23 September</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pragmatics</td>
<td>RA7</td>
<td>Essay 1 (Due 11:59PM on Monday 26th September)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>RECESS WEEK (26 September – 30 September)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>7 October</td>
<td></td>
<td>Propositional attitudes</td>
<td>RA8</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>14 October</td>
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<td>Davidson and radical interpretation (Part I)</td>
<td>RA9</td>
<td>Quiz 3</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>21 October</td>
<td></td>
<td>Davidson and radical interpretation (Part II)</td>
<td>RA10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Reading Assignment</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>28 October</td>
<td>Quine and indeterminacy (Part I)</td>
<td>RA11</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>4 November</td>
<td>Quine and indeterminacy (Part II)</td>
<td>RA12</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>11 November</td>
<td>Wittgenstein and language games</td>
<td>RA13</td>
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**Reading Assignments (RAs)**

To prepare for class, you should complete the reading assignment (RA) for a given week before that week’s lecture meeting. For example, before attending the lecture in week 2, students should complete RA 2.

The following abbreviations indicate where to find a particular reading:

- **N** = NTULearn website: [https://NTULearn.ntu.edu.sg/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp](https://NTULearn.ntu.edu.sg/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp)
- **Kemp** = Gary Kemp, *What is this Thing Called the Philosophy of Language?*

**RA1: Naïve semantics**

- Kemp, “Introduction”
- Kemp ch. 1, “Naïve semantics and the language of logic”

**RA2: Frege’s semantics**

- Kemp ch. 2, “Fregean semantics”
- Gottlob Frege, “On Sinn und Bedeutung” (N)

**RA3: Russell’s semantics**

- Kemp ch. 3, “Russellian semantics”
- Bertrand Russell, “On Denoting” (N)

**RA4: Names, necessity, and essence (Part I)**

- Kemp ch. 4, “Kripke and Putnam on naming, necessity, and essence”
- Saul Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, Lecture II (N)
RA5: Names, necessity, and essence (Part II)

- Hilary Putnam, “Meaning and Reference” (N)

RA6: Indexicals

- Kemp ch. 5, “Possible worlds: semantics, context, and indexicality”
- John Perry, “The Problem of the Essential Indexical” (N)

RA7: Pragmatics

- Kemp ch. 6, “Pragmatics”
- H.P. Grice, “Logic and Conversation” from Studies in the Way of Words (N)

RA8: Propositional attitudes

- Kemp ch. 7, “The propositional attitudes”
- Saul Kripke, “A Puzzle About Belief” (N)

RA9: Davidson and radical interpretation (Part I)

- Kemp ch. 8, “Davidson’s philosophy of language”
- Donald Davidson, “Truth and Meaning” (N)

RA10: Davidson and radical interpretation (Part II)

- Donald Davidson, “Radical Interpretation” (N)

RA11: Quine and indeterminacy (Part I)

- Kemp ch. 9, “Quine’s philosophy of language”
- W.V.O. Quine, “Speaking of Objects” (N)

RA12: Quine and indeterminacy (Part II)

- W.V.O. Quine, “Two Dogmas of Empiricism” (N)
- Gary Gutting, “Quine’s ‘Two Dogmas’: argument or imagination?” (N)

RA13: Wittgenstein and language games

- Kemp ch. 10, “Wittgenstein’s alternative”
- Ludwig Wittgenstein, selections from Philosophical Investigations (N)