Philosophy 181B/281B: Topics in Philosophy of Language, Winter 2015

Instructor: Mark Crimmins (markcrim@gmail.com)
Office Hours: Monday, 11:30 - 1:30, and by appointment.
Office: Building 100, room 102C

Class meetings: MW 9:30-10:45 in 460-301. I will run the meetings seminar-style: there will be no formal lecture, but I will usually start a session by framing issues for discussion. I expect you to come to class prepared to discuss the day's material, and I strongly encourage participation by everyone.

Suggested prerequisite: Philosophy 181/281 or equivalent (you should be familiar with at least some of the work on language of philosophers such as Frege, Russell, Quine, Grice, and Kripke).

Readings:
- The main readings are primary sources, available online at this link.
- Other readings, usually for background, including articles from the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, are linked from the Schedule page on the course website.

Assignments:
- Two papers:
  - First paper due on Friday, February 6; about 2000 words.
  - Term Paper due on Monday, March 16, about 2500 words.
- Please submit your papers to me by email by midnight, in PDF format (if you can't do that, Word and RTF are also okay); it's your responsibility to send the right document, to attach it correctly, to hit the send button, etc. I am very glad to discuss your ideas with you beforehand in office hours or by email.
- Reading reactions: each class day, by an hour before class time, please email me some thoughtful reactions—appreciations, criticisms, questions, etc.—to the day's main reading(s). There are no requirements as to length (a couple of paragraphs certainly will suffice) or structure; please put your remarks in the body of the email rather than sending an attachment, and (to be sure it gets by my email filter) include "reading reaction" in the subject field. If you object to my sharing your comments with the class, please let me know, because I plan to reproduce excerpts from reactions when they seem to me to add something particularly helpful to what I've already planned to talk about. You may miss two sessions of reactions without penalty.
- Grad students taking 281B: make it 2500 words and 3000 words.
- Evaluation: 35% first paper, 50% final paper, and 15% reading reactions and classroom participation.

Miscellaneous:
- Late papers will be marked down unless there is prior approval.
- Please let me know asap how I can help accommodate any disabilities or other challenges you might have.
- I always appreciate feedback, whether in course evaluations or anytime during the term, about how I can make the course go better for students.
Schedule

This is subject to revision, so consult the website for the latest version!

1. Linguistics and the Mental
   - (1/7) Noam Chomsky 1975, "Knowledge of Language"
   - and/or Chomsky 1986, excerpts from Knowledge of Language: Its Nature, Origin, and Use
   - (1/12) Scott Soames 1984, "Linguistics and Psychology"
   - (1/14) Devitt, Michael 2003, "Linguistics is Not Psychology"

2. Demonstratives and Intentions
   - (1/21) Kaplan, David 1989, excerpts from "On Demonstratives" (to p. 529) and "Afterthoughts" (582-590)
   - (1/26) Reimer, Marga 1992, "Three Views of Demonstrative Reference"
   - and Bach, Kent 1992, "Intentions and Demonstrations."
   - (1/28) Siegel, Susanna 2002, "The Role of Perception in Demonstrative Reference"

3. Vagueness
   - (2/2) Raffman, Diana 1994, "Vagueness Without Paradox"
   - (2/4) Williamson, Timothy 1992, "Vagueness and Ignorance"
   - (2/9) Braun, David and Sider, Ted 2007, "Vague, so Untrue"
   - (2/11) Barnes, Elizabeth (forthcoming), "Fundamental Indeterminacy"

2. Slurs
   - (2/18) Richard, Mark 2008, “Epithets and Attitudes”
   - (3/2) Anderson, Luvell and Lepore, Ernie 2013, "What Did You Call Me? Slurs as Prohibited Words"

3. Prescriptivism in Linguistics
   - and Wallace, David Foster 2001 “Tense Present”
   - (3/9) Burgess, Alexi forthcoming, "How We Ought to Do Things With Words"

(3/11) Student presentations of final paper projects.