This course is a survey of some of the classic and contemporary issues and debates in the philosophy of language.

We’ll focus on what we say to each other, and what we do with words. Some classic topics include the nature of propositions, the nature of truth, speech act theory, and communication pragmatics.

We’ll also consider some contemporary topics such as lying, bullshit, misleading, testimonial injustice, silencing speech, slurs, and how gender influences language and communication.

The classroom, with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility we have the opportunity to labor for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom.

-bell hooks, Teaching to Transgress

Dr. Rachel McKinnon
Assistant Professor
Department of Philosophy

2014 Fall Semester CRN 13399
MAYBANK 206
MW 2:00-3:15PM
STATEMENT ON INCLUSIVITY AND ACCOMMODATION

Your success in this class is important to me. If there are circumstances that may affect your performance in this class, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can work together to develop strategies for adapting lectures, activities, and assignments to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. If you’re not sure whether this applies to you, please speak to me. This includes discussing whether some topics are difficult or potentially triggering, and how that might be accommodated.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who may require accommodations should contact the Center for Disability Services (disabilityservices.cofc.edu). SNAP (Students Needing Access Parity) Services provides assistance and guidance to students with a documented disability to ensure equal access to all programs and services of the College. More information about the SNAP program can be found in their brochure. Students can find the application process at disabilityservices.cofc.edu/application. Students can chooses to inform me directly of requested accommodations. I’m happy to work with you to find the most effective accommodations for your needs.

* Alternate formats of this syllabus, for purposes of accessibility, are available on request.
PHIL 335: Philosophy of Language

AUGUST 19th thru DECEMBER 2nd, 2014

PERQUISITE(S) – EITHER SIX SEMESTER HOURS IN PHILOSOPHY (OTHER THAN PHIL 120) OR PERMISSION OF THE INSTRUCTOR

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

- A course pack. The link will be posted on OAKS when it is available.

Other readings will be available online or through the college library system.

Dr. Rachel McKinnon
Office: Room 102, 16 Glebe Street
Email: McKinnonR@cofc.edu
Office Hours: T/TH 1:00-3:00PM

Students are strongly encouraged to visit during office hours for all course inquiries and any help students need with the material. I’m also happy just to talk philosophy.

* Please read the complete policies on contacting Professor McKinnon (in person and through email) found in this syllabus to help ensure the best possible communication.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Final Grade

- Participation: 10%
- Midterm Test: 20%
- Final Exam: 25%
- Detailed Term Paper Abstract: 10%
- Term Paper: 10%

10% Participation

Attendance and participation is mandatory. Each class, students must indicate their attendance on a personalized card, which I will provide. On the back, students are encouraged each class to add their thoughts and questions about the material. As their card is filled up, a new one will be added and combined into a booklet. Students require 25 attendances for full marks, not including test days. Each participation, up to 25, is thus worth 0.4% of the final course grade. Students who accumulate 10 unexcused absences will be automatically dropped from the course and this will appear as an F on your transcript.

20% Midterm Test

This will be an in-class short answer midterm test on material up to and including Wednesday, September 24th. The questions will be short answer, requiring no more than 4-5 sentences to answer. I’ll give students a master list of questions from which I will take a subset for the final test. I will release the questions 2 weeks before the test date. The test will be closed book, but students are strongly encouraged to work together in studying.

25% Final Exam

This will be a cumulative short answer exam, scheduled during exam period: Wednesday December 3rd, 12:00 – 3:00 p.m. The questions will be short answer, requiring no more than 4-5 sentences to answer. As with the midterm, I’ll give students a master list of questions from which I will take a subset for the final test. I will release the questions 2 weeks before the test date. The test will be closed book, but students are strongly encouraged to work together in studying.
Detailed Term Paper Abstract

Students must prepare a detailed abstract—between 300 and 500 words—and a provisional bibliography for their research term paper. The abstracts will be graded and returned within a week so as to help guide students in constructing their term paper projects. Abstracts are due Wednesday November 5th, in class. We will set aside some time for students to discuss the term paper.

Term Paper

Students owe me a paper between 3000 and 4000 words, including footnotes, but not including references. This is a research project, and students are expected to seek resources in addition to the course materials. Papers are due Dec 1, in class. Early submissions will be accepted.

Late assignments will have 5% deducted from the assignment grade each calendar day late, counting from the end of the due date's class meeting time. For example, if class meets from 2:00 - 3:15pm, assignments handed in after 3:15pm on the due date are considered late.

Retention of Sample Coursework

You are advised that copies of your coursework may be retained for the purposes of benchmarking and curriculum design. All retained student work will have identifying information removed. Should you not wish to have your work retained for these purposes, please advise me of this in writing as soon as possible. You are also advised that tenure track professors (including myself) are required to include graded student work samples in their tenure portfolios.
PHIL 335: PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE  
CRN 13399 (MW 2:00-3:15)

SEMESTER OVERVIEW

IMPORTANT DATES AT A GLANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 29th</td>
<td>MIDTERM TEST</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 5th</td>
<td>Detailed Term Paper Abstract Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 1st</td>
<td>Term Paper Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 3rd</td>
<td>FINAL EXAM: 12:00 – 3:00 p.m.</td>
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COURSE TOPICS BY WEEK

- **Introduction**
- **Truth**
- **Lying and Bullshit**
- **Speech Act Theory**
- **Speech Pragmatics**

Week 01 - **Introduction**
Week 02 - **Truth:** *Propositions*
Week 03 - **Truth:** *Theories of Truth*
Week 04 - **Lying and Bullshit**
Week 05 - **Lying and Bullshit**
Week 06 - **Speech Acts:** *Speech Act Theory*
Week 07 - **Speech Acts:** *Norms of Assertion*
Week 08 - **Speech Acts:** *Norms of Assertion*
Week 09 - **Speech Acts:** *Norms of Assertion*
Week 10 - **Speech Acts:** *Norms of Assertion*
Week 11 - **Speech Pragmatics:** *Grice and Implicature*
Week 12 - **Speech Pragmatics:** *Epistemic and Testimonial Injustice*
Week 13 - **Speech Pragmatics:** *Gender and Language*
Week 14 - **Speech Pragmatics:** *Gender and Language*
Week 15 - **Speech Pragmatics:** *Gender and Speech Acts*
Week 16 - **Speech Pragmatics:** *Slurs*
* Use this list to cross reference with class calendar in this syllabus to know your reading requirements per class.

10. Rachel McKinnon (manuscript). Chapter 6 from *The Norms of Assertion*.
11. Rachel McKinnon (manuscript). Chapter 7 from *The Norms of Assertion*.
13. Rachel McKinnon (manuscript). Chapter 4 from *The Norms of Assertion*.
**READING SCHEDULE**

It is expected that students will come to each lecture having done the assigned readings. Lectures will proceed on the assumption that students have done the readings. Completing the readings is essential to understanding the material. It is recommended that students read each reading at least twice for best results.

Dates of the readings are subject to change.

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<td>Wed, Dec 03</td>
<td>FINAL EXAM</td>
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CLASS POLICIES

STUDENT PREPAREDNESS

It’s mandatory that students complete the readings before coming to class. Class discussion assumes that students have read the relevant materials. I strongly suggest that students complete the readings twice before class. Ideally, students should re-read the readings after the relevant class, too. You might be surprised at how much more you retain from the readings by following this suggestion. Take notes while completing the readings. Look up words that you don’t understand. Take your time: some of these readings (or potentially all of them) may be difficult. That’s expected. Create questions about the material. Bring the readings, notes, and questions to class. Students not prepared may be asked to leave.

GRADING

I will endeavour always to return work within 2 weeks of submission. Often it will be quicker, but sometimes it might take a few days longer. I will always communicate to the class if it will take me longer.

I use rubrics in grading papers both to increase the speed at which I can grade, and to increase the consistency and fairness of my grading. I always make the rubrics available to students at the time that I assign the assignments. Students are strongly encouraged to keep the rubrics in mind while completing their assignments.

I also practice anonymous grading. Studies have repeatedly shown that we have implicit biases: people of all genders tend to give the same paper different grades depending on whether the paper has a "male" name or a "female" name (e.g., John and Jane), giving the "female" name paper a lower grade. This effect also happens due to implicit biases based on race and names (e.g., Shawn and Quayshawn). Consequently, students absolutely must not include their names anywhere on their graded work. This includes the argument repair paper, the mindfulness papers, the group projects, and tests. Instead, only include your student number.

On understanding or appealing your grades, all such inquiries must be made in person in my office hours. If this is not possible (and not merely inconvenient) for you, for a variety of reasons, contact me and we will make an alternative arrangement. Except for extreme cases, I won't discuss grades via email. If you want to understand your grade, first consult the rubric (if applicable) and any comments on your assignment, then come to office hours, with your graded assignment, and we can discuss it. However to appeal a grade, you must first write out, explicitly, why you think your assignment was unfairly graded. I won't consider changing a grade unless you do this.

EXTRA CREDIT

All students are expected to meet the same standards for their grade. I do not allow any extra credit assignments.
LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY

Late assignments will have 5% deducted from the assignment grade each calendar day late, counting from the end of the due date’s class meeting time. For example, if class meets from 2:00 - 3:15pm, assignments handed in after 3:15pm on the due date are considered late.

CLASSROOM DECORUM

We will often discuss very controversial topics in class, sometimes challenging some of your most deeply held beliefs and values. Class is constructed to be a safer space to discuss such topics, but topics should always be discussed respectfully. There will be no personal attacks or comments. Language should be inclusive, which means, for example, not using masculine pronouns for the general case (e.g., “When someone is rational, he should maximize his expected utility.”) as it’s both ungrammatical and not inclusive. See the American Philosophy Association’s guidelines: www.apaonlinecsw.org/apa-guidelines-for-non-sexist-use-of-language. It also means not using epithets that are offensive (e.g., “That’s so gay,” “That’s a retarded argument,” “That’s crazy”).

Also, do not use what are known as “silencing techniques.” For an explanation on what these are, you can visit a blog post I wrote about them: www.newappsblog.com/2013/09/calling-out-silencing-techniques-in-class.html. This all applies to me as well. If you catch me breaking any of these rules, you have permission (respectfully) to immediately call me out on it, even publicly in class. I will do the same.

EMAIL POLICY

Email is a relatively new privilege. Only a short time ago students would have to go to professors’ office hours or telephone their office and leave messages. Please think carefully before you email a professor. Ask yourself the following questions: Is this information on the syllabus? Is this information in the course calendar or webpage? Is this something that I should ask or tell the instructor in person? Is this information I could receive from another student? Can my email be answered in a few sentences? Is this email a good use of my professor’s limited time and attention?

I will respond to emails within two business days of receiving it. This means that I do not answer emails at night or on the weekend. In fact, I rarely work nights or weekends. This also means that if you send me an email at 3am on Wednesday, I may not answer until Friday. I don’t carry a smart phone with access to email, so don’t expect quick email responses. And do not expect emails more than a few sentences. This means that you should think about whether emailing me is the best recourse for finding the information that you need, if that’s the purpose of your email. If I have not responded within two business days, please send me a follow-up email. Sometimes emails get missed: professors tend to receive upwards of 50 email messages per day.

Be sure to place your course title in the subject of your email, followed by a brief description of why you’re contacting me (e.g., PHIL335: Request for additional resources). Include a polite salutation (e.g., Hello Professor McKinnon), use complete sentences (emails are not text messages), and sign the email with your full name, so I know who you are. Email is now part of your professional identity as a student and it must be used professionally. This will help you throughout your university career and beyond, I assure you.
Office Hours

Students are strongly encouraged to visit during office hours for all course inquiries and any help students need with the material. I'm also happy just to talk philosophy. While my office is on the first floor, if students have mobility issues, please contact me and we can make alternate arrangements that will make meeting easier. I'm also happy to make alternate arrangements if it's extremely difficult for you to make it to my office hours. These may include, but are not limited to, setting up Skype or phone calls.

Outside of office hours, if my office door is open, you're more than welcome to knock and ask if I'm available to talk. If my door is closed, then I'm either away or too busy to speak to anyone.

Attendance and Missed Classes

If you have missed class, it is your responsibility to learn what you missed from other students and not by asking me through email. You’re welcome to come chat during office hours, though. You do not need to inform me that you will miss class, unless you have legitimate documentation excusing you from attendance. If you must miss a class, you do not need to inform me ahead of time. If your absence is an excused absence, provide me with the required documentation when you are able to. Remember, lying about the reasons for your absence constitutes a violation of the College Honor Code.

Use of Electronic Devices in Class

I strongly discourage the use of electronic devices in class, but they are permitted. However, all audio functions must be turned off--this includes putting devices on "silent" rather than "vibrate." Students using devices during class time that result in a distraction or disruption to other students may be asked to leave. Recording devices, unless given explicit permission by the instructor, are not permitted.

A number of recent studies have suggested that students tend to learn better with handwritten notes than by typing. Moreover, students (and people in general) tend to vastly overestimate the efficacy of, and their ability to, multitask. Distractions such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, or whatever favourite online distractions happen to be, draw important attention away from class discussions and information retention. Please don’t divide your attention. You have my undivided attention during class time, please give me yours in return.

If you choose to bring technology to class, use it responsibly. Use it to look up words you don’t know, check facts discussed in class, quickly search through an electronic reading, and so on. These are all good uses of technology in class.

Retention of Sample Coursework

You are advised that copies of your coursework may be retained for the purposes of benchmarking and curriculum design. All retained student work will have identifying information removed. Should you not wish to have your work retained for these purposes, please advise me of this in writing as soon as possible. You are also advised that tenure track professors (including myself) are required to include graded student work samples in their tenure portfolios.
COLLEGE HONOR CODE

COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON
HONOR CODE AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved.

Incidents where the instructor determines the student’s actions are related more to a misunderstanding will handled by the instructor. A written intervention designed to help prevent the student from repeating the error will be given to the student. The intervention, submitted by form and signed both by the instructor and the student, will be forwarded to the Dean of Students and placed in the student’s file.

Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly by the instructor and/or others having knowledge of the incident to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive a XF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This grade will appear on the student’s transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the X to be expunged. The student may also be placed on disciplinary probation, suspended (temporary removal) or expelled (permanent removal) from the College by the Honor Board.

Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration--working together without permission-- is a form of cheating. Unless the instructor specifies that students can work together on an assignment, quiz and/or test, no collaboration during the completion of the assignment is permitted. Other forms of cheating include possessing or using an unauthorized study aid (which could include accessing information via a cell phone or computer), copying from others’ exams, fabricating data, and giving unauthorized assistance.

Research conducted and/or papers written for other classes cannot be used in whole or in part for any assignment in this class without obtaining prior permission from the instructor.

Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the Student Handbook online at studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/index.php