

PHILOSOPHY OF CULTURE, LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY
San Francisco State University
Spring 2015

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Office hours: Wed 6pm-7pm
and by appointment - Hum 317

PHIL 702.01
Wednesdays 7pm-9:45pm
Location: Humanities building 374

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores political and moral aspects of language use. Through the discussion and critical analysis of academic papers and non-academic materials, we will inquire into how speech and silence are related to moral wrongness, harm, liberty, resistance and social justice. This is a seminar course. Students are required to read the assigned readings thoroughly and come to class with questions. The more students engage with the materials, the more productive the course will be.

COURSE EVALUATION

Presentation in class: 27%

2 Handouts: 2 x 10%: 20%

Weekly questions (pass/fail on each question out of 13): 13%

Written assignment (critical response to one of the readings): 40%

Presentation in class: each student must choose one of the readings from the syllabus and make a presentation in class. The presentation should explain the argument and the conclusion of the reading and, ideally, include critical comments. Length: 45 minutes. Sign up for your presentation online.

Handouts: students are expected to select 2 readings and develop 1 handout for each reading (2 total). The handout must summarize the argument of the reading. Ideally, it will also connect it with other readings, and/or include (brief) critical comments. Handouts will be graded on a 0-1-2 scale (0: non-existent or poor; 1: good; 2: very good). Handout length: up to one two-sided page. Format: be creative!

Weekly questions: each week students are expected to bring to class a question on one of the assigned readings (in writing), and raise it in class. These questions will be evaluated on a 0-1 scale (0: non-existent or irrelevant for the reading; 1: relevant).

Paper response (written assignment): each student will write a critical response to one of the readings. It cannot be a mere summary of the paper, or a statement of a personal opinion that does not explicitly engage with the paper's argument. A good paper response will contain both an

accurate summary of the paper's argument, and a critical analysis of some part of that argument. Maximum length: 1500 words.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

The classroom should be a safe space to discuss any topic, no matter how controversial, and it should be safe for everyone. We all have to build and maintain that safety by discussing respectfully, avoiding personal attacks, offensive epithets, contemptuous gestures and exclusive language. Appropriate language use includes neutral pronouns, e.g. *her/his* or *their*. See the American Philosophical Association guidelines www.apaonlinecs.org/apa-guidelines-for-non-sexist-use-of-language.

GENDER-NEUTRAL WRITING

In philosophy, gender-neutral writing is the accepted practice recommended by the American Philosophical Association. Please follow APA guidelines in your writing.

DISABILITY ACCESS STATEMENT

Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor. The Disability Programs and Resource Center is available to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process. The DPRC, located in SSB 110, can be reached by telephone at 338-2472 (voice/TTY) or by e-mail at dprc@sfsu.edu.

LEARNING ASSISTANCE CENTER

The Learning Assistance Center (LAC) provides free, on-campus writing tutoring for SF State students. It offers both one-time and ongoing tutoring sessions, with some same day appointments available. The LAC is open Monday through Friday from 9am-4pm and Friday from 9am-12pm. For more information and to schedule an appointment, see <http://www.sfsu.edu/~lac/index.html>.

READINGS:

Some of the required readings are taken from:
Ishani Maitra & Mary K. McGowan (eds.). 2012. *Speech and Harm: Controversies Over Free Speech*, 94-120. Oxford: Oxford University Press (SH).
All the other readings will be made available online on the course website.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1

Course overview

Week 2

- Austin, John. 1962. *How To Do Things With Words*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Langton, Rae. 1993. Speech Acts and Unspeakable Acts, *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 22: 293-330

Week 3

- Hornsby, Jennifer & Rae Langton. 1998. Free Speech & Illocution. *Legal Theory* 4(1): 21-37 (shorter version "Freedom of Illocution? Response to Daniel Jacobson" in Rae Langton *Sexual Solipsism: Philosophical Essays on Pornography and Objectification*, 2009. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Chapter 3).
- Jacobson, Daniel. 1995. Freedom of Speech Acts? A Response to Langton. *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 24(1): 64-78
- Langton, Rae. 2012. Beyond Belief: Pragmatics in Hate Speech and Pornography (SH)

Week 4

- Maitra, Ishani. 2009. Silencing Speech. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 39(2):309-338
- Saul, Jennifer M. 2006. Pornography, Speech Acts & Context. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 106 (2): 227-246
- Optional: Maitra, Ishani & Mary Kate McGowan. 2010. On Silencing, Rape and Responsibility. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 88(1): 167-172

Week 5

- Maitra, Ishani. 2012. Subordinating Speech. In Ishani Maitra and Mary K. McGowan (eds.) *Speech and Harm: Controversies Over Free Speech*, 94-120. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- McGowan, Mary K. 2004. Conversational Exercitives: Something Else We Do With Our Words. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 27 (1): 93-111
- Optional: Langton, Rae & Caroline West. 1999. Scorekeeping In A Pornographic Language Game. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 77: 303-19
- Lewis, David. 1979. Scorekeeping in a Language Game. *Journal of Philosophical Logic*, 8(3): 339-359

Week 6 Deadline for Handout #1

- McGowan, Mary K. 2009. Oppressive Speech. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 87 (3): 389-407
- Simpson, Robert M. 2012. Un-Ringing the Bell: McGowan On Oppressive Speech and The Asymmetric Pliability of Conversations. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 91(3): 555-575

Week 7

- Langton, Rae. 2014. The Authority of Hate Speech. Draft for *Analytic Legal Philosophy Conference*, Oxford, May 2014
- Langton, Rae. 2007. Disenfranchised Silence. In Michael Smith, Robert Goodin & Geoffrey Geoffrey (eds.), *Common Minds: Themes from the Philosophy of Philip Pettit*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Optional*: Ayala, Saraya & Nadya Vasilyeva. Forthcoming. Responsibility for Silence

Week 8

- Kukla, Rebecca. 2014. Performative Force, Convention, and Discursive Injustice. *Hypatia* 29(2): 440-457
- Fricker, Miranda. 2003. Epistemic Injustice And A Role For Virtue in The Politics of Knowing. *Metaphilosophy* 34(1/2): 154-173
- Medina, José. 2010. The Relevance of Credibility Excess in a Proportional View of Epistemic Injustice: Differential Epistemic Authority and the Social Imaginay. *Social Epistemology*, 25(1): 15-35
- Optional*: Tumulty, Maura. 2012. Illocutions and Expectations of Being Heard. In Sharon Crasnow & Anita Superson (eds.) *Out from the Shadows*, 217-244. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Week 9

- Dotson, Kristie. 2011. Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing. *Hypatia* 26(2):236-257
- Anderson, Elizabeth. 2012. Epistemic Justice as a Virtue of Social Institutions. *Social Epistemology* 26:2, 163-173
- Optional*: Fricker, Miranda. 2012. Silence and Institutional Prejudice. In Sharon Crasnow & Anita Superson (eds.) *Out from the Shadows*, 287-306. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Langton, Rae. forthcoming. Hate Speech and the Epistemology of Justice. *Criminal Law and Philosophy*

Week 10 Deadline for Handout #2

- Haslanger, Sally. 2011. Ideology, Generics, and Common Ground. In Charlotte Witt (ed.) *Feminist Metaphysics*. Springer Verlag. 179-207
- Leslie, Sarah J. Forthcoming. The Original Sin of Cognition: Fear, Prejudice and Generalization. *The Journal of Philosophy*
- Optional*: Leslie, Sarah J. 2014. Carving up the Social World with Generics. In Tania Lombrozo, Joshua Knobe & Shaun Nichols (eds.) *Oxford Studies in Experimental Philosophy*, 1. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Week 11

- Haslanger, Sally. 2000. "Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them To Be?" *Noûs* 34(1): 31-55

- Penley, Constance, Caline Perreñas Shimizu, Mirielle Miller-Young, and Tristan Taormino. 2013. Introduction: The Politics of Producing Pleasure. In Tristan Taormino, Caline Perreñas Shimizu, Constance Penley, and Mirielle Miller-Young (eds.) *The Feminist Porn Book: The Politics of Producing Pleasure*, 9-20. New York: The Feminist Press
- O'Connor, Sinead. 2013. Open Letter to Miley Cyrus. *The Guardian*, 3 October 2013
- Palmer, Amanda. 2013. An Open to Sinead O'Connor, Re: Miley Cyrus. *Amanda Palmer's Blog*, 3 October 2013
- Yoffe, Emily. 2013. College Women: Stop Getting Drunk. *Slate*, 15 October 2013
- Antony, Louis. 2013. Advising Women Against Drinking Also Sends A Dangerous Method. *The New York Times*, 24 October 2013
- Optional*: Haslanger, Sally. 2013. Social Meaning And Philosophical Method. Presidential Address, *American Philosophical Association Eastern Division*.
- Watch "The World Before Her" (2012), a documentary by Nisha Pahuja

Week 12

- Braddon-Mitchell, David & Caroline West. 2004. What is Free Speech? *Journal of Political Philosophy* 12 (4): 437-460
- McGowan, Mary K. 2012. On "Whites Only" Signs and Racist Hate Speech: Verbal Acts of Racial Discrimination (SH)
- Mill, John S. 1978. *On Liberty*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing (selection)

Week 13. Deadline for paper response draft

- Tirrell, Lynne. 2012. Genocidal Language Games (SH)
- West, Caroline. 2012. Words That Silence? Freedom of Expression and Racist Hate Speech (SH)

Week 14

- Nielsen, Laura B. 2012. Power in Public: Reactions, Responses, and Resistance to Offensive Public Speech (SH)
- Gelber, Katharine. 2012. 'Speaking Back': The Likely Fate of Hate Speech Policy in the United States and Australia (SH)
- Springer, Elise. 2013. *Communicating Moral Concern: An Ethics of Critical Responsiveness*. Cambridge: MIT Press (selection)

Week 15. Deadline for paper response (final version)

Open discussion