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

Dr. Saray Ayala-López
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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.apaonlinecsw.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 DRPC, 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:
All the other readings will be made available online on the course website.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1
Course overview
Week 2

Week 3
Langton, Rae. 2012. Beyond Belief: Pragmatics in Hate Speech and Pornography (SH)

Week 4

Week 5

Week 6 Deadline for Handout #1

Week 7

Week 8

Week 9
Langton, Rae. forthcoming. Hate Speech and the Epistemology of Justice. Criminal Law and Philosophy

Week 10 Deadline for Handout #2

Week 11


Watch “The World Before Her” (2012), a documentary by Nisha Pahuja.

**Week 12**


**Week 13. Deadline for paper response draft**


**Week 14**


Gelber, Katharine. 2012. ‘Speaking Back’: The Likely Fate of Hate Speech Policy in the United States and Australia (SH).


**Week 15. Deadline for paper response (final version)**

Open discussion.