Ling M7/Phil M24: Language and Identity  
Summer 2019 Syllabus Draft  
Last Updated February 11

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Lecture: MWF 10am-11:20am Bunche 3211  
Sections: M 11:30am-12:20am Bunche 2178  
W 1:30pm-2:20pm Bunche 2178

Course Overview

How do we use language to project our own identity? How do we use it to perceive or shape the identity of others? The question of how language interacts with our identification in various gender, racial, and sexually-oriented groups in society is broad, fascinating, and difficult. This course offers an introduction to the investigation of that question using the resources of contemporary philosophy and linguistics.

The course will be broken into two units, one for each half. In the first, we will discuss an approach grounded in Pragmatics and Speech Act Theory. The study of pragmatics aims to understand the non-literal aspects of linguistic communication. We regularly (intentionally and unintentionally) communicate more than what our words literally mean. How is it that non-literal communication is used to signal our and others’ places in society? We will investigate how complex communication impacts our social lives. Speech act theory aims to understand the sense in which we use language not just to communicate, but to do things, to act. We will discuss the different kinds of action that can be taken using language, with particular focus on the systemic suppression of minority groups. To what extent is acting with our words the result and/or cause of various hierarchical relationships?

The second unit will move us to consider other properties of language that impact our identities. We will discuss some of the different linguistic practices and strategies used across social groups. On what basis do we (or should we) engage in a given practice? To what extent do the features of a language impact our attitudes toward its speakers? Of particular interest will be the question of how an individual expresses their identity linguistically.

This course may be taken to satisfy UCLA’s Diversity Requirement.

Sensitive Topics

Much of this course’s content is extremely sensitive; we will address controversial topics about race, gender, and the suppression of minority groups through linguistic practices. This will involve discussion of slurs and hate speech, explicitly. While offensive language may be mentioned, but never used (see the use/mention distinction, day 1), we will need to show a great deal of care and empathy throughout. Please participate only in a way that will advance our conversation in a productive and respectful way.

Course Materials

There is no official textbook for this course. All required readings will be available online via the course webpage. Please check it regularly for updates.
Course Difficulty

Although there are no prerequisites for this course, it will be intellectually demanding. You will be expected to master novel theoretical concepts. You will be expected to slowly, carefully, and critically engage with the claims, arguments, and objections presented in lecture and in the assigned readings. In your final paper, you will be expected to produce a clear, sustained and focused discussion of a complex topic. In short, this class is not an easy A.

This class is not about memorizing facts or correctly reproducing slogans; this class is about developing your own opinions and critical perspectives on the topics discussed and enriching your ability to articulate and defend those opinions in a written form. Students who are prepared to work hard, challenge themselves, and attend lecture and section regularly will do well.

Assignments and Grading

- **Participation**: 10% of the course grade
- **Weekly Reading Responses**: 2% each $\times$ 5 Responses = 10% of the course grade
- **Midterm Paper**: 35% of the course grade
- **Final Paper**: 45% of the course grade

Late assignments will be docked 1/3 letter grade for each 24 hour period they are late.

Students are expected to know and to follow the university’s guidelines for academic honesty. Academic misconduct can occur in a variety of ways, including (but not limited to) cheating, fabrication, and plagiarism. When in doubt about whether some academic practice is acceptable, ask your TA or the instructor for assistance. Always err on the side of caution. **Any suspected violation of university policy regarding academic conduct will be reported directly to the Office of the Dean of Students, without exception.** UCLA’s policies on academic and intellectual integrity can be found here:

- [https://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/studentconductcode](https://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/studentconductcode)
- [https://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Academic-Integrity](https://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Academic-Integrity)

Students needing academic accommodations should contact the Center for Accessible Education (CAE) [formerly the Office for Students with Disabilities or OSD] at (310)825-1501 or in person at Murphy Hall A255. When possible, students should contact the CAE within the first two weeks of the term as reasonable notice is needed to coordinate accommodations.
# Reading & Assignment Schedule

Subject to revision. Check email and course website for updates.

## Unit 1: Speech Acts & Pragmatics

### Week 1 - Foundations

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>8/5</td>
<td>Introduction, No Reading</td>
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| 8/7   | Grice 1975, “Logic and Conversation”, Sections TBD  
Austin 1962, *How to Do Things with Words*, Sections TBD |
| 8/9   | Grice 1957, “Meaning”, Sections TBD  
Austin 1962, *How to Do Things with Words*, Sections TBD |

### Week 2 - Applications: Power in Discourse

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<th>Assignment</th>
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| 8/12  | Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003, Ch. 4, “Making Social Moves”, Sections TBD  
ibid., Ch. 6, ‘Saying and Implying”, Sections TBD |
| 8/16  | Langton 2018, “Blocking as Counter-Speech” |
| 8/14  | RR 2 due online 9am  
Kukla 2012, “Performative Force, Convention, and Discursive Injustice” |

### Week 3 - Applications: Politics

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| 8/19  | Stanley 2015, Ch. 4, “Language as a Mechanism of Control” (first half)  
ibid., (second half) |
| 8/23  | RR 3 due online 9am  
Saul 2018, “Dogwhistles, Political Manipulation, and Philosophy of Language”, Sections TBD |

## Unit 2: The Richness of Language

### Week 4 - What Language Is

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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| 8/26  | Midterm Paper Due online 9am  
Lewis 1975, "Languages and Language" |
| 8/28  | Hill 2013, “Language Ideologies, Policies, and Attitudes toward Signed Languages” |
| 8/30  | DQ 4 due online 9am  
Musgrave 2016, “Language Endangerment” |
Week 5 - What We Call Ourselves
9/2  No Class (Labor Day)
9/4  Dembroff and Wodak 2018, “He/She/They/Ze”
9/6  **RR 5 due online 9am**

Bettcher 2013, “Trans Women and the Meaning of ‘Woman’”

Week 6 - Language & Identity
9/11 Review, No reading
9/13  **Final Paper due online 11:59pm**

Catch-Up, No reading

References