Instructor: Dr. Megan Stotts
Office: University Hall 314
Office hours: TBD
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Class Sessions: Wednesday 12:30–3:20pm in UH 316

Course Website: Important information about the course, as well as some of the assigned readings, will be posted on Avenue to Learn.

Course Description:
Within philosophy of language, semantics is the study of what words themselves mean. Pragmatics, on the other hand, is the study of issues related to actual language use in context: how communication works, what kinds of acts we can perform with language, and how we can convey much more than the literal meanings of the words we use. In this seminar, we will discuss a variety of topics within pragmatics, such as speech act theory, the norms that guide communication, and theories of metaphor. We will also discuss issues connected to the boundary between semantic and pragmatic content. Much work within pragmatics assumes that semantic and pragmatic content are distinct from each other, but the question of exactly how to distinguish them is fraught with controversy. Our aim will be to reach a good general understanding of pragmatics and its relationship to semantics, while also delving into a few select topics in greater depth.

Course Objectives:
1. Gain an understanding of the theories and arguments of the authors we study, and of their significance within philosophy of language
2. Improve students’ ability to argue for their own agreement or disagreement with the authors we study
3. Improve students’ philosophical communication skills (both spoken and written)

Required Texts:
*Pursuing Meaning*, by Emma Borg. ISBN: 9780198738985

Additional required readings will be posted on Avenue to Learn.

Course Evaluation:
Participation in seminar discussion: 10%
10 reading responses: 40% (4% each)
Term paper: 50%

About the Reading Responses:
For 10 of our seminar meetings, please submit a 1–2 page (double-spaced) response to one of our readings. Your response may include a bit of summary, but it should be primarily critical—you might raise an objection to an author’s view, provide new support for an author’s view, or consider multiple ways of interpreting a difficult passage or aspect of the reading and argue that one of those interpretations is correct. Responses will be graded on the basis of the quality of your argument and your level of engagement with the reading. The responses are due at 8:30am on the day we will discuss that reading. I will often choose one or two people to informally present their reading responses during class, so you should always be prepared to do this.

**About the Term Paper:**
A term paper of 12–17 double-spaced pages will be due at 11:59pm on April 16. Papers should be submitted via email.

**Policy on Missed Work, Extensions, and Late Penalties**
Extensions will be granted on a case-by-case basis. If you submit an MSAF that covers the date on which a reading response was due, your deadline will be automatically extended by 48 hours. Longer extensions will also be granted on a case-by-case basis. Late reading responses and term papers will be penalized 5% as soon as the deadline passes, and an additional 5% for every additional day they are late.

**Topics and Readings**

**January 10: Gricean Pragmatics**
Grice, “Meaning”
Grice, “Logic and Conversation”
Neale, “Paul Grice and the Philosophy of Language” (selections)

**January 17: Speech Act Theory**
Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, Lectures I–V

**January 24: Speech Act Theory, cont’d.**
Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, Lectures VI–X

**January 31: Speech Act Theory, cont’d.**
Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, Lectures XI–XII
Searle, “The Structure of Illocutionary Acts”
Searle, “Indirect Speech Acts”

**February 7: Relevance Theory**
Wilson and Sperber, “Inference and Implicature”
Lepore and Stone, “The Psychological Turn”

**February 14: Metaphor**
Davidson, “What Metaphors Mean”
Reimer, “The Problem of Dead Metaphors”

*Mid-Term Recess*
February 28:  Metaphor, cont'd.
Camp, “Why Metaphors Make Good Insults: Perspectives, Presupposition, and Pragmatics”

March 7:  Contextualism
Carston, “Implicature, Explicature, and Truth-Theoretic Semantics”
Recanati, “The Pragmatics of What is Said”

March 14:  Semantic Minimalism
Borg,  *Pursuing Meaning*, Preface and Ch. 1

March 21:  Semantic Minimalism, cont’d.
Borg,  *Pursuing Meaning*, Ch. 2–3

March 28:  Semantic Minimalism, cont’d.
Borg,  *Pursuing Meaning*, Ch. 4–5

April 4:  Semantic Minimalism, cont’d.
Borg,  *Pursuing Meaning*, Ch. 6

Other Course Information

1. **Grades:** The scale used by the Registrar's Office will be used to convert number grades to final letter grades.
2. **Changes to the course outline:** The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this course outline. Any changes by the instructor will be announced via email or in class.

Please Note the Following Policies and Statements:

**Academic Dishonesty**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity)

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:
1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Email correspondence policy

It is the policy of the Faculty of Humanities that all email communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from each student’s own McMaster University email account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. Instructors will delete emails that do not originate from a McMaster email account.

Modification of course outlines

The University reserves the right to change dates and/or deadlines etc. for any or all courses in the case of an emergency situation or labour disruption or civil unrest/disobedience, etc. If a modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with an explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. Any significant changes should be made in consultation with the Department Chair.

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF)

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work. Please note these regulations have changed beginning Fall 2015. You can find information at mcmaster.ca/msaf/. If you have any questions about the MSAF, please contact your Associate Dean's office.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities.

Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religion and spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the Course Calendar or by their respective Faculty. In most cases, the student should contact his or her professor or academic advisor as soon as possible to arrange accommodations for classes, assignments, tests and examinations that might be affected by a religious holiday or spiritual observance.