

Philosophy of language (PHIL UA-9085)

Introduction

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Plan for today

Class details and instruction mode

Course formalities

Why *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*?

Class details

- **Schedule:** Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9h00-10h30.
- **Course Description:** This undergraduate course provides an introduction to contemporary philosophy of language, mainly but not exclusively in the analytic strand.
- **Instruction style:** the course is taught in a seminar, discussion-based style.
- **Instruction mode:** In-person.
- **Office hours:** Tuesdays, 10h30-11h30 (if possible), room #606.
- **E-mail:** inescrespo@gmail.com, ic40@nyu.edu
- **Course webpage:** <http://inescrespo.altervista.org/nyu.html>

What brings us here

- Who am **I**? Why do I teach this course?
- Who are **you**? What questions concerning language do you ask yourself?

Instruction mode: In person

- Respect:

- Class starts at 9h00 sharp. As a sign of respect to all those involved, please arrive in the classroom by 8h55.
- Students should be respectful and courteous at all times to all participants in class.
- It is not allowed to eat in class.
- Leaving class to go to the bathroom without asking permission or yawning in class is considered rude.

- Phones:

You are expected to set phone on silent mode or turn it off before the beginning of each class. You may not use your phone in class.

- Other devices:

You may bring the texts on paper (strongly preferred) or use a tablet or laptop as a digital support if you prefer not to print all texts on paper. No other use of tablets or laptops is allowed in the class. This means that **you may not take notes on electronic devices, that you may not browse the internet, that you may not send messages on chat platforms**. Should you fail to make appropriate use of a tablet or laptop as a digital support for the texts, you will be asked to leave the classroom at once, you will be requested to print out all texts, and you will no longer be allowed to bring a tablet or laptop to class.

This is a **philosophy** class

- **Goal:** that you learn about what other people have thought about language, but that you also develop your own views.
- What's the title of this course:
"Introduction to philosophy of language"? **No.**
It is: **Philosophy of language.**
- Philosophy is a **skill**.
- **Method:** argumentation, a rational exchange of views and objections.
- **Tool:** *l'interpellation*, i.e., I will question you, ask you what you think, and always expect you'll have something to say.
- Expect **questions**, not answers.

Course formalities

- **Readings:** You are expected to be up-to-date for each class.

This doesn't mean you've understood everything you've read, but that you've read all that you're supposed to, and that you've taken note of what you don't get.

- **Class attendance** is mandatory: unexcused absences affect your grade.
- **Class participation:** Meeting the expectations specified on the syllabus has a significant positive impact on the final grade. Repeated failure to meet them has a significant negative impact on the final grade.
- **Assignments:** There are three graded homework assignments.
 - Each of the three homework assignments will be executed in **two stages**.

> **Stage 1** will take place **in the classroom**, you will be required to write on the spot, with pen and paper, or on a laptop on condition that it has no access to wifi. It will be handed in (or submitted) to your instructor at the end of the class.

> **Stage 2** will be written **at home** and submitted by email as a PDF file by the deadline indicated in the course planning on the syllabus.

Calculation of grades

- The grade of each of the three homework assignments will be determined as a **weighted average** between stage 1 & stage 2.
- Your final grade the average of the homework assignments constitutes the core of the final grade.
- **Failure to submit or fulfill any required component will result in failing the course**, regardless of grades achieved in other assignments.
- A **bonus** on the final grade—it will be increased by half a letter grade—will be granted to students who sustain **excellent participation** in class.
- A **penalty** on the final grade—it will be decreased by half a letter grade—will be imposed on students who repeatedly fail to meet the components defining **class participation** stated above.

Why *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*?

- Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (1832-1898) was an English author, poet and mathematician. He was born in Daresbury, Cheshire. He studied, and afterwards taught, at Christ Church, Oxford.
- He wrote *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, published under the pen name “Lewis Carroll”, in 1865.
- A sequel, *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There*, was published in 1871.
- Is *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* a book for children?
- Word play, punning, slips of the tongue, poetry, nonsense...
All these features will be of use for us in disentangling the many layers that constitute language.

What's next?

Session 2: Thu 25 Jan.

Topic: Brief overview of phonetics and phonology.

Reading: Elizabeth Zsiga (2006).

Contact

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