

Phil 495 : PNP Seminar : Context-Sensitivity (Spring 2011)

Course website: <http://www.artsci.wustl.edu/~grussell/PNPSeminarS11.html>

Class Times: Tuesdays 2-5pm

Class Location: Wilson 104

Prerequisites: A 300 level philosophy course. Phil 306 and Phil 100 are also recommended.

Instructor: Gillian Russell

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Office Hours: Thursday 3-4pm or by appointment, Wilson Hall 209

Course Description:

Ideas about context-sensitivity originated in the philosophy of language but are now being applied (or misapplied) throughout philosophy. This seminar will focus on the technical apparatus underlying innovations like indexicality, neo-relativism, and invariantism, and evaluate their applications in philosophy more generally. Familiarity with basic 20th century philosophy of language will be presupposed. Students who haven't taken Phil 306 or equivalent should familiarize themselves with an introductory textbook. An introductory logic course would also be an asset. Prerequisite: A 300 level Philosophy course (Phil/PNP 315 is recommended).

Syllabus

The course will have three main sections:

- Fundamentals: this section will be a crash course in analytic philosophy of language, designed to ensure that everyone has the basic tools necessary for following work in this area.
- Core Texts in Context-Sensitivity: starting with Kaplan's *Demonstratives*, we'll look at some of the core ideas in play in current discussions of context-sensitivity.
- Contemporary Applications: this section will be more open-ended and research-based

Part 1 - Fundamentals

Useful background reading: "Twentieth Century Philosophy of Language", by Jason Stanley
<http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~jasoncs/routledge.pdf>

January 18th - Referring and Denoting

"On Sense and Reference" - Gottlob Frege <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2181485>

"On Denoting" - Bertrand Russell <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2248381>

January 25th - Semantics and Pragmatics

"General Semantics" - David Lewis <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20114749>

"Logic and Conversation" - H. P. Grice

February 1st - Names, Rigid Designation, Direct Reference

Lectures 1 and 2 of *Naming and Necessity* - Saul A. Kripke

February 8th - The Referential/Attributive Distinction

"Reference and Definite Descriptions" - Keith S. Donnellan <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2183143>

Part 2 - Core Texts in Context-Sensitivity

February 15th

Excerpt from *Demonstratives* - David Kaplan

February 22nd

"Score-Keeping in a Language Game" - David Lewis, 1979. *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 8, 339-59. Reprinted in Lewis 1983, *Philosophical Papers*, Volume 1. New York: Oxford. <https://facultystaff.richmond.edu/~obelkind/07.Phil353/Lewis79.pdf>

"Frege on Demonstratives" - John Perry <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2184564>

1st March

"Pragmatics" - Charles Travis, in B. Hale and C. Wright (eds.), *A Companion to the Philosophy of Language*, Blackwell, (Oxford, 1997) .

8th March - Possible Worlds and Content

"Assertion" - Stalnaker

March 15th

"Index, Context, and Content" - David Lewis (1980).

March 22nd - Assessment Sensitivity

"Making Sense of Relative Truth" - John MacFarlane <http://johnmacfarlane.net/makingsense.pdf>

"Non-Indexical Contextualism" - John MacFarlane <http://www.springerlink.com/content/e072383726380533/fulltext.pdf>

Part 3 - Applications

March 29th - Knowledge (1)

"A defence of skepticism" - Peter Unger <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2184030>.

"Elusive Knowledge" - David Lewis, 1996. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 74, 549-67.
<http://fitelson.org/epistemology/lewis.pdf>

April 5th - Knowledge (2)

Chapters 1, 2 and 3 *Knowledge and Practical Interests* - Jason Stanley (Oxford University Press, 2008)

"Contextualism: An Explanation and Defense." DeRose, Keith. In J. Greco and E. Sosa (eds.), *The Blackwell Guide to Epistemology*, 187-205. Oxford (Blackwell, 1999)

April 12th - Knowledge (3)

Chapter 5 of *Knowledge and Practical Interests* - Jason Stanley (OUP, 2008)

"Knowledge by Indifference" - Russell and Doris, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, Volume 86, Number 3.

"In Defence of Interest Relative Invariantism" (draft): <http://brian.weatherson.org/DIRI.pdf>

April 19th - Epistemic Modals

MacFarlane "Epistemic Modals are assessment sensitive"

von Fintel, K. and A. Gillies (2008) "CIA Leaks," *Philosophical Review* 117, pages 77-98. <http://philreview.dukejournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/117/1/77>

April 26th - Further Applications

Richard, M. (2004) "Contextualism and Relativism," *Philosophical Studies* 119: 215-242.

MacFarlane, John (2002) "Future Contingents and Relative Truth"

<http://www.springerlink.com/content/e072383726380533/fulltext.pdf>

Relevant drafts from the forthcoming *Routledge Companion to the Philosophy of Language*, edited by myself and Delia Graff Fara (available only in the folder.)

"Relativism" - John MacFarlane

"Context Sensitivity" - Ernie Lepore and Tom Donaldson

"Two Dimensional Logic" - Steven Kuhn

"Indexicals and Demonstratives" - Allyson Mount

"Philosophy of Language for Epistemology" - Ram Neta

"Semantics and Pragmatics" - Chris Gauker

"Pragmatic Enrichment" - Francois Recanati

"Dynamic Semantics" - Seth Yalcin

<http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415993104/>

Assessment

Undergraduates:

Midterm Examination: 40% Tuesday 22nd March. The midterm examination will consist of approximately 4 essay questions on section 1 of the syllabus, and 4 essay questions section 2 of the syllabus. You will have to answer 3 of these questions total, with at least one question coming from each section. Each question will require you to present the core thesis and argument from at least one of the papers we have read.

Term Paper Proposal: 10% Roughly one side of structured bullet-points, to be brought to my office hours and discussed with me one time between 23rd March and 15th April.

Term Paper: 50%. Word limit 1500 words. Your term paper should present an original argument for a thesis concerning context-sensitivity. Learning to write a good philosophy paper is a difficult thing and this course will not primarily be focused on teaching you how to do it. I strongly recommend that you read <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html> before and during the writing of your paper, even if you have substantial experience with writing philosophy papers.

Graduate Students:

As above, except that the term paper should be 2-3000 words.

All papers should be turned in to the "turn in" filing cabinet in the philosophy department office on the 2nd floor of Wilson Hall by 3.30pm on the day they are due. (The office closes at 4pm, and the people who work there like to be on their way home at 4.05pm, not unlocking doors for students with a late paper.) Please use a single paper clip to hold the pages together. Pages should be numbered, with your name on the final page. Do not put your student number or social security number on your paper. Any well-known, consistent citation method is acceptable. Your paper should finish with a bibliography, listing the texts you read while pursuing research on the paper, including any texts cited.

Policy on Drafts

I will be happy to take a look at a draft of your term paper as long as you get it to me at least 1 week before the finished paper is due. This gives me time to read it carefully and write some comments, and leaves you some time to consider them before writing your final draft.

Academic Misconduct

Students suspected of plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty or misconduct will be reported to the academic integrity officer for Arts and Sciences, so that the incident may be handled in a consistent, fair manner, and so that substantiated charges of misconduct may be noted in students' records.

For those students who wish to take the class pass/fail, final grades for the course of C- or above will constitute a pass.

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