

# Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur

## Proposal for a New Course

1. Course No: 7XX
2. Course Title: Philosophy of Language
3. Course Structure:
  - (a) Per Week Lectures: 3
  - (b) Tutorial:0
  - (c) Laboratory:0
  - (d) Additional Hours: 0
  - (e) Credits (3+0+0+0): 9
  - (f) Duration of Course: Full Semester
4. Proposing Department/IDP : Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
5. Other Departments/IDPs which may be interested in the proposed course: Nil
6. Other faculty members interested in teaching the proposed course:
7. Proposing Instructor(s): A. V. Ravishankar Sarma
8. Course Description: Philosophers have long been concerned with the systematic way in which language carries information about the world. Philosophy of language investigates the nature of human language, its origins and use, the relationship between meaning and truth, and how language relates to human thought and understanding, as well as to reality itself. In the wake of the logical revolution at the end of the 19th century, a number of philosophers well-versed in formal logic turned their attention to the project of understanding human languages, not just logical ones. Others argued for a different approach, claiming that the tools of logic are either insufficient or just the wrong sort of thing to help us understand the nuances of human language use.

Questions in philosophy of language include: what does it mean for a word to make reference? What does it mean for language to mean something, and how does that meaning correspond to reality? Another central question is whether or not a form of language is necessary for thought—do people think in language, or do they think and then translate those thoughts into language? What's the foundational relationship between language, its speakers, and the world? This course is an introduction to the philosophy of language, mostly in the analytic tradition.

**Objectives :**

- (a) To focus on language from a philosophical point of view and to articulate the various philosophical issues in the discourse on language.
- (b) To emphasize the various dimensions of meaning, bearing in mind that meaning is a major concern in the philosophy of language.
- (c) To enumerate the various theories of meaning in the philosophy of language and discuss the reference theory of meaning as a theory that enjoys popular attention in the philosophy of language.
- (d) To explain different contemporary issues and views in the philosophy of language.

**Contents :**

S. No	Broad Title	Topics	No. of Lectures
1	What is Philosophy of Language?	Philosophy and Language, general aims of philosophy of language	2
2	Verificationist theory of Meaning	Philosophical Consequences, Role of meaning in Logic, Quine on verificationism and Analyticity, the role of meaning in Logic	6
3	Sense and Reference	Frege on sense and reference, Russell on denoting, Descriptivism and Kripkean challenge, causal theory of reference	6
4	Reference and Quantification	Tarski's theory of truth, Davidson's theory of meaning, Montague semantics: english as formal language	8
5	Language and Syntactic Structures	Linguistics as science of human language, Chomsky's vision of Linguistic theory, Chomsky on meaning and language faculty	6
6	Pragmatics of Language	Searle on Meaning, speech acts and derived intentionality, implicature and figurative speech	6
7	Meaning as a Philosophical Problem	Inferentialism: Meaning and Use, Kripke on Wittgenstein on rules, Kripkenstein's skeptical paradox, Externalism and Internalism	8
	Total Number of Lectures		42

**Pre-requisites, if any :** No pre-requisites needed for this course

**Short summary for including in the Courses of Study Booklet :** We constantly utilize language to express ourselves and comprehend others. But, how does language work? What makes squiggles on a page or noises meaningful? What are these meanings and where did they come from? This serves as the foundation for

an inquiry into the Philosophy of Language. Philosophy of language is an extraordinarily rich field. It has a history stretching back, in Western tradition, to the pre-Socratics. It has also been a major concern in both the Anglo-American and Continental traditions throughout the last century or two. This course will cover a variety of subjects in the analytic philosophy of language of the 20th century, such as the nature of linguistic representation, translation, propositional attitudes, speech acts, truth, reference, and meaning.

9. Books:

**Recommended books :**

- Morris, M. (2006). An introduction to the philosophy of language. Cambridge University Press.
- Soames, S. (2010). Philosophy of language. Princeton University Press.
- Szabó, Z. G., & Thomason, R. H. (2018). Philosophy of language. Cambridge University Press.

**Text Books / Reference Books :**

- McGinn, C. (2015). Philosophy of language: The classics explained. MIT Press.
- Martinich, A. P. (2012). Philosophy of language. In Philosophy of meaning, knowledge and value in the twentieth century (pp. 8-26). Routledge.
- Kemp, G. (2013). What is this thing called philosophy of language?. Routledge.
- Lycan, W. G. (2018). Philosophy of language: A contemporary introduction. Routledge.
- Chomsky, N. (2000). New Horizons in the Study of Language and Mind. Cambridge University Press.
- Lepore, E., & Smith, B. C. (2006). The Oxford handbook to the philosophy of language.
- S. Kripke, 1980. Naming and Necessity. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

10. Any Other Remarks: No

Dated:28-09-2024

  
Proposer: A. V. Ravishankar Sarma 28/09

Dated:

DUGC/DPGC Convener:

**The course is approved / not approved**

**Chairman, SUGC/SPGC:**

**Dated:**.....