

## Course Outline

### Philosophy 343/PHI 794

#### Topics in Philosophy of Language and Hermeneutics

Philosophers of the past one hundred years or so haven't been able to agree on much of anything. In matters of both style and substance, our epoch seems to have produced unprecedented levels of fragmentation. It is all the more remarkable, given this state of affairs, that the questions about language and interpretation have come to be recognized, in virtually all quarters, as central to the contemporary philosophical enterprise. For both the Anglo-American and European Continental traditions, the riddles of the word, of the relation between speaking and thinking, writing and meaning, intention and expression, have been crucial to the aspiration of real philosophical progress. In this course, we will look carefully at works of Wittgenstein and Heidegger representative of these traditions. We will then attempt to discover whether and to what extent the tension between them, so determinative for the philosophical landscape in which we presently find ourselves, is already anticipated in Plato's *Cratylus* – the inaugural work in the theory of language.

#### Texts

<i>The Blue and Brown Books</i>	Wittgenstein
<i>On the Way to Language</i>	Heidegger
<i>The Cratylus</i>	Plato

#### Evaluation

The mark for this course will be based on seminars (60%) and a substantial term paper (40%). Graduate students will be expected to supplement their own presentations and (when useful) those of others with brief comments on related texts and relevant secondary literature. Their final papers will be subject to all requirements of the shared Masters Program. The number of seminars will depend upon course enrollment. I have divided our texts for purposes of presentation and we will distribute the work equally among those registered in the course. While undergraduate seminar presentations need not themselves take the form of polished essays, members ought to feel called upon to do something more than summarize the arguments of the assigned texts. Appropriate procedures are discussed in more detail on the seminar guidelines accompanying this outline.

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