PHZ325E Philosophy of Language (Fall 2024)

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Course Description

Can artificial intelligences (AI) perform speech acts such as assertion and lying? Do the outputs produced by artificial text generators have meanings? If artificially intelligences lack speaker intention, in what sense do human and artificial intelligences communicate with each other? This course aims to investigate these questions by looking at how philosophers understand such concepts as meaning, assertion, and lying, and by assessing whether and how these concepts apply to human-AI interactions.

Course Requirements

1. Class participation (20%): For every meeting, 1-2 of you will send to our class's chat group a question about the reading to be discussed. Examples of what your question can be about: the parts of the reading that you don't understand; your disagreements with the author(s).

2. Mid-term take-home assignment (20%)

3. Final take-home assignment (40%)

Course Schedule

Week 1: Course introduction

Week 2: Meaning and intention: Grice, H. Paul. "Meaning". *The philosophical Review* 66.3 (1957): 377-388.

Week 3: Performatives: J. L. Austin. "Performative Utterances " (1961), in A. P. Martinich (ed), *The Philosophy of Language*, pp. 120-130

Week 4: Speech act*: John R. Searle. What Is a Speech Act? (1965), in A. P. Martinich (ed), The Philosophy of Language, pp. 130 - 141*

Week 5: Cooperative principle, what is said, and what is meant: Grice, H. Paul. "Logic and conversation" (1975), in A. P. Martinich (ed), *The Philosophy of Language,* pp. 156-168

Week 6: Assertion: Stalnaker, Robert C. "Assertion." (1978) in *Context and content: Essays on intentionality in speech and thought*

Weeks 7 and 8: Assertion: Neri Marsili. "The definition of assertion: Commitment and truth" (2024).

Week 9: Can machines produce meanings?: Green, Mitchell, and Jan G. Michel. "What might machines mean?." *Minds and Machines* 32.2 (2022): 323-338.

Week 10: Metaphor and fictionalism: Walton, K. "Metaphor and Prop Oriented Make-Believe" (1993)

Mid-term assignment due

Weeks 11: Can machines produce meanings?: Mallory, Fintan. "Fictionalism about chatbots." *Ergo an Open Access Journal of Philosophy* 10 (2023).

Weeks 12 and 13: Lying and asserting (part 1): Stokke, Andreas. "Lying and asserting." *The Journal of philosophy* 110.1 (2013): 33-60.

Weeks 14 and 15: Lying with metaphor: Güngör, Hüseyin. "Non-literal lies are not exculpatory." (2024) *Philosophical Quarterly*

Weeks 16 and 17: Can artificial intelligence make assertions and lie?: Butlin, Patrick, and Emanuel Viebahn. "AI assertion." *Ergo* (2024).