Course Description
This is a course in the philosophy of language. In general, the philosophy of language inquires into the nature of language and the relationship between language and the world. One important problem is to understand the notion of truth in language and the conditions under which a statement, sentence, etc. is true (or false). This course will be loosely organized around that problem, which will serve as our point of departure in exploring questions about meaning, reference, and other important notions. We shall study the writings of prominent 19th and 20th century philosophers representing both the Anglo-American analytic and the Continental European traditions.

Texts
photocopied materials, notebook on reserve

Course Activities
This course will be conducted as a seminar. Most of our time in class will be spent discussing the assigned readings and the questions and problems that arise in connection with them. One class meeting, at the end of the semester, will be devoted to presentations of course papers by members of the seminar. Video materials will occasionally be used, and faculty visitors will sometimes participate in the seminar.

Papers
You will write a formal course paper and three short “reaction papers” during the term. Each reaction paper will be written on the assigned reading for a particular class and will be distributed (via paper or email) to the other members of the seminar in advance of that class. Reaction papers will be scheduled so that there are two such papers for each class meeting. You may be request to be assigned a particular class (or particular classes). In each of your three papers, you will comment on some aspect of the reading that you regard as interesting and significant. Reaction papers will be used to stimulate discussion and typically will be 1–2 pages long.

Your formal course paper must be on an appropriate topic, which you will select in consultation with the instructor. Your topic will be some important problem or question in the philosophy of language closely related to those we discuss in the seminar. Your paper will present your own original exploration of that problem or question. A list of suggested topics will be provided.

Course Grade
Your course grade will depend on your participation in seminar discussions, your three “reaction” papers, and your formal course paper and presentation. Your participation in discussion will determine approximately 40% of your final grade, your “reaction” papers approximately 20%, and your formal course paper and presentation approximately 40%.