

Professor Elisabeth Camp

*Office:* 426 Logan Hall

*Office Hours:* Wednesdays 2-3:30 and by appointment

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**Text:** Saul Kripke: *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*,  
available at Penn Book Center, 34<sup>th</sup> and Sansom Streets

All other readings, as well as all handouts will be posted on Blackboard.

***Course Description:***

In this class we will explore the various kinds of things that get called “meaning,” from the most basic informational correlations (as when we say that smoke means fire), to the conventional meaning of sentences in a language, and on to the most open-ended, complex forms of cultural significance (as when we talk about what a movie means to us). What determines something’s meaning: the creator or the recipient? Can all of these kinds of meaning be considered true or false? If something is meaningful, must there always be a determinate answer about *what* it means? Readings will include philosophers (Quine, Wittgenstein, Grice, Millikan), evolutionary biologists (Skyrms), and literary theorists (Wimsatt and Beardsley, Fish).

***Course Requirements:***

- Two shorter papers, c. 1500 words (25% each of course grade).
- A final paper, c. 2500 words (35% of course grade).
- Attendance and participation in class (15% of course grade).
- Daily readings: you should do the assigned reading *before* class.  
Always bring the readings to class.

This class is a seminar, and depends on your active participation. (This also means that we may not cover all of the material in an entirely timely fashion; I’ll make decisions about what to cut and expand as we go along.) To guide discussion, I will post study questions on Blackboard at the beginning of each week; you should post a brief response (one paragraph) to one question on the Blackboard discussion board, and take a look at everybody else’s responses, at least once each week.

If you must miss class, you should make up the absence by writing a short response (less than a page) to a question about the material discussed that day.

Except in extreme conditions, extensions on papers must be granted well before the due date, and only at my discretion; otherwise, late papers will be downgraded 1/3 letter grade per day.

You are expected to be familiar with and to abide by Penn’s policy on academic and intellectual integrity: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/osl/acadint.html>.

## Schedule of Topics and Readings

(very much subject to revision: check Blackboard for updates)

### Varieties of Meaning: Introduction

Wed 1/13	Introduction
Mon 1/18	NO CLASS
Wed 1/20	Locke: <i>Essay Concerning Human Understanding</i> , III.2, III.6.44-51
Mon 1/25	Grice: "Meaning"
Wed 1/27	Grice cont'd
Mon 2/1	Grice con'td

### From Natural meaning to Speaker's Meaning

Wed 2/3	Dretske "Information" (§1 of BBS Précis) Millikan: "Local Natural Signs & Information"
Mon 2/8	Kimball: "Honeybee Communication" (online; link on Blackboard) Seyfarth & Cheney: "Meaning and Emotion in Animal Vocalizations"
Wed 2/10	SNOW DAY!
Mon 2/15	Lewis: "Coordination and Convention"
Wed 2/17	Lewis cont'd
Mon 2/22	Skyrms: "The Evolution of Meaning" <b>First paper topics handed out</b>
Wed 2/24	Grice: "Logic and Conversation"

### Meaning, Thought, and Indeterminacy

Mon 3/1	Kripke: <i>Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language</i> , ch. 2 [optional: Wittgenstein, <i>Philosophical Investigations</i> (excerpts)]
Wed 3/3	Kripke ch. 2 cont'd
<b>Fri 3/5</b>	<b>First papers due</b>
3/8 & 3/10	NO CLASS: Spring Break
Mon 3/15	Kripke ch. 3
Wed 3/17	Quine: "Ontological Relativity," <i>Word and Object</i> (excerpts)
Mon 3/22	Searle: "Indeterminacy, Empiricism, and the First Person"
Wed 3/24	Davidson: "Radical Interpretation," "A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs"
Mon 3/29	Millikan: "Truth Rules, Hoverflies, & the Kripke-Wittgenstein Paradox" <b>Second paper topics handed out</b>

## **Meaning and Interpretation in the Arts**

*What is the source of artistic meaning?*

- Wed 3/31 Wimsatt & Beardsley: "The Intentional Fallacy"  
Mon 4/5 Fish: "Is There a Text in this Class?"  
Barthes: "The Death of the Author"  
Wed 4/7 Foucault: "What is an Author?"  
**Fri 4/9 Second papers due**  
Mon 4/12 JOSH KNOBE TALK  
Wed 4/14 Hirsch: "In Defense of the Author"  
Nehamas: "The Postulated Author"

*What is the kind of artistic meaning?*

- Mon 4/19 Brooks: "The Heresy of Paraphrase"  
Camp: "Metaphor and That Certain 'Je Ne Sais Quoi'"  
Wed 4/21 Mink: "History and Fiction as Modes of Comprehension"  
Velleman: "Narrative Explanation"  
  
Mon 4/26 *Review and Conclusion*  
**Final Paper Topics Handed Out**  
  
Fri 5/11 **Final Paper Due**