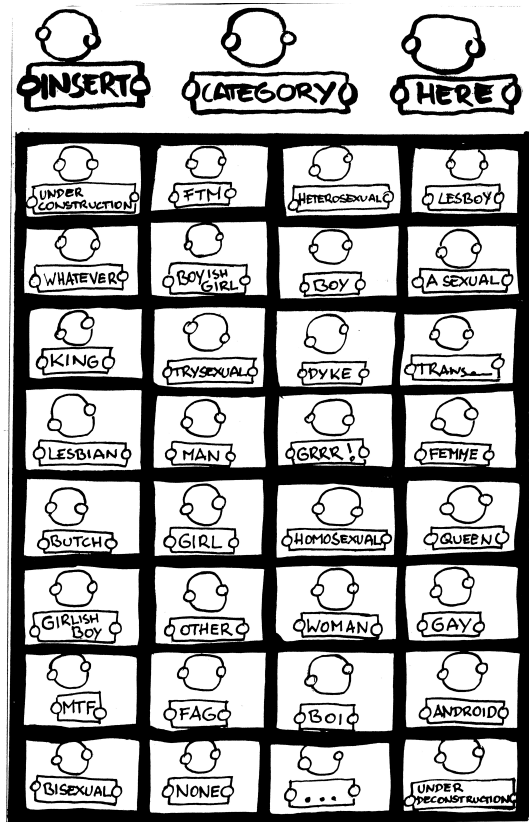


Language and Gender: Introduction to Philosophy of Language

Winter 2015/2016, Graz University¹



<http://nic.tumblr.com>

Course No.	501.215
Time	Tuesday 1:30 – 3:00pm
Room	Heinrichstr. 26/V, UR 09.51
Website	http://moodle.uni-graz.at
Instructor	Dr. Dirk Kindermann
Email	dirk.kindermann@uni-graz.at
Phone	0316/380-2314
Office	Room 513
Office Hours	Tuesdays 5-6pm & by appointment

Course Description

In the course we will be concerned with the following questions on the relationship between language and discrimination based on gender (and other socially relevant categories):

1. How do we discriminate against others in speaking? How do we use language to demean, derogate, offend, and hurt other people based on their gender, sexual orientation, or ethnicity?
2. What is the meaning of expressions who are conventionally used to offend others because of their gender, sexual orientation, or ethnic identification?
3. Does the representation of gender and ethnicity in language influence our thinking?
4. What is the role of generalizations (in so-called generic statements) in sexist and racially prejudiced thinking?

¹This is a translated and slightly revised version of my German syllabus with additional comments to instructors at the end.

5. Your questions (see below)

In trying to answer these questions, we will look at some key topics from analytic philosophy of language. We will read both classical texts from philosophy of language and contemporary texts on language, gender, and race.

Course Goals

The course is designed to put students in a position to ...

1. identify and critically evaluate some of the social mechanisms inherent in our use of language; and
2. reconstruct and assess the foundational assumptions and theories from 20th century philosophy of language that we will study.

With these two goals, the course is also meant to encourage further study of analytic philosophy of language on your own.

Prerequisites

This course is not easy. We want to get acquainted with difficult topics in the philosophy of language and also to apply them to our course questions. At the same time, we touch upon topics equally at home in gender studies, sociology, feminist theory, and political philosophy. You should be prepared to work hard for this course. Prior knowledge of philosophy of language will be useful but is not required. Knowledge of gender studies is most welcome but not a requirement either. I will require:

- Openness to the course questions on language and gender
- Willingness to do independent online research on particular examples of discrimination in speech & writing
- Availability for a full seminar day, equivalent to three sessions, on Saturday, 5 December 2015.

Climate Issues

We will often discuss controversial topics in class, which may challenge some of your most deeply held beliefs and values. The class room is meant to provide a safe climate, in which we treat each other and third parties respectfully; in which we avoid personal attacks or comments and intervene respectfully when we notice such attacks; and in which we will make an attempt at using inclusive language. This means, for instance, that we won't use masculine pronouns for the gender-neutral, general case ("An inexperienced student may ask *his* neighbor"). Take a look at the guidelines of the American Philosophical Association² for English and the Wikipedia entry

²www.apaonlinecsw.org/apa-guidelines-for-non-sexist-use-of-language

‘Geschlechtergerechte Sprache’³ for German. Inclusive language also means avoiding aggressive and offensive speech (“That’s retarded,” “Are you blind?”) as well as ‘silencing techniques.’⁴

These rules for a respectful and constructive seminar climate apply to me as well. Whenever I may not live up to them, you’re welcome to respectfully call me out on it. I will do the same.⁵

Readings

All course readings will be available on the [Moodle course website](#). Further readings can also be found in the course’s section in the philosophy library.

Online Participation

Please visit the Moodle course website regularly at <http://moodle.uni-graz.at>. Here you will find the readings, handouts, the glossary you will build up together over the course of semester, links to relevant current affairs, and updates of this course syllabus.

Course Schedule

Please check the Moodle course website weekly if there are updates to the course schedule.

Speech Acts: Silencing & Subordination	
2 13/10/2015	Speech act theory: J.L. Austin <i>Austin (1961): ‘Performative Utterances’</i> <i>Morris (2007): Chapter 12 ‘Austin on Speech Acts’ in An Introduction to Philosophy of Language</i>
3 20/10/2015	Pornography & Silencing <i>Langton (1993): ‘Speech Acts and Unspeakable Acts’</i> <i>Anderson et al. (2012): ‘Language and Race’, S. 753–4 & 757–60 (‘Speech Acts’)</i> Snippets: (a) <i>sex vs gender</i> , (b) <i>sexism</i>
4 27/10/2015	Communication as a language game <i>Lewis (1979): ‘Scorekeeping in a Language Game’</i> Snippets: (a) <i>semantics vs pragmatics</i> , (b) <i>presupposition</i>

³https://static.uni-graz.at/fileadmin/Akg/4_Fuer_MitarbeiterInnen/LEITFADEN_Geschlechtergerechtes_Formulieren_APZ.pdf, https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geschlechtergerechte_Sprache

⁴“Silencing techniques are things people say to get someone to drop out of a discussion, either by leaving or becoming and remaining silent.” (Rachel McKinnon) You can find examples here: <http://krwordgazer.blogspot.ca/2013/04/silencing-techniques.html> Examples of silencing in philosophy class rooms can be found here: www.newappsblog.com/2013/09/calling-out-silencing-techniques-in-class.html. Notice also: ‘Silencing tactics are fairly simple. They are methods used to quash dissent. To dismiss or disable the voices of dissent against the privilege[-]induced majority speak.’ <http://geekfeminism.wikia.com/wiki/Silencing>

⁵This part of the syllabus is adapted from Rachel McKinnon’s syllabus for her course *Phil 335: Philosophy of Language*, taught at College of Charleson in fall 2014.

5 3/11/2015	Language games: Silencing & Subordination	<p>Langton & West (1999): ‘Scorekeeping in a Pornographic Language Game’</p> <p>Optional: Rae Langton (2015): <i>John Locke Lectures</i>, Lecture I: ‘Accommodating Authority’</p> <p>Snippets: (a) <i>feminism(s)</i>, (b) <i>LGBTQI(-movement)</i></p>
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Slurs, Pejoration, and Discrimination		
6 10/11/2015	Pejoration as part of semantic meaning?	<p>Jeshion (2013) , Anderson et al. (2012, S. 754–57): ‘Language and Race’</p> <p>Snippets: (a) <i>racism</i>, (b) <i>use vs mention</i>, (c) <i>scare quotes</i></p>
7 17/11/2015	Features of slurs & pejoratives	<p>Hom (2010). On the ‘taboo’ of slurs: http://www.tagesschau.de/inland/herrmann-103.html</p> <p>Snippets: (a) <i>Person of Colour, Black, white (weiß)</i>, (b) <i>n-word (Engl.)</i>, (c) <i>N-Wort (German)</i></p>
8 24/11/2015	Pejoration from a constructivist perspective	<p>Hornscheidt (2011) & Hornscheidt (2013)</p> <p>Snippets: (a) <i>queer</i>, (b) <i>queer(-feminism)</i>, (c) <i>Intersectionality</i>, (d) <i>ableism, classism, ageism, lookism</i></p>

Language & Thought		
9 1/12/2015	Does language shape thought?	<p>Boroditsky et al. (2003): ‘Sex, Syntax, Semantics’ & Boroditsky (2011)</p> <p>Elbourne (2011): <i>Meaning</i>, Kapitel 8: ‘Meaning and Thought’, S. 140–55</p> <p>Snippets: (a) <i>implicit bias</i>, (b) <i>cis(gender) & trans(gender)</i></p>

Generalization & Generics		
10 5/12/2015 10:00–11:30am	Thinking in (social) categories: cognitive mechanisms	<p>Anderson et al. (2012): ‘Language and Race’, S. 760–65 (‘Racial Generics’)</p> <p>Leslie (ming): ‘The Original Sin of Cognition: Fear, Prejudice, and Generalization’</p> <p>Snippets: (a) <i>anti-semitism</i>, (b) <i>homophobia</i>, (c) <i>transphobia, biphobia</i></p>

Genderneutral Language & Linguistic Intervention		
11 5/12/2015 12:00–1:30pm	What is genderism/sexism?	Hornscheidt (2012, 72–75 & 270–333). Snippets: (a) <i>heternormativity</i> , (b) <i>political correctness</i>
12 5/12/2015 3:00–4:30pm	Using speech to intervene in genderism: personal appellation	Hornscheidt (2012, 72–75 & 270–333) Snippets: (a) <i>Ausländer_in</i> , (b) <i>intersex</i>

Power, Ideology, Language		
13 15/12/2015	Language as a mechanism of control	(Stanley, 2015, Kap. 4) http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2015-07/propaganda-jason-stanley-interview Snippets: (a) <i>propaganda</i> , (b) <i>ideology</i>

15/12/2015	Essay writing in philosophy (optional extra session) Deadline for media research & Deadline for discussion of your essay question
22/01/2016	Deadline essay

Attendance

In compliance with university regulations, attendance in class is obligatory. You may miss as many as 3 sessions without sanction. Note that the seminar day of 5 December 2015 is equivalent to three sessions. Please always send me a short email before class if you cannot make it to that class.

Assignments & Assessment

1. Attendance and participation in class (10%)

Regular attendance as well as active participation in class discussion make up this part of your overall grade.

2. Short presentation (25%)

You are each required to give a **short presentation of 10–15 minutes** in class. We will have one presentation by a group of 2–3 students in every session. Please prepare, write, and deliver the presentation *together as a group* (see ‘Team work’ below). The presentations are meant to provide a **short and succinct** summary and evaluation of the most important **theses and arguments** in the text we are reading for the session. A **short handout** (1–2 pages) is obligatory and will

also be assessed. You need to send me your handout by email **the evening before class** at the latest. Please make sure to bring enough copies to class.

I would also like to encourage you to come talk to me during office hours well in advance of your presentation.

3. **Snippet talk & glossary entry (15%)**

You will each give an informal snippet talk of 3–5 minutes in class. Snippet talks will happen somewhat spontaneously when they best fit into our discussion. Their purpose is to help us understand central concepts from gender studies and philosophy which we will need but can't treat in depth. For topics see the seminar schedule above.

You shouldn't use slides or a handout for your snippet talk. Instead, we will build an online **glossary** from your talks: your contribution should be **half a page to one page** and be written in the style of a concise lexicon entry. You can find examples of what I mean by this in Perry Baumgartinger's *Queeropedia*.⁶ In your entry, explicitly cite the lexicons, websites and other sources you use. (You can find a pdf document on how to cite on the Moodle course website.) The glossary will grow over the course of the semester. The **deadline** for your glossary entry is **one week after your snippet talk**.

4. **Media research (15%)**

In the course we will learn about philosophical & linguistic *theories* of slurs and pejoratives, about offensive and marginalizing uses of language (silencing, subordination) and about generalizations based on gender and ethnic categories. Your job in the media research exercise is to document and explain real/virtual life examples of the phenomena described and explained by these theories. Be creative! You can choose examples from social media, blogs, print and online media, historical documents, official documents, film, advertisement, literature, etc. Choose a particular phenomenon (e.g. slurs that denigrate on the basis of a trans* gender identity) and find **at least 3 examples**; include the example in your research piece and cite the source; explain for each example (at most three), why and how it is an instance of the phenomenon you've chosen. It will often be easiest if you choose one particular theory or approach to the phenomenon and use it to argue why and how your example is an instance of the phenomenon. Your piece should be **3–4 pages**, with approximately 1/3 for the cited material. The **deadline** for the media research exercise is **15 December 2015**.

5. **Short essay (35%)**

You will write a short essay. The **deadline** is **Friday, 22 January 2016**.

Your essay should be 1500 words (submitting more than 1800 words or less than 1200 words will affect assessment negatively) and should reflect your independent and critical engagement with your essay question. You have to come up with **your own essay question** yourself – it needs to be related to the course topics and **must be discussed with me before 15 December 2015**. Your essay title and introduction should clearly state the essay question, and your conclusion should summarize your answer.

⁶https://www.dropbox.com/s/8k1vhcespnwexxp/Baumgartinger_2009_Queeropedia-2%20S.97.pdf?dl=0

Virtues in philosophical essay writing which I care a lot about in assessing your essay: clarity of expression, clarity in overall essay structure, concise arguments, precision. Take the time to carefully read the guidelines for philosophical writing listed below. We will also have an optional session on essay writing towards the end of the semester.

(a) *Essay Writing in Philosophy* (Kindermann, available on Moodle and here):

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/ylordo6m5xa25ug/PhilosophicalWritingKindermann2015.pdf?dl=0>

(b) Jim Pryor's guidelines: <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

Late Submission

It is important to me that you learn to finish essays and other creative writings within a reasonable period of time and to hand them in on time. For the sake of fairness, I have the following *Late Assignment Policy*, which applies to your essay and media research exercise:

< 24 hrs.	1/3 grade
24–48 hrs.	2/3 grade
48–72 hrs.	1 grade
3–7 Tage	2 grades
> 1 week	<i>Please don't.</i>

If special circumstances prevent you from submitting by the deadline, please contact me *well before the deadline*.

How To Prepare For Class

- **Reading:** You will spend a lot of time reading in this course. Many of the texts are very challenging. Some are short, but don't assume they won't take you long to read. Expect to read a text **2–3 times**. Read **“read aggressively”** (see [Perry et al. \(2012, 2–4\)](#)): Read closely, analyse, question, reconstruct, take notes, continue ... If you have trouble understanding what an author says, or any other question concerning the course, you can always **consult me for advice**. And consider team work (see below).
- Always do the reading(s) *before* class. Don't miss any readings – it will be hard to catch up.
- **Ask questions** in class: If a point is unclear to you, chances are your classmates will appreciate additional clarification, too. Don't be shy to ask questions in class.
- **Philosophical writing:** Writing a philosophy essay requires a number of skills. The qualities of a good philosophy essay (such as clarity of expression, clarity in structure, precision) may differ from those relevant in other subjects. Do get acquainted with the guidelines for writing essay in philosophy (see above). If you have any questions, come see me during my office hours. Finally, please carefully proofread and spell-check your essay before submission – learn to use your critical reading skills in your own service.

- **Team work:** You will find it helpful to **team up** with fellow students to **explain philosophical ideas and arguments to each other** and to **critically discuss** them. What you invest in helping others will come back doubly when you write your essays: You haven't understood a view or argument unless you can express it clearly and precisely.

Fair Play & Plagiarism

Don't plagiarise. It's that simple. Plagiarism is an infringement of intellectual copyright and a serious offence, and is not taken lightly by the university. It is easy to avoid it: whenever you help yourself to the ideas of others, make their authorship explicit by **referencing** them. In addition, use **quotation marks** when you cite them word for word. When in doubt, always reference the source you're using: better a reference too many than too few.

RESOURCES

FYI: Events & Workshops

Two very interesting and relevant events that take place in Vienna this semester:

- 22/23 October: **Symposium Gender_Language_Politics**
<https://glp2015.univie.ac.at/de/home/>
- 3 November: **The Philosophy of Propaganda. A Workshop with Jason Stanley**
<http://pop2015.phl.univie.ac.at>

Optional Readings Extending the Course Readings

- Entries in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (<http://plato.stanford.edu>) on: *Feminist Philosophy of Language, Feminist Philosophy of ... , Feminist Perspectives on Sex and Gender, Analytical Feminism, Topics in Feminism, ...*
- [McConnell-Ginet \(2012\)](#)
- [Cameron \(1998\)](#)
- [Cameron & Kulick \(2006\)](#)
- [Hornscheidt \(2000\)](#)
- [Sprachpraxis \(2011\)](#)
- [Hornscheidt \(2012\)](#)
- [Holmes & Meyerhoff \(2003\)](#)
- Rae Langton's 'Accommodating Injustice' (*John Locke Lectures*, Oxford University)
Handouts and Mp3s available at http://www.philosophy.ox.ac.uk/lectures/john_locke_lectures.
See also her eponymous Hågerström Lectures in Uppsala:
<http://www.filosofi.uu.se/Conferences+%26+Workshops/2015/november-2015—hagerstrom-lectures/>:

Abstract: What we do with words can help or hinder justice in ways that exploit rules of accommodation: a process of adjustment that tends to make speech acts count as ‘correct play’. Speech acts follow rules of accommodation. Authority, norms and knowledge can likewise follow rules of accommodation, in ways that contribute to injustice. Accommodation allows speakers and hearers to build unjust norms and patterns of authority, sexual subordination, and racial hatred. ‘Back-door’ speech acts work subtly, via presupposition, generics, thick concepts and epithets. Accommodation can contribute to epistemic injustice: through knowledge destruction, via alteration of standards, stakes, and credibility; and also, more surprisingly, through knowledge creation. Handicaps on would-be speakers are failures of, or challenges to, accommodation: such limits on ‘correct play’ can be viewed as a kind of silence. Attending to these dangers makes visible certain solutions. Accommodation reveals speech acts as something we do together with words: the acts and omissions of hearers, as well as speakers, contribute to what is done. Free speech itself looks different, demanding richer resources: state and individual action, not just inaction, could be needed to make it real.

Introductory: Gender Studies

- [von Braun & Stephan \(2000\)](#)
- [von Braun & Stephan \(2005\)](#)

Introductory: Philosophy of Language

- [Lycan \(2008\)](#)
- [Miller \(2003\)](#)
- [Morris \(2007\)](#)
- [Soames \(2010\)](#)
- Advanced: [Devitt & Hanley \(2006\)](#), [Kompa \(2015\)](#) (deutsch), [Lepore & Smith \(2006\)](#), [Russell & Fara \(2012\)](#)

Resources: Philosophy

- The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://plato.stanford.edu>
The free app in the itunes store: <https://itunes.apple.com/en/app/sep/id342210166?mt=8>
- [Craig \(1998\)](#) Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Online at www.rep.routledge.com or in the philosophy institute library: U-LPh5, Hauptbibliothek II 602811
- [Audi \(1999\)](#): Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy. Main library II 726908 & HB2-C19
- [Blackburn \(2008\)](#): Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy. Institute library U-LPh88, Hauptbibliothek I 596361
- [Waibl & Herdina \(2011\)](#): Dictionary of Philosophical Terms/Wörterbuch philosophischer Fachbegriffe: German-English/English-German. Deutsch-Englisch/Englisch-Deutsch. Institutsbibliothek U-LPh75/CD

- [Precht & Burkard \(2008\)](#): Metzler Lexikon Philosophie: Begriffe und Definitionen. Hauptbibliothek I 719702
- [Precht \(2004\)](#): Grundbegriffe der analytischen Philosophie
- [Mautner \(2005\)](#): The Penguin Dictionary of Philosophy
- [Proudfoot & Lacey \(2010\)](#): The Routledge Dictionary of Philosophy. Hauptbibliothek I 582860
- The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: www.iep.utm.edu
- Reading a philosophy paper (J. Pryor): <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html>
- Writing a philosophy paper (J. Pryor): <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>
- What is an argument? (J. Pryor): <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/vocab/argument.html>
- Vocabulary describing arguments (J. Pryor): <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/vocab/validity.html>
- Some Good and Bad Forms of Argument (J. Pryor): <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/vocab/goodbad.html>
- Analyzing concepts (J. Pryor): <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/vocab/analyses.html>
- An (English) philosophical glossary for beginners (J. Pryor): <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/vocab/glossary.html>
- Classical texts in philosophy online (German): www.zeno.org/Philosophie
- Researching articles online: <http://scholar.google.at>
- PhilPapers (online directory of English articles and books): <http://philpapers.org>

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Comments to instructors:

- The constructivist texts by Hornscheidt were very popular with students. In place of Hornscheidt's German texts (about pejoration and sexism in German(y and Austria)), one could profitably read excerpts from Judith Buthler's work.
- My students struggled with Hom's (2010) overview article, which presupposes a good deal of knowledge of philosophy of language. I probably wouldn't use it again in a class that has no philosophy of language prerequisite. If I did, I would only read part 1 on the features of pejoratives, which was helpful to the students.

