

# ETHICS IN DISCOURSE

2013-14

## **Instructor:**

Manuel Liz

Univ. of La Laguna

manuliz@ull.es

## **1. General Description**

The aim of the course is to introduce the main philosophical problems involved in the normative features of language. After a brief introduction, we will begin presenting Sellars' naturalistic approach and some recent developments. After that, we will consider the perspective of pragmatics. After that, we will discuss the ethical approach of Habermas. Finally, we will analyze the problem of rules and its connections with meaning.

Even though the course has a very strong philosophical orientation, the problems and discussions addressed will be introduced in a clear way and without presupposing any sophisticated philosophical background.

## **2. Programme**

1. Introduction
  - 1.1. The notions of ethics and discourse
  - 1.2. Normativity and naturalization
2. Sellars' naturalistic approach
  - 2.1. Fussing the images
  - 2.2. Meaning
  - 2.3. McDowell and Brandom
  - 2.4. Millikan and Dennett
3. The perspective of pragmatics
  - 3.1. What is pragmatics?
  - 3.2. Austin, Searle and Grice
4. An ethical approach
  - 4.1. Normativity, language, and ethics
  - 4.2. The ethics of discourse in Habermas
5. Rules and meaning
  - 5.1. The problem of following rules in Wittgenstein
  - 5.2. Is meaning normative?

## **3. Teaching Methods**

- Regular classes.
- Guided reading of texts.
- Group discussions of particular issues.

We will work in detail the following three texts:

1. Horgan, T. & Mark Timmons (1993) "Metaphysical naturalism, Semantic Normativity, and Meta-Semantic Irrealism", *Philosophical Issues*, 4, pp. 180-204.
2. Peregrin, J. (2012a): 'The Normative Dimension of Discourse', in K. Allan and K. Jaszolt (eds.), *Cambridge Handbook of Pragmatics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp. 209- 225.
3. Paul Boghossian (1989) "Is Meaning Normative?" [Included in his *Content and Justification*, Cambridge, Oxford Univ. Press, 2008, Part I: "The Nature of Content" ]

#### 4. Assessment Methods

- Participation in the sessions of the course.
- A short written essay or commentary of approximately 2.000 words.

#### 4. Some References

(In no way mandatory, nor exhaustive)

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- Byrne, A., 2007. "Semantic Values?" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 65: 201–207.
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- Hattiangadi, A. 2006. "Is Meaning Normative?" *Mind and Language*, 21: 220–240.
- , 2007. *Oughts and Thoughts. Rule-Following and the Normativity of Content*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
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- Searle, J., 1969, *Speech Acts*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- , 1995. *The Construction of Social Reality*, London: Allen Lane.
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- Soames, S., 1997. "Skepticism about Meaning: Indeterminacy, Normativity, and the Rule-Following Paradox," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, Supplementary Volume 23: 211–249.
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- Whiting, D., 2007. "The normativity of meaning defended," *Analysis*, 67: 133–40.
- Wilson, G., 2006. "Rule-Following, Meaning, and Normativity," in *Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Language*, eds. E. LePore and B. Smith, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
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- Wright, C., 1980. *Wittgenstein on the Foundations of Mathematics*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
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