

LANGUAGE AND EXPERIENCE

Naftally Israeli

Spring Semester, Monday 12:00-14:00

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Short description:

When we speak about the inner world, we are referring, first and foremost, to experiences and feelings. Experiences and feelings are the nursery of our psychological self. For us, experiences and feelings symbolize who we are, our status in the world, and the attitude of the world to us. For others, our experiences and feelings signal our mental state, and thus how we want others to relate to us. As such, feelings and experiences serve as mediators between our own inner world and the external world, the world out there that we share with others. Feelings and experiences therefore have a unique and confusing characteristic: they are separate from the external world but are also connected to it in various ways; they express our own subjectivity, but also serve us for interpersonal communication and can be interpreted by others. We use words – abstract formulas – in order to share personal experiences and feelings. But how is it possible to speak about experiences and feelings that are still not verbalized? Does the very act of speaking establish certain experiences and feelings? How can language attest to the reality of an experience or feeling that existed before they were expressed in language?

This course will deal with these psychological and philosophical questions. We will discuss the main issues raised by philosophers of language in the 20th century, and their relevance to psychology in our time.

Assessment:

Mid Term:

Short paper - mandatory. (20%)

Final requirement:

Take-home exam - mandatory. (60%)

Participation:

Attendance (10%).

Meaningful participation (10%).

Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory. Students are permitted a maximum of three absences without penalty. Any additional absences will affect the final grade and may result in failure of the course.

Academic conduct:

Plagiarism is taken extremely seriously. Any instance of academic misconduct which includes: submitting someone else's work as your own; failure to accurately cite sources; taking words from another source without using quotation marks; submission of work for which you have previously received credit; working in a group for individual assignments; using unauthorized materials in an exam and sharing your work with other students, will result in failure of the assignment and will likely lead to further disciplinary measures.

Additional requirements:

Please keep phones turned-off while in class.