Brandeis University, Department of Philosophy

PHIL 127a: Lying and Deception

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Consultation hour
Mandel 112, Tuesdays, 4:00–5:00pm (before class – or make an appointment by email)

This course will provide a comprehensive introduction to philosophical debates around the notions of truthfulness, lying and deception. Individual topics include the definition of lying, the possibility of self-deception, the value of truthfulness, lying and deception as ethical problems and the problem of lying in major figures in the history of philosophy, such as Augustine, Grotius and Kant.

Class times  Location
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5:00pm–6:20pm  Shiffman Humanities Center 125

Assignments and Evaluation
1. Regular reading on-line responses: students will respond online to one or two questions about the week’s readings (counting for 30% of the final grade).
2. One ten-page paper, due mid-term (counting for 30% of the final grade);
deadline: by the end of the day on Monday, October 9, 2017 (paper copy in my box).
   Choose your own topic from Part I (“The Contemporary Debate”).
3. One three-hour exam at the end of the term (counting for 40% of the final grade);
date: tbd. Questions will be taken from Parts II and III (“History”/“Kant”).

This is a Four-Credit Course (with three hours of class-time per week) Success in this 4 credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.).

Academic Integrity
You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work (a fortiori in a class on lying). Please consult the university webpage for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Allegations of alleged academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Director of Academic Integrity. Sanctions for academic dishonesty can include failing grades and/or suspension from the university.

Disabilities
If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately.
Class Schedule

Aug 31  Introductory session (NB: no class on Sept 5)

I. The Contemporary Debate

Sept 7, 12, 14  What is lying? Is a lie a lie if it fails to deceive/isn’t intended to deceive?  
                Stokke 2013a/b, Lackey 2013

Sept 19, 26, 28  What is wrong with lying? What is good about truthfulness?  
                Saul 2012 (Ch. 4), Martin 2009, Stokke 2014, Faulkner 2007

Oct 3  Can we lie to ourselves? If so, how?  
       Baron 1988

II. A Brief History of (the Philosophy of) Lying

Oct 10, 11  Plato  
            Selections 8, 9 in DeLapp/Henkel 2016

Oct 17, 19  Aristotle and Aquinas  
            Selections 3 and 11 in DeLapp/Henkel 2016

Oct 24, 26  Augustine  
            Selection 1 in DeLapp/Henkel 2016

Oct 31, Nov 2  Grotius  
               Selection 2 in DeLapp/Henkel 2016

Nov 7, 9  Nietzsche  
          Selection 19 in DeLapp/Henkel 2016

III. Kant on False Promises, Lies and Deception

Nov 14, 16, 21, 28, 30  *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (selections)  
                         *The Metaphysics of Morals* (selections)  
                         *A Supposed Right to Lie*  

Dec 5, 7  slippage week

Dec 8 or 11  additional discussion session/exam preparation
Reading List

–, 2010. Lying and Deception, Philosophers’ Imprint, 10: 1–22
2013b. Lying, Deceiving, and Misleading, Philosophy Compass, 8: 348–359.

* Recommended purchase – other texts (incl. Kant) will be made available on LATTE