

Introduction to Philosophy of Language

TR 11:40-12:55, LaFayette L300

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Description

Philosophical reflection since Plato has often turned on theses concerning the language in which philosophical questions and claims are couched. The Twentieth and early Twenty-First centuries have seen a flowering of philosophical thinking about language. This course makes a quick tour through contemporary philosophy of language by examining in detail some of its central documents. We will be dealing with four central questions:

1. ***The referential bond***: In virtue of what does a particular word or phrase refer to a particular thing?
2. ***Information value***: In virtue of what does a particular word or phrase carry the information that it does?
3. ***Speech acts***: What is the nature of the acts we perform when we use language?
4. ***Semantics and pragmatics***: What is the relation between what a word or phrase means and what we use it to do?

Requirements

Students are expected to attend all classes, to participate in classroom discussions, and to complete all written assignments. From time to time I may assign quizzes or homework assignments.

Your first homework assignment is to send me an email by Friday, 19 Jan. The format and content of the email will be specified throughout this syllabus. Here's the first specification: The subject line of the email should be 'PHIL 2470A Syllabus'.

Course grades will be determined by summing using the following weights:

attendance, quizzes, homework, and participation	15%
midterm	25%
paper	30%
final	30%

The paper will be developed in stages over the course of the semester. Its development will include a process of peer review, similar to the process my own papers go through when I submit them for publication. To facilitate this process, we will be using a third-party tool called PackBack. I will be providing more information about PackBack in class on Tuesday, 23 January. The important thing to know for now is that you will be charged \$59 (+ tax) to use the service. Please contact me to explore various options if this charge will be a hardship for you. There are no other charges associated with this class.

You should include the following sentence in your email, so long as it is true: 'I acknowledge that the peer review process for developing my paper for this class will require that I sign up for PackBack.' If the sentence is not true, you should say so in the email.

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The midterm exam is scheduled for . The final exam is scheduled for **9 May** at 10:30 AM. No makeup exams will be given, unless you are participating in a religious observance, in quarantine/isolation, in the hospital, or in jail at the time of the exam. You will fail if you miss an exam.

You should include the following sentence in your email, so long as it is true: ‘I acknowledge the dates of the exams, and I will make my travel plans for Spring Break and the end of the term so as to allow me to take them in person.’ If the sentence is not true, you should say so in the email.

Office Hours

I am here to teach you. You are strongly encouraged to come by my office hours, TR 8:30-9:45, for help or discussion. Office hours are offered either via teleconference or in person at 70 South Williams Street. You should book an appointment online at <https://go.uvm.edu/booklouis>. When you sign up, you will receive an email containing a link for a teleconference meeting (MSTeams). Of course, you don’t have to attend via videoconference. If you make an appointment, you may also stop by my office at 70 South Williams Street, #107 to talk with me in person instead.

The email you are writing to me should include the following, so long as it is true: ‘I understand when your office hours are, and how to schedule an appointment with you.’ If the sentence is not true, you should say so in the email.

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Protocol for making up absences

There are no excused absences in this course. However, there are remediated absences. If you miss a class, you can make it up by completing the following steps:

- Study the lecture notes for the class meeting you missed on Brightspace (<https://brightspace.uvm.edu>) under **Course Materials/Notes/**;
- Complete any homework that may have been assigned;
- make an office hours appointment at <https://go.uvm.edu/booklouis> and show up;
- tell me the date of the class you missed;
- discuss the material with me.

Your email to me should include the following sentence, so long as it is true: 'I understand that attendance is required in this course, that there are no excused absences, and what I need to do to make up any absences.' If it is not true, you should say that in your email.

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Policies and Other Information

This section on policies is for your reference. There are no specifications in this section of format or content for your email.

Student Learning Accommodations: In keeping with University policy, any student with a documented disability interested in utilizing ADA accommodations should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS), the office of Disability Services on campus for students. SAS works with students and faculty in an interactive process to explore reasonable and appropriate accommodations, which are communicated to faculty in an accommodation letter. All students are strongly recommended to discuss with their faculty the accommodations they plan to use in each course. Faculty who receive Letters of Accommodation with Disability Related Flexible accommodations will need to fill out the Disability Related Flexibility Agreement. Any questions from faculty or students on the agreement should be directed to the SAS specialist who is indicated on the letter.

Contact SAS:
A170 Living/Learning Center
802-656-7753
access@uvm.edu
<https://www.uvm.edu/access>

Religious Holidays: Students have the right to practice the religion of their choice. If you need to miss class to observe a religious holiday, please submit the dates of your absence to me in writing by the end of the second full week of classes. You will be permitted to make up work within a mutually agreed-upon time.

Electronic devices: No electronic devices may be used for any reason other than as an accommodation for a documented condition. If you are using an electronic device in violation of this policy, I will ask you to leave the class meeting.

General statement regarding potential changes during the semester: <http://catalogue.uvm.edu/> The University of Vermont reserves the right to make changes in the course offerings, mode of delivery, degree requirements, charges, regulations, and procedures contained herein as educational, financial, and health, safety, and welfare considerations require, or as necessary to be compliant with governmental, accreditation, or public health directives.

Lived Name and Pronoun Information: The UVM Directory includes fields for indicating your lived name and your pronouns. Lived names (preferred names, names in use) are names that an individual wants to be known by in the University community. Entering your pronouns is strongly encouraged to help create a more inclusive and respectful campus community. To update your information, login to the UVM Directory. A preview box will allow you to see how this information will appear in other systems used on campus such as Microsoft Teams and Blackboard. More information about how to make changes to your lived name and pronouns is available in the [Knowledge Base](#).

Intellectual Property Statement/Prohibition on Sharing Academic Materials: Students are prohibited from publicly sharing or selling academic materials that they did not author (for example: class syllabus, outlines or class presentations authored by the professor, practice questions, text from the textbook or other copyrighted class materials, etc.); and students are prohibited from sharing assessments (for example homework or a take-home examination). Violations will be handled under UVM's Intellectual Property policy and Code of Academic Integrity.

Academic Integrity: The [Academic Integrity policy](#) addresses plagiarism, fabrication, collusion, and cheating.

Code of Student Conduct: UVM's [Code of Student Conduct](#) outlines conduct expectations as well as students' rights and responsibilities.

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FERPA Rights Disclosure: The purpose of UVM's [FERPA Rights Disclosure](#) is to communicate the rights of students regarding access to, and privacy of their student educational records as provided for in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974.

Final Exam Policy: The University [final exam policy](#) outlines expectations during final exams and explains timing and process of examination period.

Grade Appeals: If you would like to contest a grade, please follow the procedures outlined in [this policy](#).

Grading: [This link](#) offers information on grading and GPA calculation.

Promoting Health & Safety: The University of Vermont's number one priority is to support a healthy and safe community:

[Center for Health and Wellbeing](#)

[Counseling & Psychiatry Services \(CAPS\)](#) Direct Phone Line: (802) 656-3340

C.A.R.E. If you are concerned about a UVM community member or are concerned about a specific event, we encourage you to contact the Dean of Students Office (802-656-3380). If you would like to remain anonymous, you can report your concerns online by visiting the [C.A.R.E. Team website](#).

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Readings

Gottlob Frege	“On Sense and Nominatum”
Bertrand Russell	“On Denoting”
Keith Donnellan	“Reference and Definite Descriptions”
Saul Kripke	excerpts from <i>Naming and Necessity</i>
Hilary Putnam	“Meaning and Reference”
Sally Haslanger	“What Good are our Intuitions?”
J.L. Austin	“Performative Utterances”
H.P. Grice	“Logic and Conversation”

Readings will be made available electronically on the course Brightspace site; you may login at <https://brightspace.uvm.edu>.

The readings can be viewed with Adobe Acrobat Reader, which you can download and install free of charge.

Your email to me should include the following sentence, so long as it is true: ‘I understand how to access the readings required in this course.’ If it is not true, you should say that in your email.

Tentative Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Exams

16 Jan	Syllabus and Introduction
<hr/> Frege: Two Kinds of Meaning <hr/>	
18 Jan	Frege, “On Sense and Nominatum”
23 Jan	Frege, <i>cont.</i>
25 Jan	Frege, <i>cont.</i>
30 Jan	Frege, <i>cont.</i>
1 Feb	Frege, <i>cont.</i>
<hr/> Russell: The Theory of Descriptions <hr/>	
6 Feb	Russell, “On Denoting”
8 Feb	Russell, <i>cont.</i>
13 Feb	Russell, <i>cont.</i>
15 Feb	Russell, <i>cont.</i>
20 Feb	Russell, <i>cont.</i>
<hr/> Reference and Descriptions <hr/>	
22 Feb	Donnellan, “Reference and Definite Descriptions”
27 Feb	Donnellan, <i>cont.</i>
29 Feb	Donnellan, <i>cont.</i>
5 Mar	[Town Meeting Day]
7 Mar	MIDTERM EXAM
12 Mar	[Spring Break]
14 Mar	[Spring Break]
19 Mar	Kripke, <i>N&N</i>
21 Mar	Kripke, <i>cont.</i>
26 Mar	Kripke, <i>cont.</i>
28 Mar	Kripke, <i>cont.</i>
2 Apr	Putnam, “Meaning and Reference”
4 Apr	Putnam, <i>cont.</i>
<hr/> Application: Terms in Social Theory <hr/>	
9 Apr	Haslanger, “What Good are our Intuitions?”
11 Apr	Haslanger, <i>cont.</i>
<hr/> Pragmatics: Doing Things by Talking <hr/>	
16 Apr	Austin, “Performative Utterances”
23 Apr	Austin, <i>cont.</i>
25 Apr	Austin, <i>cont.</i>
30 Apr	Grice, “Logic and Conversation”
2 May	Grice, <i>cont.</i>
9 May (10:30 AM)	FINAL EXAM