

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Course Outline**

**Philosophy 4xxx/9xxx and Ling 9xxx:
Survey of Philosophy of Language**

**Summer Term 2020
Day and Time: TBA**

**Instructor: R. Stainton
StH Room 3126**

Classroom: TBA

Office Hours: TBA

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DESCRIPTION

Issues and theories in recent philosophy of language. Topics include: the contrast between “meaning as use”, mentalistic and formalist accounts of meaning; the application of these accounts, as a case study, to reference and descriptions. Authors include: Austin, Donnellan, Frege, Grice, Kaplan, Kripke, Quine, Russell, Searle and Strawson.

TEXTS

Robert J. Stainton (2000). *Perspectives in the Philosophy of Language*. Peterborough: Broadview.

Paul Elbourne (2011). *Meaning: A Slim Guide to Semantics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- *Note:* Kripke’s “Speaker’s Reference and Semantic Reference” and Kaplan’s “Demonstratives” will be made available online

OBJECTIVES

- To overview key issues in contemporary philosophy of language and semantics.
- To fine-tune students’ ability to read, think and write at the most sophisticated level.

READINGS

I. The Formalist Tradition

- Gottlob Frege (1892), “On Sense and Reference”
- Bertrand Russell (1919), “Descriptions”
- Saul Kripke (1971), “Identity and Necessity”

II. The Use Tradition

- J.L. Austin (1961), “Performative Utterances”
- John Searle (1965), “What Is a Speech Act?”

III. The Mentalistic Tradition

- H. Paul Grice (1957), “Meaning”
- Jerry Fodor (1978), “Propositional Attitudes”

IV. Case Study: Reference, Descriptions and the Three Traditions

- Peter Strawson (1950), “On Referring”
- Keith Donnellan (1966), “Reference and Definite Descriptions”
- H. Paul Grice (1967), “Logic and Conversation”
- Saul Kripke (1977), “Speaker’s Reference and Semantic Reference”
- David Kaplan (1977), “Demonstratives”

REQUIREMENTS

In-Class Participation: 10%

“Briefing Notes” on Selected Philosophical Readings: 35%

In-Class Exam: 25%

Short Essay: 30%

• *Briefing Notes*: At the outset of the relevant classes, students will hand in two to three pages of typewritten notes on the chapter assigned. (750-1000 words is appropriate.) These “briefing notes” will consist of two parts: an outline of the main argument being made (which is not typically a section-by-section outline of the paper), and some critical questions and comments.

• *Exam*: The in-class exam will cover all the material presented up to that point.

• *Essay*: The paper should be the sort of thing one could submit to a student conference – ideally about 12 double-spaced pages in length, definitely not more than 14 pages. It may be either more empirical or more philosophical, depending upon the interests and background of the student.

AUDIT

Students wishing to audit the course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first week of classes.

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY POLICIES

The **Department of Philosophy Policies** which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses is available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website at <http://uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html>.

It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.

ACCOMMODATION

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student’s Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at

http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

ACADEMIC OFFENCES

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

PLAGIARISM CHECKING

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning 519.661.3030 (during class hours) or 519.433.2023 after class hours and on weekends.