

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Course Outline

Philosophy 4210G/9400L and Ling 9453L:
Survey of Philosophy of Language

Intersession Term 2020	Instructor: R. Stainton
Day and Time: W&F 12:30-3:30	StvH Room 3126
Classroom: Online	Office Hours: TBA
	E-mail: rstainto@uwo.ca

DESCRIPTION

A survey of foundational and highly influential texts from 20th Century Analytic Philosophy of Language. Emphasis will be on twin topics of special interest to contemporary linguistic theorizing: 1) contrasting conceptions of linguistic meaning, including Frege-Russell-Davidson style truth-conditional approaches; Ordinary Language Philosophy's use-oriented approaches; and the mentalist semantics familiar from Grice and generative grammar. 2) The contrast between semantics vs. pragmatics and attempts to trace a boundary between them. This latter section will conclude with a detailed case study on definite descriptions, indexicals and singular reference. Authors include: Austin, Davidson, Donnellan, Fodor, Frege, Grice, Kaplan, Kripke, Russell, Searle, Strawson and Wittgenstein.

TEXTS

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

William Lycan (2019). *Philosophy of Language*. 3rd Edition. New York: Routledge

- *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/pragmatics.
- 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"
- Donald Davidson (1967), "Truth and Meaning"
- Saul Kripke (1971), "Identity and Necessity"

II. The Use Tradition

- Ludwig Wittgenstein (1953), Selections from *Philosophical Investigations*
- J.L. Austin (1961), “Performative Utterances”

III. The Contemporary Mentalistic Tradition

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

IV. Hybrid Theories

- John Searle (1965), “What Is a Speech Act?”
- H. Paul Grice (1967), “Logic and Conversation”

V. Case Study: Reference, Descriptions and the Traditions

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

REQUIREMENTS

Participation: 10%

“Briefing Notes” on Selected Philosophical Readings: 50%

Glossary: 15%

Take-Home Exam: 25%

• *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 in the course.

AUDIT

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

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.

EVALUATION OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Ordinarily, at least three days prior to the deadline for withdrawal from a course without academic penalty, students will receive assessment of work accounting for at least 15% of their final grade. For this 4000-level course in the Summer term, however, such a graded assessment is impracticable. An exemption from this policy from the Dean has been secured.

COURSE ASSIGNMENT

The last day of scheduled classes in any course will be the last day on which course assignments will be accepted for credit in a course. Instructors will be required to return assignments to students as promptly as possible with reasonable explanations of the instructor's assessment of the assignment.

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 the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

PLAGIARISM CHECKING

In addition to submitted hard copies of assignments for blind grading, all required papers must also be submitted 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.