

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
Course Outline 2017**

**Philosophy 4210G/Ling 9210B/9210B:  
Problems in Philosophy of Language**

**Instructor:** Robert J. Stainton  
**Class Days and Hours:** W 2:30-5:30  
**Office:** Stevenson Hall 3126  
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**Office Hours:** Th 3:30-4:30  
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

A survey of key ideas within the 20th Century's "Ordinary Language" approach to philosophy, including especially its contribution to linguistic theorizing. Topics will include: philosophical and linguistic methodology; "(dis)solving" philosophical puzzles; actions and events; meaning, force and truth conditions; constatives vs. performatives; language games; convention vs. intention in speech acts; expression meaning, utterance meaning and speaker meaning. Authors will include: G.E.M. Anscombe, J.L. Austin, H.P. Grice, P.F. Strawson and L. Wittgenstein.

**SOURCE TEXTS**

Elizabeth Anscombe (1957). *Intention*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.  
J.L. Austin (1961). *Philosophical Papers*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  
H. Paul Grice (1989). *Studies in the Ways of Words*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.  
Peter F. Strawson (2004). *Logico-Linguistic Papers*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Aldershot, England: Ashgate.  
Ludwig Wittgenstein (1953). *Philosophical Investigations*. Translated by Elizabeth Anscombe. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

**OBJECTIVES**

The twin objectives are to hone students' philosophical skills (e.g., writing, reading and debating at the highest level) and to introduce them to important material from the recent history of Analytic philosophy in general and philosophy of language in particular.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Class Participation: 15%

Five Short “Briefing Notes”: 35%  
Final Essay: 25% [Due Dec 7<sup>th</sup> at 5 p.m.]  
Final Exam: 25% [During exam period]

*Briefing Notes:* On the day on which the paper is discussed in class, students will submit an outline of the main conclusion and main arguments of the paper in question. It should be approximately 700 – 1000 words. The asterisks below indicate which papers require a Briefing Note.

*Final Essay:* The paper should be the sort of thing one could submit to a student conference – ideally about 14 double-spaced pages in length (i.e., around 5000 words). It may be either more empirical or more philosophical, depending upon the interests and background of the student. The Essay is due the final day of classes.

*Final Exam:* The emphasis of the Exam will be on synthesizing ideas from across the entire term.

With the exception of students granted special accommodation, no electronic devices will be permitted during the test. Use of handheld devices and browsing of websites during class is very strongly discouraged, as it distracts both the user and his/her neighbours.

#### Submission instructions

- All written work must be submitted, in anonymous form and in hard-copy, either in class or by means of the Philosophy drop box (on the first floor of Stevenson Hall, beside the elevator).
- It must also be submitted electronically to **Turnitin**: “All required papers are 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>).”
- Late submissions will not be accepted without explicit prior permission of the instructor and/or proper medical documentation.

### **COURSE OUTLINE**

#### I. Austin and Strawson

##### *A. Austin*

- J.L. Austin (1946), “Other Minds”
- (1956/79), “Performative Utterances”
- (1956), “Ifs and Cans”
- (1957), “A Plea for Excuses”\*

##### *B. Strawson*

Peter F. Strawson (1950), “On Referring”  
 ---- (1953), “Particular and General”  
 ---- (1964), “Intention and Convention in Speech Acts”\*  
 ---- (1969), “Meaning and Truth”

C. *Austin vs. Strawson on Truth*

Strawson (1949), “Truth”  
 Austin (1950), “Truth”\*  
 Strawson (1950), “Truth”

II. Wittgenstein and Anscombe

Ludwig Wittgenstein (1953), *Philosophical Investigations*  
 Elizabeth Anscombe (1957), *Intention*  
 ---- (1966), “A Note on Mr. Bennett”  
 ---- (1975), “The First Person”\*

III. Grice

A. *First Thoughts*

H. Paul Grice (1957), “Meaning”  
 ---- (1958), “Post-War Oxford Philosophy”  
 ---- (1961), “The Causal Theory of Perception”\*

B. *Second Thoughts: Pragmatics and OLP*

---- (1967/89), “Prolegomena”  
 ---- (1967/75), “Logic and Conversation”  
 ---- (1967/78), “Further Notes on Logic and Conversation”

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE**

DATE	AUTHOR AND PAPER	BRIEFING NOTE REQUIRED?
Jan. 11	Austin, “Other Minds” and “Performative Utterances”	
Jan. 18	Austin, “Ifs and Cans” and “A Plea for Excuses”	Briefing note on “Plea”
Jan. 25	Strawson, “On Referring” and “Particular and General”	
Feb. 1	Strawson, “Intention and Convention in Speech Acts” and “Meaning and Truth”	Briefing note on “ICSA”
Feb. 8	Austin and Strawson on Truth	Briefing note on Austin’s “Truth”
Feb. 15	Wittgenstein, <i>Philosophical Investigations</i>	
Mar. 1	Wittgenstein, <i>Philosophical Investigations</i> (cont.)	
Mar. 8	Anscombe, <i>Intention</i>	
Mar. 15	Anscombe, “A Note on Mr. Bennett” and “The First Person”	Briefing note on “The First Person”

Mar. 22	Grice, "Meaning" and "The Causal Theory of Perception"	Briefing note on "CTP"
Mar. 29	Grice, "Post-War Oxford Philosophy" and "Prolegomena to <i>Logic and Conversation</i> "	
Apr. 5	Grice, "Logic and Conversation" and "Further Notes on Logic and Conversation"	

### **AUDIT**

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

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. In particular, 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](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf).

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.

For additional information, see:

- Registrarial Services (<http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>)
- Student Support Services (<http://westernusc.ca/services/>)