

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

**Philosophy 4210F/9xxxL and Ling 9452L:  
History of Philosophy of Language**

**Intersession Term 2021**

**Day and Time:** Tu, W, Th 4:30-6:30

**Classroom:** Online

**Instructor:** R. Stainton

**Office Hours:** TBA

**E-mail:** rstainto@uwo.ca

**DESCRIPTION**

An overview of key concepts and arguments in philosophy of language from a historical perspective. Topics will range across metaphysics, semantics and epistemology, and will likely include: the source of linguistic facts (e.g., conventional, natural or divine); the relationships between language and ontology (e.g., essences and existential commitment); truth, falsity and paradox; the ontological categories of linguistic contents (mental, concrete and abstract); varieties of meanings (e.g., of names, predicates and syncategoremata); language, mind and knowledge (e.g., nativism and the influence of language on cognition); language and communication (e.g., rhetoric and the “defects” of ordinary languages).

Texts will be drawn principally from the Ancient, later Medieval, and Early Modern period. Expect excerpts from: Plato, Aristotle, the Epicureans and the Stoics, Augustine, Abelard, Peter of Spain, Aquinas, Roger Bacon, Ockham, Buridan, Hobbes, Arnauld & Nicole, Locke, Berkeley, Leibniz, Condillac and Reid.

**TEXTS**

Margaret Cameron, Ben Hill & Robert J. Stainton (eds.)(2017) *Sourcebook in the History of Philosophy of Language*. Springer.

**OBJECTIVES**

- To overview key issues in philosophy of language, by means of studying works from the pre-Modern history of Western Philosophy.
- To fine-tune students’ ability to read, think and write at the most sophisticated level.

**REQUIREMENTS**

Participation: 10%

“Briefing Notes” on Selected Philosophical Readings: 50%

Glossary: 15%

Final 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 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](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](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.