

PHI-2300

Introduction to Philosophy of Language

WF 11:50–1:20 | AC02 TR007

INSTRUCTOR:

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to the philosophy of language. We will discuss classical texts from philosophers of the Western Tradition, such as Frege, Russell, Donnellan, Kripke, etc., about how we use language to talk about the world. We will also touch on how we use sentences to communicate information beyond their meaning: when you politely decline an invitation to a party by saying ‘I have to work’, you literally say that you have to work, but often times what you communicate is that you are not going to the party; how do you convey a piece of information that is not part of the meaning of the sentence you said? Lastly, we will discuss theories about the derogatory capacity of pejorative words or phrases, like slurs, insults, etc.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	STUDENT OUTCOMES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand basic concepts and distinctions in the readings and theories.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognize and explain positions and concepts clearly and precisely.• Extract and charitably reconstruct arguments from assigned readings.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage with selected important debates, positions, and methods in Western philosophy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply theories and concepts in new contexts.• Use introduced concepts and distinctions in your own arguments.

- Evaluate theories and develop original ideas on selected topics in philosophy.

- Construct thought experiments and arguments against hypotheses presented in class.
- Compare theories and understand theoretical implications of different views

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- 20% Reading Assignments
- 20% Midterm In-class Exam
- 25% Group Assignments
- 25% Final Paper
- 10% Participation

Reading Assignments

Reading Assignments will be graded based on student engagement with the readings on Perusall. For full credit, students must annotate throughout the entire reading, and respond to at least one other student's annotation, question, or comment in readings of at least **10 readings**, each worth 2%. Students are expected to engage with the required readings in sufficient detail for annotating, commenting, and critical discussion, and be conversant with the material so that discussion is substantive and lively. For credit, annotations, questions, or comments should be done by **the day after the reading is scheduled**.

Midterm In-Class Exam

Midterm Exam will be in short essay format.

Group Assignments

There will be about 8-9 groups assignments throughout the course. The highest 5 grades will count towards the final grade. Each assignment is worth 5%.

Final Paper

Final version is due on **April 29th**, Wednesday by 11:59pm. The paper (no more than 1.500 words) is on a self-chosen topic (with instructor/TA/GA approval).

Participation

Participation grade will be based on student's engagement in lecture. Attendance will be taken but do not expect a perfect grade merely for being an organic body.

NOTE: Things change – the Fates are fickle. Consequently, information found on this syllabus is subject to revision as we progress through the semester: Readings and content may be added (or cut) depending on our rate of progress, and it may be necessary to amend the due date of the assignments. Revisions will be announced in lecture and posted online. It is each student's responsibility to keep informed of any changes.

MATERIALS

- All readings will be freely available on Perusall through Canvas.
- If you haven't received an invitation to access the course materials on Canvas, please email your TA/GA!

GRADING

The usual grading scale will apply: 0-39% F, 40-44% D-, 45-49% D, 50-54% D+, 55-59% C-, 60-64% C, 65-69% C+, 70-74% B-, 75-79% B, 80-84% B+, 85-89% A-, 90-100% A.

Paper and exams will be graded based on the following **six** evaluation criteria:

Bare minimum: is the paper prompt or question addressed at all?

Clarity: Are the explanations of technical terms and arguments clear, understandable, and accessible to someone who is not taking the class?

Correctness: Are the explanations of technical terms, theories and arguments correct? Are the theories and arguments ascribed to the right philosophers?

Originality: Are there original cases, objections, or replies?

Relevance: Are there theses, cases, arguments, or any other information that are irrelevant to address the prompt? Is the paper lacking explanation of a relevant theory, thesis, case, or argument?

Structure: Does the paper have a clear structure, with introduction and conclusion? Are the theses, cases, and arguments presented in an organized way?

NOTE: While there is no evaluation criterion for grammar or typos, they may affect the grade if they are severe enough to compromise understanding. Thus, before submitting written assignments, make sure to proof read them. Also take note of campus resources listed below that offer assistance with essay-writing.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Your work must be your own. Submitting work which you have not composed yourself, or using another person's ideas without due credit, or failing to mark another person's words with appropriate quotation marks all constitute plagiarism. The instructor reserves the right to assess penalties for violations of academic integrity, which may include giving a failing grade for an assignment, for the entire course, or referral to a University disciplinary committee.

STUDENT SUPPORT AND CAMPUS RESOURCES

If you are facing a major medical or another major difficulty that is keeping you from doing well in the class, contact me as soon as you can. I am happy to work with you to find the best course of action and, if possible, to help you complete the course successfully. But I can't help if you don't let me know about your circumstances as soon as they arise.

**** Please, don't wait until after the final exam to let me know about your circumstances. At that point there is virtually nothing I can do to accommodate you.****

1) **ACWB** (*Ashoka Centre for Well-Being*)

If you're dealing with depression, anxiety, or are just feeling overwhelmed, ACWB is available to help. They offer individual counseling, group workshops, and other resources to make the semester more bearable.

- First floor of AC-02 (previously called 'New Academic Building'), next to TR106
- well.being@ashoka.edu.in
- Book an appointment: <http://acwb.ashoka.edu.in>

2) **CWC** (*Centre for Writing and Communication*)

CWC offers workshops on study skills, assistance with essay-writing, and other free services that will help you perform well in your classes.

- Third Floor, Administrative Block.
- <https://www.ashoka.edu.in/page/CWC-66>
- Book an appointment: <https://ashoka.mywonline.com>

3) **OLS** (*Office of Learning Support*)

If you have any sort of disability - physical or mental, permanent or temporary – we strongly encourage you to register with OLS. They can then notify your instructors if you need certain accommodations during classes or during tests.

A disability can be something like difficulty seeing or hearing; difficulty attending class due to physical or emotional distress; chronic anxiety or depression; or anything else that interferes with your schoolwork.

There's no shame in seeking help for these sorts of things. Contact them as soon as possible if you need or expect to need their support.

- Book an appointment: ols@ashoka.edu.in
- Request Support: <https://goo.gl/forms/8wYThiSMwv8f1G4L2>
- <https://www.ashoka.edu.in/page/ols-68#!/#section-418>

ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY		FRIDAY	
JAN 22 nd	1	24 th	2
Introduction (0) AITA that if Jurassic Park were real I would tell my husband that he cannot go?		Proper Names – J.S. Mill (1) <i>System of Logic</i> , Chap II, Of Names	
29 th	3	31 st	4
Proper Names – G. Frege (2) “On Sense and Reference”		Proper Names – G. Frege (cont.) · Group Worksheet #1	
FEB 5 th	5	7 th	6
Proper Names – B. Russell (3) “On Denoting”		Definite Descriptions – B. Russell (cont.) · Group Worksheet #2	
12 th	7	14 th	8
Definite Descriptions – K.S. Donnellan (4) “Reference and Definite Descriptions”		Definite Descriptions – K.S. Donnellan (cont.) · Group Worksheet #3	
19 th	9	21 st	10
The Modal Argument – S. Kripke (5 & 6) <i>Naming and Necessity</i> , Lecture 1 & 2 (up to p.87)		The Modal Argument – S. Kripke (cont.) · Group Worksheet #4	
26 th	11	28 th	12
The Epistemological Argument – S. Kripke (7) <i>Naming and Necessity</i> , excerpts		The Epistemological Argument – S. Kripke (cont.) · Group Worksheet #5	
MAR 4 th	13	6 th	14
Midterm Review		Midterm Exam – In Class	
11 th		13 th	
MIDTERM BREAK – NO CLASS		MIDTERM BREAK – NO CLASS	
18 th	15	20 th	16
(8) Speech Acts - J.L. Austin <i>How to do things with words</i> , Lectures I, II, V, VII, VIII, and XI.		Speech Acts – J.L. Austin (cont.) · Group Worksheet #6	
25 th	17	27 th	18
Speech Acts – L.J. Cohen (9) “Do Illocutionary Forces Exist?” · Group Worksheet #7		Speech Acts – M. Matczak (Extra) “Three Kinds of Intention in Lawmaking”	
APR 1 st	19	3 rd	20
Implicatures – H.P. Grice (10) “Logic and Conversation” · Group Worksheet #8		Implicatures – H.P. Grice (cont.)	

WEDNESDAY	FRIDAY
8 th 21 Pejorative Language – C. Hom (11) “The Semantics of Racial Epithets” · Group Worksheet #9	10 th HOLI – NO CLASS
15 th 22 Pejorative Language – R. Jeshion (12) “Slurs and Stereotypes”	17 th 23 Pejorative Language – R. Jeshion (cont.)
22 nd WRITING/OH WEEK	24 th WRITING/OH WEEK
29 th Final Paper due by 11:59pm	MAY 1 st NO CLASS
6 th EXAM WEEK – NO CLASS	8 th EXAM WEEK – NO CLASS