

UC Santa Barbara | Semester Year

COURSE CODE

Philosophy of Language (Advanced)

Day Time | Classroom

INSTRUCTOR:

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Office | Office Hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This is an advanced course in Philosophy of Language. We will talk about “this and that, but mostly on ‘this’ and ‘that’, and other ways our interpretation and understanding of language depends on contextual factors.”¹

The course is structured in 3 modules. In the first module, we will learn about two basic theories of the meaning of proper names (‘Juliana’, ‘Manhattan’, etc.). In the second module, we will learn about explicit context sensitivity and some semantic theories of indexicals and demonstrative expressions, such as ‘this’, ‘that’, ‘here’, ‘I’, and some interesting issues like: how can I truly say that ‘I am not here now’ when I’m necessarily there then when I utter the sentence? Is there a difference between saying that *I* am hungry and that *Juliana* is hungry? In the last module, we will talk about implicit context sensitivity that we may find in sentences like ‘It’s raining’ – when you say it, you obviously mean that it’s raining in a particular place, but which place? We will also discuss how much of our discourse exhibit implicit sensitivity – all sentences? some sentences? –, and puzzles related to the truth-values of sentences containing predicates of “personal taste” – how can I say ‘Chocolate cake is delicious’ and you deny it by saying ‘Chocolate cake is not delicious’, while maintaining that both our utterances are true?

1. Quote from Stefano Predelli’s website (<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/humanities/departments/philosophy/people/stefano.predelli>).

| LEARNING OBJECTIVES | STUDENT OUTCOMES |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage critically with selected important debates, positions, and methods in Western philosophy. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain debates and positions clearly and precisely in written and oral form. Construct thought experiments and arguments against hypotheses presented in class. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand basic concepts and distinctions in the readings and theories. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply theories and concepts in new contexts. Use introduced concepts and distinctions in your own arguments. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop original ideas on selected topics in philosophy. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critically engage with positions and arguments put forth in readings. Write and present clear, precise, and moderately original argument on self-chosen topic. |

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- 20% Reading Assignments
- 10% Participation
- 20% Presentation
- 25% Midterm Take Home Exam
- 25% Final Paper (5-7 pages)

Reading Assignments

Reading Assignments will be graded based on student engagement with the readings on Perusall. For full credit, you 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 weeks**, each worth 2 points. You 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. Annotations, questions, or comments should be done by **the day before** the reading is scheduled at **11:59pm** to count towards your grade.

Participation

Participation grade will be based on student's engagement in lecture and participation on in class activities throughout the course. Attendance will be taken but do not expect a perfect grade merely for being an organic body.

Midterm Take Home Exam

Midterm Take Home Exam is in short essay format. The questions will be posted online at the end of week 6, and it is due on week 7, DATE/TIME. You will have 4 days to complete this assignment.

Presentation

The last two weeks of classes will be dedicated to group or individual presentations about a self-chosen topic (pending instructor's approval) related with modules 1, 2, or 3. Students will have to submit a short report (2–3 pages) the day before their presentation is scheduled. For full credit, students have to (1) submit a short report (2–3 pages), (2) give an in class presentation, and (3) ask questions in other presentations.

Final Paper (5-7 pages)

A Final Paper (5-7 pages) is due on the day of the final is scheduled. The paper is on a self-chosen topic (pending instructor's approval).

NOTE: Things change – the Fates are fickle. Consequently, information found on this syllabus is subject to revision as we progress through the quarter: 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 available on Perusall.

COURSE SCHEDULE & READINGS

Module 1 – Semantic Theories

· **WEEK 1**

- Gottlob Frege, “On Sense and Reference”.
- John Stuart Mill, *The System of Logic*, chap 2.

· **WEEK 2:**

- Bertrand Russell, “Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description”.
- Selected letters from Frege-Russell correspondence.

Module 2 – Indexicals and Demonstratives

· **WEEK 3**

- John Perry, “Frege on Demonstratives”.

· **WEEK 4**

- David Kaplan, “Demonstratives” (excerpts).

· **WEEK 5**

- Hector-Neri Castañeda, “‘He’: A Study in the Logic of Self-Consciousness”.
- John Perry, “The Problem of the Essential Indexical”.

· **WEEK 6**

- Ruth Millikan, “The Myth of the Essential Indexical”.
- Herman Cappelen & Josh Dever, “The Inessential Indexical”, chapter 3.

· **WEEK 7**

- David Kaplan, “Monsters Begat by Elegance”.
- Stefano Predelli, “I Am Not Here Now”.

Module 3 – Unarticulated Constituents

· **WEEK 8**

- François Recanati, “Unarticulated Constituents”.

· **WEEK 9**

- Barbara Partee, “Binding Implicit Variables in Quantified Contexts”.

- **WEEK 10**

- Emma Borg, “Saying What You Mean: Unarticulated Constituents and Communication”

- **WEEK 11**

- Peter Lasersohn “Context dependence, disagreement, and predicates of personal taste”.
- Isidora Stojanovic, “Talking about taste: Disagreement, implicit arguments, and relative truth”.

- **WEEK 12-14: Presentations**

GRADING

The usual grading scale will apply: 0-59% F, 60-62% D-, 63-66% D, 67-69% D+, 70-72% C-, 73-76% C, 77-79% C+, 80-82% B-, 83-86% B, 87-89% B+, 90-92% A-, 93-96% A, 97-100% 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 information, theses, cases, or arguments 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. So, before submitting your paper or take home exam, make sure to ask a friend to proof read besides proof reading the paper yourself. Also take note of campus resources listed below that offer assistance with essay-writing.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

I take academic dishonesty in any form very seriously: I will prosecute any offenses, seeking penalties ranging up to and including expulsion from the university. The university's Academic guide to Integrity is available online: <http://judicialaffairs.sa.ucsb.edu/PDF/academicintegflyer.pdf>. It is every student's responsibility to be familiar with the university's policies. If you see anything there that you don't understand please contact me.

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 we can do to accommodate you.****

1) CAPS (Counseling & Psychological Services)

If you're dealing with depression, anxiety, or are just feeling overwhelmed, CAPS is available to help. They offer individual and group counseling, as well as relaxation rooms and other resources to make the quarter more bearable.

- tel: (805) 893-4411
- <http://counseling.sa.ucsb.edu>

2) CARE (Campus Advocacy Resources & Education)

CARE provides resources related to sexual assault, stalking, and intimate partner violence. They offer free and confidential counseling, medical and legal assistance, and help with referrals for long-term support for those who need it.

- tel: (805) 893-4613
- <http://wgse.sa.ucsb.edu/Care>

3) **RCSGD** (*Resource Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity*)

The RCSGD provides resources for gender, sexual, romantic minorities such as: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, asexual, intersex, and otherwise gender/sexual/romantic nonconforming individuals.

They also collect reports of hate incidents and maintain a list of gender neutral bathrooms on campus.

- tel: (805) 893-5847
- <http://wgse.sa.ucsb.edu/sgd/>

4) **CLAS** (*Campus Learning Assistance Services*)

CLAS offers workshops on study skills like note-taking and time management; group tutorials on math, science, and economics; assistance with essay-writing, and other free services that will help you perform well in your classes.

- <http://clas.sa.ucsb.edu>

5) **DSP** (*Disabled Students Program*)

If you have any sort of disability - physical or mental, permanent or temporary – we strongly encourage you to register with DSP. 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, but unfortunately UCSB requires that instructors receive confirmation from DSP before providing accommodation. Since DSP is often busy, contact them as soon as possible if you need or expect to need their support.

- tel: (805) 893-2668
- <http://dsp.sa.ucsb.edu>