

COURSE INFORMATION

Spring 2011: Intro to Philosophy of Language
 PHIL 129: 001 [MWF 10.10-11.00]: [216 Boucke]

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Texts	
Lycan, William G.	2008. <i>Philosophy of Language: A Contemporary Introduction</i> . New York: Routledge. ISBN: 9780415957526.
Agler, David W.	2010. <i>An Introduction to the Philosophy of Language: An Anthology</i> . Check course website for further details. Available at the Student Book Store .

* Notes Optional Reading Available in ANGEL

PART I — SINGULAR REFERENCE

Jan 10 – 14	<p>Chapter 1, Lycan (Introduction), pp.1–6. Frege, On Sense and Reference. *Frege, On Concept and Object. In <i>Gottlob Frege: Collected Papers</i> (1984). *Frege, Letter to Jourdain [undated]. In <i>Phil and Math. Correspondence</i> (1980). *Frege, [17 Key Sentences on Logic]. In <i>Gottlob Frege: Posthumous Writings</i> (1979). *Frege, Thoughts. In <i>Gottlob Frege: Collected Papers</i> (1984). *Dummett, Michael. Sense and Tone. Ch.1 from <i>Frege: Philosophy of Language</i> (1973) *Dummett, Michael. Truth Value and Reference. Ch.12 from <i>Frege: Philosophy of Language</i> (1973) *Evans, Gareth. Frege. Ch.1 from <i>The Varieties of Reference</i> (1982).</p>
17 Jan	MLK Day – No Class
Jan 19 – 21	<p>Chapter 2, Lycan (Definite Descriptions), pp.9–30. Russell, Descriptions. Donnellan, Keith. Reference and Definite Descriptions (1966). *Evans, Gareth. Russell. Ch.2 from <i>The Varieties of Reference</i> (1982). *Kaplan, David. What is Russell’s Theory of Descriptions? (1972). *Russell, Bertrand. Review of Meinong (1905). *Strawson, Peter. On Referring (1950). Due: Podcast #1</p>
Jan 24 – 28	<p>Chapter 3, Lycan (Proper Names: the Description Theory), pp.31-44. Russell, Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description. <i>Review</i>. Frege, On Sense and Reference. *Russell, Bertrand. Philosophy of Logical Atomism. *Searle, John. 1958. Proper Names. <i>Mind</i> 67:166-173.</p>
Jan 31 – Feb. 11	<p>Chapter 4, Lycan (Proper Names: the DR and Causal Theory), pp.45-62. Mill, John Stuart. 1906. Book I, Chapters 1 and 2. In <i>A System of Logic</i>: Kripke, Saul. Lectures 1 and 2, In <i>Naming and Necessity</i>. *Evans, Gareth. Recent Work. Ch.3 from <i>The Varieties of Reference</i> (1982). *Braun, Empty Names. *Lewis, David K. Truth in Fiction *Predelli, Stefano. Talk about Fiction *Thomasson, Amie L. Speaking of Fictional Characters Writing Workshop #1 (Metadiscourse) Due: Podcast #2</p>
PART II — THEORIES OF MEANING	
Feb 14 – 18	<p>Chapter 5, Lycan (Traditional Theories of Meaning), pp.65-75. Due: Short Paper #1</p>
Feb 21 – 25	<p>Chapter 6, Lycan (“Use” Theories), pp.76-85</p>

	<p>*Alston, W. 1963. Meaning and Use. <i>Philosophical Quarterly</i> 51:107-124. *Russell, Bertrand. The Cult of 'Common Usage' (1953)</p>
Feb 28 – March 4	<p>Chapter 7, Lycan (Grice's Program), pp.86-97. Grice, H. P. 1989. Meaning. *Ziff, P. 1960. On H. P. Grice's Account of Meaning *Grice, H. P. 1989. Further Notes on Logic and Conversation. Due: Podcast #3</p>
March 7 – 11	Spring Break – No Class
March 14– 18	<p>Chapter 8, Lycan (Verificationism), pp.96-108. *Waismann, F. 1965. Verifiability. *Russell, Bertrand. Logical Positivism (1950)</p>
March 21 – 25	<p>Chapter 9 (Truth-Conditional Theories), Lycan, pp.109-125. Davidson, D. 1967. Truth and Meaning. Dummett, M. (1975), "What Is a theory of Meaning? *Harman, G. 1972. Logical Form. *Dummett, M. 1976. What Is a theory of Meaning, II Due: Podcast #4</p>
March 28 – April 1	<p>Chapter 10, Lycan (Possible World \wedge Intensional Semantics), pp.126-33. Lewis, David. 1975. Languages and Language. *Lewis, David. 1970. General Semantics. Writing Workshop #2 (Argument) Due: Podcast #5</p>
PART III — SEMANTICS & PRAGMATICS	
April 4 – 8	<p>Chapter 11, Lycan (Semantic Pragmatics), pp.137-143. Stalnaker, Robert. Pragmatics *Harman, G. 1972. Logical Form. *Kaplan, David. 1989. Afterthoughts. Due: Short Paper #2</p>
April 11 – 15	<p>Chapter 12, Lycan (Speech Acts), pp.144-155. Austin, J. L. 1961. Performative Utterances. Searle, John. 1965. What Is a Speech Act? Due: Podcast #6</p>
April 18 – 22	<p>Chapter 13, Lycan (Implicative Relations), pp.156-172. Grice, H. P. Logic and Conversation *García-Carpintero, Manuel. 2001. Gricean Rational Reconstructions and the Semantics/Pragmatics Distinction. *Wilson, D. and Sperber D. 2004. Relevance Theory. Due: Podcast #7</p>
April 25 – 29	Writing Workshop #3 (Quotations \wedge Bibliography)
29 April	Classes End
	Due: Final Paper TBA

1. Course Description

Although philosophical considerations about language has occurred throughout the history of philosophy (e.g. Plato's *Cratylus* or Aristotle's *On Interpretation*), from around the turn of the 20th century, philosophy of language has become one of the central fields of philosophy (alongside epistemology, metaphysics, philosophy of mind, and philosophy of science). In the early to middle part of the 20th century, philosophy of language was occupied primarily with questions about meaning and whether a proper analysis of language would dissolve traditional philosophical questions. Two traditions emerged. IDEAL LANGUAGE PHILOSOPHERS claimed that philosophical problems could be eliminated by constructing a more purified and logical form of language. The working assumption was that philosophical problems were really the result of various ambiguities or violations operating in the semantics of natural language. Removing these problems by constructing a non-ambiguous and precise

semantics allowed for dissolving philosophy entirely (i.e. speculative metaphysics). ORDINARY LANGUAGE PHILOSOPHERS claimed that philosophical problems could be eliminated by greater attention to how language is *commonly or ordinarily used*. Philosophical problems were the result of using common expressions in an uncommon, perverse, or jargon-laden fashion. By attending to the normal use of language, the ordinary language tradition claimed to furnish dissolutions to the mind-body problem (Ryle), eradicate arguments supporting the sense-data theory (Austin), and undermine essentialism (Wittgenstein).

During the latter part of the 1950s and into the 1960s and 1970s, both traditions began to pay more attention to language in its own right and less on its use to dissolve traditional philosophical problems or philosophy altogether. What emerged out of both traditions was a blending of the two camps into two complementary disciplines: FORMAL SEMANTICS and CONTEMPORARY PRAGMATICS. In broad outline, the primary objective of the former is to provide an account of the sentence meaning (what is said), reference, and truth-conditions of linguistic expressions, while the objective of the latter is to provide an account of speaker meaning (what is meant), communication, and how the use of an expression affects hearers. The two domains are complementary insofar as those working in formal semantics no longer believe that the meaning of a word/sentence can be explained in complete abstraction from its contextual use, while those working in contemporary pragmatics tend to accept the Gricean distinction between *what is said* and *what is implicated* (or at least not reduce meaning to use). In this course, we will investigate some basic philosophical questions having to do with language: (1) how does language refer to reality (theories of reference), (2) what (if any) is the nature of meaning (theories of meaning), (3) how much does contextual factors bear upon what is said (theories of the semantic / pragmatic interface).

2. Grade Evaluation, Scale, Breakdown

Grades will be rounded up from the *second* decimal point, e.g. 90.95 rounds up to 91.0 while 90.94 rounds down to 90.90. In the event that eLION does not allow for a particular grade (e.g. D+), you will simply be given the letter grade (e.g. if you have a D+ then you will receive a D, and if you have a C-, you will receive a C).

A: 91–100%;	C+: 79.0–79.9	F: 0–59.9
A–: 90.0–90.9	C: 71.0–77.9	INCOMPLETE
B+: 89.0–89.9	C–: 70–70.9	DROP
B: 81.0–88.9	D+: 69.0–69.9	
B–: 80–80.9	D: 60.0–68.9	

3. Explanation of Evaluation

There are four components to this course: (1) Participation / Attendance / Podcast, (2) Two Short Papers, (3) Examinations, and (4) Final Paper.

3.1. Participation / Attendance / Podcast (20%)

Since the course is a combination of lecture and seminar format, regular and active participation is required. Although it is not essential that you have mastered the text, you are expected to have read the assignment before attending class and have made notes for which passages, terms, or arguments you think are important. In addition, you will be required to post *one* podcast (audio/visual) that provides a quick summary of the week's reading and classroom discussion. A rubric will be provided in class.

3.2. Online / Classroom Examinations (15%)

Assignments in the form of an examination (online or in-class) will be assigned periodically throughout the course. These quizzes will test a very rudimentary understanding of the philosophical texts and your comprehension of writing skills learned in this course. In preparation for quizzes, it is necessary that you have done the reading and have a general idea of its major claim(s), along with the mainline of its supporting argument. Some quizzes will allow you to make use of the text in question (and your notes), so it is to your advantage if you (1) bring the relevant texts to class and (2) mark or highlight the major claims/arguments of the text.

3.3. Two Short Papers (25%)

You will be asked to write two, short (1000 words) papers for this course. Each paper is geared around a writing workshop which is designed to develop your ability in summarize a text, argue for a particular thesis, or organize your thoughts. The assignments are *developmental*, so you will be regularly asked to employ skills that you have learned earlier in the course. In addition, you will be required to attend a peer-review session before you turn in your paper.

3.4. Paper Proposal, Final Paper ^ Presentation (40%)

The ultimate goal of this course is a final paper (roughly 3000–4000 words) which organizes and synthesizes your previous work around a *thesis* supported by a coherent, concise, and well-reasoned argument. This paper should include at least the following five components: (1) the use of metadiscourse, (2) a bibliography, (3) at least one clearly identifiable argument, (4) the effective use of quotations, and (5) additional research (see optional articles on ANGEL). While the exact claim and theme of the paper is subject to your discretion, your paper must relate to one of the principal topics of the course and you will be required to submit a paper proposal in advance. In addition to the final paper and proposal, you will be asked to prepare a digital presentation of your paper. This can be a video of you explaining the main theme of your paper, an audio (.mp3) file where you present your paper by giving a short, audio summary of your thesis and its supporting arguments, or some

4. Late Work

If you are planning on taking a **Test/Notebook/Paper** late, you will need to clear this with the instructor *before* the day and time of the test. If the instructor is not informed that you will be taking the test late, a grade reduction of one letter grade is incurred for every day the test is late. So if the due date is Tuesday at 3p.m. and you email me on Tuesday at 3.01p.m., you will lose a letter grade. You will not lose an additional letter grade until 3.01p.m. the next day (i.e. Wednesday).

5. Guides to Philosophical Literature

In preparing your final paper, you will be required to do a minimal amount of additional research / reading.

5.1 General Guides

Bynagle, Hans E. 1986. *Philosophy, a guide to the reference literature*. Littleton, CO: Libraries Unlimited.
Tice, Terrence N. and Thomas P. Slavens. 1983. *Research guide to philosophy*. Chicago: American Library Association.

5.2 Dictionaries, Encyclopedias, & Biographical Sources

The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy. 1999. Ed. Robert Audi. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
The Oxford Classical Dictionary. 1996. Ed. Simon Hornblower and Anthony Spawforth. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Encyclopedia of Classical Philosophy. 1997. Ed. Donald J. Zeyl. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
The Encyclopedia of Philosophy. 1967. Ed. Paul Edwards. New York: Macmillan.
Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Supplement. 1996. Ed. Donald M. Borchert. New York: Simon & Schuster.
The Oxford Companion to Philosophy. 1995. Ed. Ted Honderich. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy. 1998. Ed. Edward Craig. New York: Routledge.
Biographical Dictionary of Twentieth-Century Philosophers. 1996. Eds. Stuart Brown, Diane Collinson, Robert Wilkinson. London and New York: Routledge.
The Dictionary of Eighteenth-Century British Philosophers. Eds. John W. Yolton, John Vladimir Price, and John Stephens. Bristol: Thoemmes Press.
Hypatia's Daughters: Fifteen hundred years of women philosophers. 1996. Ed. Linda Lopez McAlister. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Medieval Philosophers. 1992. Ed. Jeremiah Hackett. Detroit: Gale Research.

5.3 Directories for Journal Articles

Année Philologique, 1969–Present
ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials
DigiZeitschriften: The German Digital Journal Archive
FRANCIS
Historical Abstracts
IBZ: Internationale Bibliographie der Zeitschriftenliteratur
International Medieval Bibliography
Iter: Gateway to the Middle Ages and Renaissance
JSTOR
MLA Bibliography
Philosopher's Index, 1940–Present

5.4 Undergraduate Journals in Philosophy

After receiving comments and suggestions on your work, you may be interested in submitting your paper to a conference or an undergraduate journal.

Aporia: <http://aporia.byu.edu/site.php?id=current>
Episteme: <http://www.denison.edu/academics/departments/philosophy/episteme.html>
The Lyceum: <http://lyceumphilosophy.com/>

6. Additional Administrative Information

6.1. Academic Misconduct

The general principles and policy relating to cheating and plagiarism, which are enforced in this class, can be found in the Penn State policy on academic misconduct. *Academic Integrity*: Academic dishonesty encompasses a wide range of activities, whether intentional or unintentional, that includes, but is not limited to: all forms of fraud, plagiarism, and any failure to cite explicitly all materials and sources used in one's work. Sanctions for these activities include, but are not limited to, failure in a course, removal from the degree program, failure in a course with an explanation in the permanent transcript of the cause for failure, suspension, and expulsion. If you are unclear about whether you or someone you know is engaging in academic misconduct, read the following: [University Statement on Academic Integrity](#)

6.2 Other Resources on Academic Misconduct

[PSU Academic Integrity](#)
[PSU ITS:](#)
[Plagiarism Tutor](#)
[Turnitin](#)
[PSU Teaching & Learning with Technology](#)

6.3. Disability

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the campus disability liaison as soon as possible: (name, office, telephone, email). For additional information, check the university web site for [Disability Services](#).

6.4. Resources to Help with Research, Writing, Documentation, and Citation

[Information Literacy Tutorial](#)
[University Learning Center](#)
[Writing Center](#)

6.5. Use of Angel and email communication

Please check the webpage on the [ANGEL](#) website regularly. An online version of the syllabus is available there, and you will be notified of any cancellation of a course meeting there. If you need to contact me, send a well-constructed email to dwa132@psu.edu with an appropriate subject line (e.g. P120 Question) and with an appropriate address (e.g. "Dear David"). Failure to do either, or emailing me with multiple links attached ("check this youtube link")

will result in your instructor deleting your email. Students are responsible for activity on their computer accounts so only send emails pertinent to the course. Also, please do not send correspondence from cellular telephones (e.g. Blackberries, etc.).

6.6. Drop procedures and Incompletes

Students who simply stop attending class, for whatever reason, without officially withdrawing from the course, will receive the grade of F. If you expect a refund, be aware that the date the withdrawal form is processed by Penn State registrar's office determines the amount of refund.

Consult the Register site for [drop procedures](#)

Consult the Handbook for taking an [Incomplete \(D/F\)](#)

6.7. Student Guidance

If you are in need of psychological counseling, please do not hesitate to contact Penn State's [Counseling & Psychological Services](#) (phone: 814-863-0395). For any problem related to your studies, university policies and procedures, do not hesitate to seek the help of the [Student Affairs Services](#), your Academic Advisor, or arrange a meeting with your instructor who will help you obtain assistance through one of the above, or another, agency.

6.8. Classroom Environment

A number of factors figure into creating a healthy classroom environment. In order to facilitate such an environment, I ask you to obey the following: (1) the use of cell phones in any capacity is prohibited (please turn ringers/buzzers off, no text-messaging during class), (2) please do not begin to 'pack up' your belongings before your instructor has *explicitly* dismissed you, (3) please come to class rested, sleeping in class is strictly prohibited, (4) please do not do other work in class. If you are incapable of performing (1)–(4) or are disruptive in class, you will kindly be asked to leave the classroom.

6.9. Challenge Examination

For some courses, students may request a [challenge examination](#) as a substitute for completing the usual requirements of a course. If the examination is successfully completed the credits received are described as "credits by examination" ([policy 42-50](#)).

Elements of this syllabus are subject to modification due to unforeseen variables, catastrophic events, or other factors. The instructor will announce any of these changes in class.