

## PHLB80-Philosophy of Language

**Professor:** Dr. Dustin Stokes  
**Section:** PHLB80H3 S  
Lectures TU 7:00-10:00 MW120  
**Office:** HW325  
**Office Hours:** Thurs 12:30-1:30/or by appointment  
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### Course description

This is an introductory course in the philosophy of language. In some sense, the course doubles as an introductory course to some of the core foundations for analytic philosophy. The most basic question we will ask is, simply, "What is language?". This question, depending upon which philosopher you ask, can be broken into sub-questions, including: What is the *role* of language in our lives, and does this tell us anything about what language is? What is the relationship between language and the mind? Between language and (objects in) the world? What is the nature of meaning? What is the relation between the meaning of words and speakers of a language?

### Course materials:

We take our readings from both primary and secondary sources:

Secondary source:

*An Introduction to the Philosophy of Language*, by Michael Morris (Cambridge University Press).

Primary sources:

The introductory chapters will be coupled with primary readings; these readings will be available online (either in PDF through Blackboard; or through some other medium as instructed under the 'Reading schedule' below).

All additional course materials are available online via the course blackboard site. Lecture notes, essay assignments, announcements, and other information will also be made available on this site. The portal may be accessed via:  
<https://portal.utoronto.ca/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp> (You must login using your UTORid and password.)

### Evaluation:

**30% Short essay 1 DUE 14 FEB:** (questions assigned 7 Feb)  
**30% Short essay 2 DUE 20 MAR:** (questions assigned 13 Mar )  
**40% Final exam DATE TBA**

The short essays might also be thought of as take-home exams. You will be given a short list of questions, from which you will choose and respond to one. The questions will be distributed in class, and the papers are to be submitted the following week at the start of lecture. Your responses should be concise and to the point, and should be between 750-1250 words (3-5 pages).

The final exam will be comprehensive and essay-style, but like the short papers, you will have choices between questions.

## General:

This is a writing intensive course. All of the work/examinations will be written. Your papers will be graded not only on content, but also on grammar, writing mechanics, style, etc. The UTSC writing centre can be found online here:

<http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/~ctl/twc/index.html>

I also recommend this for writing philosophy papers:

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

Plagiarism and academic offenses of any kind will not be tolerated. You should familiarize yourself with the university guidelines and policies on academic integrity:

<http://www.utoronto.ca/academicintegrity/resourcesforstudents.html>

Late work/exams are allowed only with the submission of an official University of Toronto Medical Certificate or a letter from your registrar (or other university authority).

**Unexcused late work will NOT be accepted.**

*If you require special test-taking or note-taking accommodations, please see me.*

## (Tentative) Reading/discussion schedule:

MM: Reading in Morris *Introduction to the Philosophy of Language*

@: Reading available in PDF on course blackboard website.

For all other readings, instructions are provided below.

### Week 1

10 Jan

*Introduction and Locke's theory of language*

- Ch. 1 Morris (MM)
- Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book III, Ch. 1 & 2 (any copy of this text will do; or, for a modern "translation" online: <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/lo3.html>)

### Week 2

17 Jan

*Frege: sense and reference*

- Ch. 2 Morris (MM)
- Frege, 'Über Sinn und Bedeutung' (Translated as 'On Sense and Reference' (@))

### Week 3

24 Jan

*Continuing with sense and reference*

- Possible additional readings TBA

### Week 4

31 Jan

*Russell and definite descriptions*

- Ch. 3 Morris (MM)
- Russell, 'On denoting' (@)

### Week 5

7 Feb

*Kripke and proper names*

- Ch. 4 Morris (MM)
- Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, Lectures I&II (@)

### Week 6

14 Feb

*Natural kind terms*

- Ch. 5 Morris (MM)
- Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, Lecture III (@)
- Putnam, 'Meaning and reference' (@)

**SHORT ESSAY 1 DUE**

**READING WEEK-NO CLASS 21/23 FEB**

**Week 7**

28 Feb

*Propositional attitudes: Reference*

- Ch. 7 Morris (MM)
- Quine, 'Quantifiers and propositional attitudes' (@)

**Week 8**

6 Mar

*Propositional attitudes: A semantic puzzle*

- Ch. 8 Morris (MM)
- Kripke, 'A puzzle about belief' (@)

**Week 9**

13 Mar

*Tarski, semantics, and truth*

- Tarski, 'The semantic conception of truth' (@)
- Possible additional reading TBA

**Week 10**

20 Mar

*Davidson on truth and meaning*

- Ch. 9 Morris (MM)
- Davidson, 'Truth and meaning' (in Davidson, *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*, online here: <http://go.utlib.ca/cat/7958706> )

**SHORT ESSAY 2 DUE****Week 11**

27 Mar

*Meaning, translation, and interpretation*

- Ch. 10 Morris (MM)
- Davidson, 'Radical interpretation' (in Davidson, *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*, online here: <http://go.utlib.ca/cat/7958706> )
- Optional: Quine, *Word and Object*, Ch. 2

**Week 12**

3 Apr

*Grice: Meaning, expression, and intention*

- Ch. 13 Morris (MM)
- Grice, 'Meaning' (@)

**Resources:**

The primary sources for this course will be challenging. So I strongly encourage you to use the Morris introductory text in tandem with these readings. In addition, you might find some of the following resources helpful.

-For general philosophy resources, I suggest both *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, ed. Audi, R. (1999) and *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, ed. Blackburn, S. (1994). Online, try the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy at <http://plato.stanford.edu/>

-For introductory texts on philosophy of language, try W. Lycan, *Philosophy of Language: A contemporary introduction* (Routledge 2008) or M. Devitt and K. Sterelney, *Language and Reality*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (MIT Press 1999)