PHIL 3241 — Philosophy of Language

T.J. Broy
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Office: 104 Manchester Hall
Office Hours: Wednesday 1:30 pm — 3:00 pm or by appointment

Fall 2024
TR 11:00 am — 12:15 pm
116 Koons Hall

1 Course Description

Philosophical issues raised by language. Topics may include the nature and functions of language; theories of meaning, reference, and truth; speech acts; the evolutionary origin of language; and language's relation to thought, gender, race, and politics.

2 Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Analyze and assess philosophical arguments
- Make connections between philosophical ideas and personal experiences and perspectives
- Understand some of the major views in the philosophy of language
- Demonstrate personal philosophical reflection through writing

3 Required Text

All readings are available on HuskyCT.

4 Grading

Your grade in the course will be composed of the following:

Discussion	25%
Quizzes	25%
Reading Responses	25%
Final Exam	25%

Assignments and final grades will be according to the following scale:

A	93	Excellent
A-	90	Excellent
B+	88	Very good
B	83	Good
B-	80	Good
C+	78	Good
C	73	Average
C-	70	Fair
D+	68	Poor
D	63	Poor
D-	60	Merely passing
F		

5 Assignments

5.1 Discussion

Class time will be spent in a combination of lecture and discussion. On days allotted for discussion, students will submit a claims card. On either side of an index card, students will submit one substantive philosophical claim from the readings for that week which they agree with and would be willing to defend in class and one substantive philosophical claim which they disagree with and would be willing to critique in class. One of the two claims may be substituted for a substantive question about the assigned reading. Both claims (or both claim and question) should include a citation to the text.

5.2 Quizzes

There will be six quizzes assessing comprehension of the reading assignments. Quizzes will consist of five multiple choice questions to be answered at the end of class. Quizzes are open book and open note. If the class average for quizzes is below 75% at the end of the semester, the lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

5.3 Reading Responses

Students will submit two reading responses during the course of the semester. Each reading response should engage with one argument from one of the assigned readings. Reading responses should be structured in two parts. In the first expository part, explain the target argument. In the second evaluative part, evaluate the target argument. Reading responses have a maximum word count of 1,000 words. An example reading response is available on HuskyCT.

5.4 Final Exam

The final exam will consist of essay questions. A list of possible essay questions will be distributed prior to the exam. On the day of the exam, a subset of those questions will be selected for the exam and students will choose which questions to answer from among that set. The final exam is open book, but not open note.

5.5 Due Dates

Work will not be accepted after the due date. If for some reason you find yourself unable to complete your work by the due date, talk to me and we can discuss the possibility of an extension. Once the due date has passed, however, no late work will be accepted.

6 Electronics

The use of personal electronics (laptops, cell phones, etc.) is not permitted during class meetings except when such use is required as part of an approved accommodation.

7 Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is dishonest or unethical academic behavior that includes, but is not limited to, misrepresenting mastery in an academic area (e.g., cheating), failing to properly credit information, research, or ideas to their rightful originators, representing such information, research, or ideas as your own (e.g., plagiarism), or using ChatGPT (or similar) to generate material which is submitted in fulfillment of an assignment. Any instances of academic misconduct will result in grade penalties ranging from a lower grade on the assignment to failure of the course and will be reported to the Office of Community Standards. Information about university policies regarding academic misconduct is available at https://community.uconn.edu/academic-misconduct/.

8 Discrimination, Harassment, and Related Interpersonal Violence

Academic and professional excellence can flourish only when each member of our community is assured an atmosphere of mutual respect. All members of the University community are responsible for the maintenance of an academic and work environment in which people are free to learn and work without fear of discrimination or discriminatory harassment. In addition, inappropriate amorous relationships can undermine the University's mission when those in positions of authority abuse or appear to abuse their authority. To that end, and in accordance with federal and state law, the University prohibits discrimination and discriminatory harassment, as well as inappropriate amorous relationships, and such behavior will be met with appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the University. Additionally, to protect the campus community, all non-confidential University employees (including faculty) are required to report sexual assaults, intimate partner violence, and/or stalking involving a student that they witness or are told about to the Office of Institutional Equity. Please be aware that while the information you provide will remain private, it will not be confidential and will be shared with University officials. More information is available at https://equity.uconn.edu and https://titleix.uconn.edu. Information about accessing medical care can be found at https://titleix.uconn.edu/get-help/urgent-medical-care/. Information about accessing confidential resources relating to sexual assualt and domestic violence can be found at https://titleix.uconn.edu/get-help/confidential-advocacy/.

9 Disability Accommodation

If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability or pregnancy, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options. Students who require accommodations should contact the Center for Students with Disabilities, Wilbur Cross Building Room 204, (860) 486-2020 or https://csd.uconn.edu/.

10 Course Schedule

Date	Topic/Reading	Assessment
Aug. 27	Syllabus	
Aug. 29	Making and evaluating arguments	
Sep. 3	Grice, "Meaning"	
Sep. 5	Discussion	
Sep. 10	Russell, "Descriptions"	
Sep. 12	Discussion	
Sep. 17	Strawson, "On Referring"	
Sep. 19	Discussion	Quiz
Sep. 24	Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*	
Sep. 26	Discussion	
Oct. 1	Evans, "The Causal Theory of Names"	
Oct. 3	Discussion	Quiz
Oct. 8	Austin, "Performative Utterances"	
Oct. 10	Discussion	
Oct. 15	Strawson, "Intention and Convention in Speech Acts"	
Oct. 17	Discussion	Quiz
Oct. 18		Reading Response 1
Oct. 22	Grice, "Logic and Conversation"	
Oct. 24	Discussion	
Oct. 29	Lewis, "Scorekeeping in a Language Game"	
Oct. 31	Discussion	Quiz
Nov. 5	Kripke, *On Rules and Private Language*	
Nov. 7	Discussion	
Nov. 12	Millikan, "Truth Rules, Hoverflies, and the Kripke-Wittgenstein Paradox"	
Nov. 14	Discussion	Quiz
Nov. 19	Langton, "Speech Acts and Unspeakable Acts"	
Nov. 21	Discussion	
Nov. 26	No class	
Nov. 28	No class	
Dec. 3	Currie, *The Nature of Fiction*	
Dec. 5	Discussion	Quiz
Dec. 6		Reading Response 2