PHIL/MCOM/LALS
2504A

Language and Communication

Carleton University
Department of Philosophy

Term: Summer 2009 (July – August)
Meetings: Tuesdays & Thursdays: 2:35-5:25 (12 meetings)
Venue: Tory Bld. 447
Instructor: Eros Corazza
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Essay Deadline: TBA
Exam: exam period (2h exam)

- The PowerPoint slides are posted on my webpage
Course description
We shall begin by discussing some central topics of Frege’s philosophy of language. The main topics discussed will be: Frege’s sense/reference distinction, Frege’s theory of thought, Frege’s anti-psychologism and Frege’s theory of demonstratives. To understand the importance of Frege’s contribution we will focus on Dummett’s interpretation.

We shall then discuss some central topics from Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations* and the way they have been perceived within the philosophical community. Among these topics we shall discuss notions such as: language games, form of life, rule following, etc.

Finally, we shall look at the direct reference theory of proper names (Kripke, Donnellan, …) and the direct reference theory of indexicals (Kaplan, Perry, …). We shall pay particular attention to the notion of context and the way our linguistic interchange exploits it in order to single out objects of discourse. In so doing we shall see how direct reference deals with Frege’s and Wittgenstein’s conceptions of language.

Aims and Objectives
The module aims to provide a general introduction to the development of some key notions pertaining to the philosophy of language. To do so we shall focus on some of Frege’s and Wittgenstein’s influential works and the way they have been perceived by the analytic philosophical community.

Learning Outcomes
By the end of the module you should be able to:

- Understand notions such as: the sense/reference distinction, the linguistic turn, anti-psychologism, language game, rule following, etc. (see Module Content and Topics to be Discussed, for detailed information on the notions/topics we’ll discuss).

- Communication skills: through essays writing and the feedback you will get on them you will further develop the capacity to present problems and propose solutions to them in a clear, precise and concise way. Through discussions you will also have the opportunity to develop the capacity to speak briefly and clearly on a given subject/problem, to ask questions and requests for clarification, and to contribute constructively to discussion.

- You will have lot of opportunities to interact with other students in discussing some of the issues we will be dealing with.

Requirements
It is mandatory to have a Carleton student “connect” account and to register on WebCT.

Assignments
One short essay and a final (2 h.) exam

- Attendance
  Weight: 20%
- Short Essay (1500 words maximum)
  Weight: 30%
- Final exam (answer 2 questions out of 5 or 6)
  Weight: 50%

Due Assignment

- Short Essay: TBA
- Final exam: Exam Period (a 2 hours exam)
**Texts Recommended**
In bold characters the texts you **must** read. The other texts mentioned are extremely helpful in understanding and appreciating the text you must read.

- All the books should be on the short loan reserve in the library
- The books should also be available to buy at **Haven Books** (Sunnyside).

**On Frege:**


- Frege’s 2 papers you have to read are also in:
  

Dummett, M., 1973, *Frege Philosophy of Language*, Oxford UP, ch. 5, ch. 6, ch. 11

Dummett, M., 1981, *The Interpretation of Frege’s Philosophy of Language*, Oxford UP, ch. 6, ch. 10


**On Wittgenstein:**

**Wittgenstein, L. Philosophical Investigations, Blackwell**

The *Philosophical Investigations* (PI) can be found on the net (with a commentary) on:

- [http://www.voidspace.org.uk/psychology/wittgenstein/one.shtml](http://www.voidspace.org.uk/psychology/wittgenstein/one.shtml)

**Marie McGinn, 1997, Wittgenstein and the Philosophical Investigations, Routledge**


**On Direct Reference:**


Essay Topics
You should write one essay of 1500 words (or 6 typewritten double-spaced pages) maximum on one of the following five questions:

1. Is the following inference valid?
   Mary believes that Hesperus is a star
   Hesperus is Phosphorus
   So: Mary believes that Phosphorus is a star
   Why?
2. What’s the difference between Frege and Dummett’s Frege?
3. Explain and evaluate Frege’s anti-psychologism.

Topics to be discussed and suggestions for reading
Each topic will require a 3h class

1. Introduction: Terminological Remarks

2. Frege’s Puzzles
   Primary reading: Frege. “Sense and Reference” in The Frege Reader
   Secondary reading: Dummett, Frege Philosophy of Language. ch. 5, ch. 6

3. Fregean Thoughts
   Primary reading: Frege. “Thought” in The Frege Reader
   Secondary reading: Dummett, Frege Philosophy of Language. ch. 11

4. Dummett’s Frege
   Primary reading: Dummett, Frege Philosophy of Language. ch. 5, ch. 6, ch. 11
   Secondary reading: Dummett, The Interpretation of Frege’s Philosophy of Language. ch. 6, ch. 10

5. Frege’s Anti-Psychologism
   Primary reading: Frege. “Thought” in The Frege Reader
   Primary reading: Dummett. The Origins of Analytical Philosophy. ch. 2, ch. 4, ch. 10, ch. 13

6. The Sense/Reference Distinction Revisited
   Primary reading: Perry. “Frege on Demonstratives”
   Secondary reading: Kaplan. “Demonstratives”

7. Wittgenstein’s Methodology, the Augustinian Conception of Language, and Language qua Institution
   Primary reading: Wittgenstein. Philosophical Investigations (part 1)
   Secondary reading: Backer & Hacker. Wittgenstein: Meaning and Understanding
   Secondary reading: McGinn. Wittgenstein and the Philosophical Investigations

8. Ostensive Definitions, Indexicality, and the First Person
   Primary reading: Wittgenstein. Philosophical Investigations (part 1)
   Primary reading: Wittgenstein. The Brown Book (first part)
   Secondary reading: Backer & Hacker. Wittgenstein: Meaning and Understanding

9. Meaning, Understanding, and Use
   Primary reading: Wittgenstein. Philosophical Investigations (part 1)
   Secondary reading: Backer & Hacker. Wittgenstein: Meaning and Understanding
   Secondary reading: McGinn. Wittgenstein and the Philosophical Investigations
10. Following a Rule
Primary reading: Kripke. *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*
Secondary reading: McGinn. *Wittgenstein and the Philosophical Investigations*

11. The Private Language Argument and the Philosophy of Psychology
Primary reading: Wittgenstein. *Philosophical Investigations (part 2)*
Secondary reading: Hacker. *Wittgenstein: Meaning and Mind*

12. Revision Class

*Suggestions for Writing an Essay*

Source: *Episteme Links*


Cf. G. J Mattey:

http://philosophy.ucdavis.edu/mattey/phi22n/paphints.html

**Don't** bring in extraneous details about the context in which the works were written. Your paper assignments are focused on a specific topic. Your paper must stick to that topic. For example, "Descartes was a philosopher who was born in France, lived in the Netherlands, and died in Sweden."

**Do** frame the nature of the philosophical problem clearly. For example, "Is it possible to demonstrate the existence of God using no other information except about what it is to be God?"

**Don't** go off on a tangent. "Some philosophers have tried to prove that God exists by claiming that the order of nature requires an intelligent designer. Others have thought that the world does not necessarily exist, and if so, then there must be a God which necessarily exists and explains why the world exists. The first kind of argument is called the 'argument from design' and the second kind is called the 'cosmological argument.'"

**Do** stick to the issues mentioned in the paper assignment.

**Don't** throw out opinions casually. Example. "How could anybody prove that God exists? That is the kind of things human beings are just incapable of knowing."

**Do** give reasons for any opinion you express. "Descartes claimed that there is a nature of God. But what evidence is there that there really is such a thing as a nature of God, rather than just a concept of God that we make up ourselves?"

**Don't** make undocumented claims about what any of the authors wrote.

**Do** back up your description of the philosopher's position by use of quotations from the text. Parenthetical page references to the text are sufficient in lieu of footnotes. For example, "According to Descartes, God has a nature and this nature includes existence. He claims that his idea of God's nature is different from a false idea he made up himself, like a four-sided figure that is not a square but is inscribed in a circle. 'For there are a great many ways in which I understand that this idea is not an invention that is dependent on my thought, but is an image of a true and immutable nature' (p. 47)."

**Don't** use the words of others without quotation. This is plagiarism, which is a punishable academic offence. Your reader will be watching out for plagiarism. One good way to recognize when you are plagiarizing is to notice any change of style, say some sentences which use a lot of words you do not use ordinarily, or whose grammatical structure is very different from your own.
Do use your own words to paraphrase what an author says.

Don't neglect to address all points in the paper topic in detail.

Do provide sufficient detail on all points, so that the grader can recognize your mastery of them.

Don't pad your paper or eliminate vital parts to get it to the suggested length.

Do write economically. Make the paper just long enough to complete the required tasks and no longer. If you deviate significantly from the suggested length, consider whether you have said too much or left something out.

Don't simply write down a bunch of logically unconnected statements or assertions. For example, "Descartes tried to prove that God exists in a couple of ways. Spinoza tried to do the same thing, but he did it differently. Descartes just makes a lot of things up, and Spinoza does too."

Do present the material in the form of arguments. One way of looking at an argument is as the defense of a conclusion by appeal to premises which are acceptable to anyone who considers them objectively, such as that it impossible to think of God except as existing. "From the fact that I cannot think of God except as existing, it follows that existence is inseparable form God, and that for this reason he really exists" (p. 46).

Don't use colloquial language to make a point. For example, "Descartes's second attempt to prove God's existence was totally lame."

Do use standard language.

Don't confuse technical language with ordinary language. For example, Descartes's use of 'nature' is sometimes different from ordinary uses, such as 'part of the earth that is not developed by humans.'

Do explain any technical terms when you introduce them. For example, "The 'ontological argument' is an attempt to prove that God exists simply from the definition, or nature, or idea of God."
LIST OF EXAM QUESTIONS:
You’ll be asked to answer 2 (and only 2) questions out of 5 questions of the following list:

1. What’s the difference between Frege and Dummett’s Frege?

2. What is the difference between “a = a” and “a = b”? What is wrong with Frege’s *Begriffsschrift* solution? How does it differ from the solution proposed in *Ueber Sinn and Bedeutung*?

3. “The verbal expression of pain replaces crying and does not describe it.” *(Pl: § 244)* Explain and discuss.

4. Explain and evaluate Kripke’s and Donnellan’s arguments against Frege’s semantics.

5. “This was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule.” *(Pl: § 201)* Explain and discuss.

6. “To imagine a language is to imagine a form of life.” *(Pl, § 7)* Explain and discuss.

7. “If a lion could talk, we could not understand him.” *(Pl: pg. 223)* Explain and discuss.

8. Why does Frege introduced the sense/reference distinction?

9. “It comes to this: only of a living human being and what resembles (behaves like) a living human being can one say: it has sensations; it sees, is blind, hears; is deaf; is conscious or unconscious.” *(Pl: § 281)* Explain and discuss.

10. Explain Frege's anti-psychologism.

11. How Frege's theory deal with belief-ascriptions?

12. “If God had looked into our minds he would not have been able to see there whom we were speaking of.” *(Pl: pg. 217).* Explain and discuss.

13. Following Frege: What are the main features of a thought? and: Why does it need to possess these features?

14. What are the merits and/or defaults of Wittgenstein’s discussion of ostensive definitions?

15. “In logic we must reject all distinctions that are made from a purely psychological point of view.” *(Frege; 1979: p.142)* Explain and discuss.

16. Can there be a private language?

17. Discuss the Augustinian picture.

18. “a = a and a = b are obviously statements of different cognitive value.” *(Frege: 1892)* Explain and discuss.


20. “Philosophy, as we use the word, is a fight against the fascination which forms of expression exert on us.” *(BB: 27).* Explain and discuss.
Assignments:
Unless specifically told otherwise by their instructors, students:
- must not use a plastic or cardboard cover or paper clips
- must staple the paper
- must include the following in the lower right corner of the cover sheet:
  - student name
  - student number
  - course number and section
  - instructor’s name
- The Philosophy Department does not accept assignments by FAX.
- No assignments will be accepted after the last day for handing in term work.
- Assignments handed in through the essay box (just inside the glass doors, Paterson Hall, Floor 3A) must be dropped into the box by 4:15 on a regular business day in order to be date-stamped with that day’s date. Assignments handed in after 4:15 or on a non-business day will be stamped as having been handed in on the next business day.
- Students are required to keep copies of their assignments. If your paper is lost at any point, you will be considered not to have submitted it if you cannot produce a copy immediately on request.

Deferrals for Term Work:
If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a final assignment by the due date because of circumstances beyond your control, you may apply for a deferral of examination/assignment. For deferred examinations, you must apply within 5 working days after the scheduled date of your exam. To apply for deferral of a final assignment, you must apply within 5 working days of the last scheduled day of classes. Visit the Registrar’s Office for more information.

Plagiarism:
It is the responsibility of each student to understand the meaning of ‘plagiarism’ as defined in the Undergraduate or Graduate Calendars, and to avoid both committing plagiarism and aiding or abetting plagiarism by other students. (Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations, section 14.3, page 56 or http://www.carleton.ca/cu0809uc/regulations/acadregsuniv14.html#14.3

Academic Accommodation:
For Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Disabilities for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Registered PMC students are required to contact the centre, 520-6608, every term to ensure that I receive your letter of accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. If you require accommodations for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodations to PMC by June 12, 2009 for early summer term (June exams), and by July 31, 2009 for late and full summer term (August exams).

For Religious Observance: Students requesting academic accommodation on the basis of religious observance should make a formal, written request to their instructors for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student. Students or instructors who have questions or want to confirm accommodation eligibility of a religious event or practice may refer to the Equity Services website www.carleton.ca/equity/holy_days/ for a list of holy days and Carleton’s Academic Accommodation policies.

For Pregnancy: Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a letter of accommodation. The student must then make an appointment to discuss her needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

Important Dates:
- May 18: Statutory holiday, University closed.
- May 22: Last day for registration and course changes for early summer and full summer courses.
- May 25-29: Classes suspended.
- June 5: Last day for a fee adjustment when withdrawing from early summer courses (financial withdrawal).
- June 12: Last day to withdraw from early summer courses (academic withdrawal).
- June 19: Last day for a fee adjustment when withdrawing from full summer courses (financial withdrawal).
- June 26: Last day of classes for late summer and full-session courses - classes follow a Monday schedule. Last day for handing in term assignments, subject to any earlier course deadline.
- June 30-July 2 (including Saturday): Early summer final examinations will be held.
- June 30: Final deadline for Summer Term fee payment.
- July 1: Statutory holiday, University closed.
- July 6: Late summer courses begin and full summer courses resume. Late Registration charges take effect at 12:00 a.m. for students registering only in Late Summer courses.
- July 17: Last day for registration and course changes for late summer courses.
- July 24: Last day for a fee adjustment when withdrawing from late Summer courses (financial withdrawal).
- July 31: Last day to withdraw from full summer and late summer courses (academic withdrawal).
- Aug. 3: Civic holiday, University closed.
- Aug. 17: Last day of classes. Last day for handing in term assignments, subject to any earlier course deadline.
- Aug. 20-25: Final examinations in full summer and late summer courses will be held.

Addresses:
Department of Philosophy: 3A46 Paterson Hall www.carleton.ca/philosophy 520-2110
Registrar’s Office: 300 Tory www.carleton.ca/registrar 520-3500
Student Academic Success Centre: 302 Tory www.carleton.ca/sasc 520-7850
Paul Menton Centre: 500 University Centre www.carleton.ca/PMC 520-6608
Writing Tutorial Service: 4th Floor, Library www.carleton.ca/wts 520-6632
MacOdrum Library www.library.carleton.ca 520-2735