

PHIL 2504: Language and Communication
Fall 2025
Course Syllabus

Instructor Information

Course instructor: Dr. Nalini Ramlal

E-mail: Naliniramlal@cunet.carleton.ca

Please email me using your Carleton email address. Include the course code in the subject line.

Office hours: Virtual hours by appointment: Mondays 10:45-11:30 AM

Office location: Zoom

Course Information

Fall 2025, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:05AM – 11:25PM

Course title: Language and Communication

Course number: 2504 A

Delivery: Online, asynchronous - see below

Department: Philosophy; Also listed as COMS 2504, LING 2504

Prerequisite(s): Second year standing

Precludes additional credit for COMM

2504 and LING 2504; Precludes additional credit for COMM 2800, LALS 2504, LALS 2800 and PHIL 2800.

Teaching Assistant Information:

TBA

Course Website

As an online course, our course website on Brightspace is a dynamic space/virtual classroom.

Brightspace will be used for access to the weekly course content, grades, announcements, Zoom link for office hours, etc. It is recommended that students regularly check Brightspace for course updates and other information. Students are responsible for keeping current with the information on Brightspace.

Official Course Description

Some of the central topics in the study of language and communication as pursued by linguists and philosophers. The nature of meaning; the connections between language, communication and cognition; language as a social activity.

Delivery Method

This course is held online, asynchronously. This means that you will not be required to sign on to live lectures. Students are expected to plan and manage their time wisely, keeping up to date with the course readings, lectures, assignment due dates, etc. Asynchronous online courses require self-monitoring in ensuring you are keeping current with the course. The instructor will send out weekly emails and reminders, though please keep in mind it is up to the student to ensure they are staying on track with the course.

Experiential Learning

The course instructor is highly committed to experiential learning, in line with Carleton's commitment to EL: <https://carleton.ca/experientialeducation/>. Experiential learning involves applying academic and theoretical ideas and content to real world experiences. Experiential learning helps students engage with course content, provides students with lifelong skills outside of the classroom, has been shown to aid in

memory retention of course ideas, theories, content, etc., can increase the effectiveness of student learning, and helps make course knowledge relatable to students.

Experiential learning will be applied throughout the semester. The course instructor engages in SoTL (scholarship for applied teaching and learning), and is dedicated to ensuring students are engaging with course material in a fruitful manner.

Course Texts

D., Dariusz. (2015). *Techniques of social influence: The psychology of compliance gaining*. Taylor & Francis. <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy.library.carleton.ca/lib/oculcarleton-ebooks/reader.action?docID=7245009> This text is available for free using Carleton's library portal. If you wish to purchase a physical copy of this text, prices range from 65.00-90.00 CAD.

Marian, V. (2023). *The power of language: How the codes we use to think, speak, and live transform our minds*. Dutton. This text is available for purchase at the Carleton bookstore, through Amazon, the publishing company's website, and as an audiobook. Prices range from 15.00-35.00 CAD.

Piller, I. (2017). *Intercultural communication. A critical introduction* (2nd edition). Edinburgh University Press. <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy.library.carleton.ca/lib/oculcarleton-ebooks/reader.action?docID=5013875&query=> This text is available for free using Carleton's library portal. If you wish to purchase a physical copy of this text, prices range from 14.00-35.00 CAD. You are welcome to purchase a physical textbook via Amazon or the publishing company's website.

Additional readings listed are accessed via Ares or Google Scholar.

All readings listed on the course syllabus are mandatory.

Optional material may be posted online, and will be indicated as optional material. These are recommendations for students who wish to further their interest in a specific topic.

Disclaimer: The instructor reserves the right to change the readings or topics assigned. Changes will not add substantial workload.

Evaluations/Course Assessments

Assignment 1

Value: 25%

Date: October 3rd (Due date 1) or October 10th (Due date 2)*

Description: Students will submit a written assignment on Bright Space. Further details and a rubric will be provided on the course website.

Assignment 2

Value: 25%

Date: October 31st (Due date 1) or November 7th (Due date 2) *

Description: Students will submit a written assignment on Bright Space. Further details and a rubric will be provided on the course website.

Reflective Journal

Value: 25%

Due: November 13th (Due date 1) or November 20th (Due date 2)*

Description: Experiential learning is a part of meaningful learning, which research in teaching and learning emphasizes the importance of in enhancing student knowledge, skills, and retention of information. There will be opportunities to engage in various experiential learning activities throughout the term. You are required to submit a collective reflection on your experience completing some of the experiential learning activities throughout the course. Further details will be provided on Bright Space at the start of the course.

Assignment 3 (Podcast/TedTalk)

Value: 25%

Due: November 28th (Due date 1) December 5th (Due date 2)*

Description: There will be a final cumulative assignment for this course. Students will submit either a podcast or TedTalk, and may work on this assignment individually or in pairs/small groups. Further information will be provided on the course website at the start of the course.

Due Dates, Late Policy, and Other Important Information:

*There are two assigned due dates for each assignment to allow for flexibility and informal accommodations. Students should aim to submit by the first indicated due date. Students who submit assignments by the first due date will receive extended feedback (written/typed feedback and the rubric breakdown). Students who submit after the first due date and by the second due date will receive only the rubric breakdown. Students who submit work after the second due date will be penalized at 10% per day, including weekends, to a maximum of 50%, and will receive only a letter/percentage grade on their assignment. Student work will not be accepted after December 5th. Note that ‘per day’ means anything a minute over the due date. For example, if the due date for an assignment is November 4th and you submit the assignment on November 5th at 12:01AM, then your assignment is considered one day late. If your assignment is submitted on November 6th at 2:45PM, your assignment is considered two days late.

Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is fundamental to post-secondary institutions, our course, and the broader academic community. All students are expected to act with honesty, fairness, and responsibility in their academic work. Violations of academic integrity undermine the learning process and the academic community. Such violations will not be tolerated.

Students are not permitted to use Chat GPT or any other AI generative technology in submitting any of their course assessments. All work submitted should be completed by the student who is submitting the work. Students are expected to submit their own, original work based on assignment guidelines. Students are not to submit work from previous courses or work that is not their own (e.g., another individual’s work; hiring a ghost writer, etc.). Students found violating this policy may face academic consequences (e.g., plagiarism).

1. The standard time for returning graded assignments is two weeks from the date of the assignment. If additional time is needed for grading, an announcement will be made on the course website.
2. Your teaching assistant is responsible for grading your work and they are your first point of contact. You should contact your teaching assistant with questions, especially questions related to grading.
3. Feedback is provided to students throughout the semester in many ways, where students have the opportunity to learn from, and apply, feedback. Meaningful feedback is provided in diverse manners in order to provide a well-rounded learning experience. Feedback is provided on graded content. It is recommended that students actively engage with feedback to improve the content of their work.
4. Re-evaluation of assignments: If a student is unhappy with their grade on an assignment or believes they deserve a higher grade, they are invited to reflect on the feedback, taking some time to determine how and where they could have improved. Students are welcome to request additional feedback during an office hour or appointment with their teaching assistant. If the student would still like to challenge the grade after receiving additional feedback, the student may request a re-evaluation from the TA first, then the professor. A re-evaluation may result in no grade change, a higher grade change, or lower grade change. Students are reminded that feedback is provided as part of the learning experience in highlighting strengths and stretches.
5. Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).
6. Students should keep up with course readings as per the schedule below. Students will be responsible in managing their time in approaching textbook material and concepts selected by the professor. The professor is available throughout the semester to meet with students. It is strongly recommended that students consult with her as needed. You are expected to plan your time wisely and complete evaluations on time.
7. Reweighting of course material is not possible.
8. All evaluations will be submitted through Bright Space. All feedback will be provided through Bright Space. Save copies of your work and back up your files.
9. Emails are for brief responses. Please see me during an office hour for questions that require a lengthier response. Allow 24-48 hours for a response to your email. Email is not monitored on weekends.
10. It is imperative that all members of the course engage with one another respectfully. Disrespectful, rude, or behaviour bordering on bullying will *not* be tolerated, including asking any member of the teaching team to violate academic standards.

Class Schedule

All readings and resources listed below and posted on Bright Space are mandatory unless otherwise specified. Course materials (e.g., recorded lectures, supplementary material, etc.) will be posted at the start of the specified week or earlier. It is recommended that readings be completed before engaging with the weekly content.

Unit 1: The Nature of Meaning; Cognition, Language, and Our Experience of the World; Knowledge and Language

Week 1: Week of Sept. 3rd

Introduction to the course

Discussion of assessments and course expectations

Week 2: Week of September 8th

Topics:

Introduction to the study of knowledge

Rationalism v. empiricism

Readings:

Dupre, G. (2021). Empiricism, syntax, and ontogeny. *Philosophical Psychology*, 34(7), 1011-146.

Pinker, S. (2004). Why nature & nurture won't go away. *Daedalus*, 133(4), 5-17.

Week 3: Week of September 15th

Topics:

The impact of language on thought

Sapir-Whorf hypothesis

Psycholinguistics

Language and cognition

Assignment 1 released

Readings:

Boroditsky, L. (2001). Does language shape thought?: Mandarin and English speakers' conceptions of time. *Cognitive Psychology*, 43(1), 1-22.

Boroditsky, L. (2011). How language shapes thought. *Scientific American*, 304(2), 62-65.

Lupyan, G., Rahman, R. A., Boroditsky, L., & Clark, A. (2020). Effects of language on visual perception. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 24(11), 930-944.

Marian, Chapters 1, 2 and 6

Week 4: Week of Sept. 22nd

Topics

Language and cognition

Film or documentary

Partial time provided to work on Assignment 1

Readings:

No readings

Unit 2: Intercultural communication

Week 5: Week of Sept. 29th

Topics:

Approaching intercultural communication/Introduction to intercultural communication

Language and culture

Partial time provided to work on assignment 1 (due October 3rd or 10th)

Readings:

Piller I., Chapters 1-4

Week 6: Week of October 6th and Week 7: Week of October 14th

Topics:

Intercultural communication in various settings

Bias in language

Assignment 2 released

Partial class time provided to work on Assignment 2

Readings:

Piller, I. Chapters 5-8

Reading Week: October 20th-24th

Week 8: Week of October 27th

Topics:

Intercultural communication in various settings

Bias in language

Partial class time provided to work on Assignment 2 (due October 31st or November 7th)

Readings:

Piller, I. Chapters 9-11

Unit 3: Language and social persuasion; Conformity

Week 9: Week of November 3rd

Topics:

Language and Influence

Readings:

Marian, Chapters 7-9

Week 10: Week of November 10th

Topics:

Language and social influence

Communication and visual social media marketing (VSSM)

Reflective journal due (November 14th or November 21st)

Readings:

Dolinksi, Chapters 1-3

Fox, A. K., Nakhata, C., & Deitz, G. D. (2019). Eat, drink, and create content: a multi-method exploration of visual social media marketing content. *International Journal of Advertising*, 38(3), 450-470.

Week 11: Week of November 17th

Topics:

Social influence

Language and persuasion

Readings:

Donlinski, D. Chapters 4-7

Week 12: Week of November 24th

Wrapping up/Conclusion of course

Time provided to work on Assignment 3 due on November 28th (due date 2 on December 5th)

In accordance with the Carleton University Undergraduate Calendar (p 34), the letter grades assigned in the course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100	B+ = 77-79	C+ = 67-69	D+ = 57-59
A = 85-89	B = 73-76	C = 63-66	D = 5
A - = 80-84	B - = 70-72	C - = 60-62	
F = Below 50			

Grades entered by
Registration WDN =
Withdraw
DEF =

PLAGIARISM

The University Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, artworks, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else, including the unauthorized use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT); If a student is suspected of using generative AI tools, they be asked to submit evidence of their work, including rough notes, drafts, video-recordings, photocopies or screenshots of the cover page and first cited page of each reference source, or other material as relevant to the assignment. You may also be required to explain the steps took when completing the assignment. using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement;
- submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one’s own; and
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s work

and/or failing to use quotations marks.

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course.

Statement on Student Mental Health

As a University student you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. Here is a list that may be helpful:

Emergency Resources (on and off campus): <https://carleton.ca/health/emergencies-and-crisis/emergency-numbers/>

Carleton Resources:

- Mental Health and Wellbeing: <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>
- Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>
- Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>
- Academic Advising Centre (AAC): <https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>
- Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS): <https://carleton.ca/csas/>
- Equity & Inclusivity Communities: <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

Off Campus Resources:

- Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: (613) 238-3311 or TEXT: 343-306-5550, <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
- Mental Health Crisis Service: (613) 722-6914, 1-866-996-0991, <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
- Empower Me: 1-844-741-6389, <https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/>
- Good2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: <https://walkincounselling.com>

Requests for Academic Accommodations

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For accommodation regarding a formally-scheduled final exam, you must complete the Pregnancy Accommodation Form ([click here](#)).

Religious obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details [click here](#).

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, please request your accommodations for this course through

the [Ventus Student Portal](#) at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). Requests made within two weeks will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. For final exams, the deadlines to request accommodations are published in the [University Academic Calendars](#). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally- scheduled exam (if applicable).

Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit:

<https://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault-support-services>

Accommodation for Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation will be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

<https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

Important Information

- Students must always retain a hard copy of all work that is submitted.
- Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean
- For us to respond to your emails, we need to see your full name, CU ID, and the email must be written from your valid CARLETON address. Therefore, in order to respond to your inquiries, please send all email from your Carleton CMail account. If you do not have or have yet to activate this account, you may wish to do so by visiting <http://carleton.ca/ccs/students/>
- November 15, 2023: Last day for academic withdrawal from full fall and late fall classes
- March 15, 2024: Last day for academic withdrawal from full winter, late winter and fall/winter courses.

For a list of dates and deadlines, including holidays and exam dates, please visit:
<https://calendar.carleton.ca/academicyear/>

Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Fall/Winter 2025-26)

Assignments:

Please follow your professor's instructions on how assignments will be handled electronically. We no longer allow hard copies placed in the department's essay box.

Evaluation:

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Deferrals for Term Work:

If students are unable to complete term work because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, they should contact their course instructor no later than *three working days* of the due date. Normally, any deferred term work will be completed by the last day of the term. Term work cannot be deferred by the Registrar.

Deferrals for Final Exams:

Students are expected to be available for the duration of a course including the examination period. Occasionally, students encounter circumstances beyond their control where they may not be able to write a final examination or submit a take-home examination. Examples of this would be a serious illness or the death of a family member. If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a take-home examination by the due date, you may apply for a deferral no later than *three working days* after the original due date (as per the University Regulations in [Section 4.3 of the Undergraduate Calendar](#)). Visit the [Registrar's Office](#) for further 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. ([Section 10.1 of the Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations](#))

Academic Accommodation:

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term:

- *Pregnancy or religious obligation:* write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the [EIC](#) website.
- *Academic accommodations for students with disabilities:* The [Paul Menton Centre](#) for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class test or exam requiring accommodation. After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your professor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made.
- *Survivors of Sexual Violence:* As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per [Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy](#).
- *Accommodation for Student Activities:* Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

Important Dates:

Sept. 3	Classes start.
Sept. 16	Last day for registration and course changes for fall term and fall/winter (two-term) courses.
Sept. 30	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from fall term or two-term courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.
Oct. 13	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Oct. 20-24	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 21	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, before the official examination period.
Dec. 5	Last day of fall term classes. <i>Classes follow a Monday schedule.</i> Last day for academic withdrawal from fall term courses. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for term work for a fall term course.
Dec. 6-7	No classes or examinations take place.
Dec. 8-20	Final examinations for fall term courses and mid-term examinations in two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Dec. 20	All take-home examinations are due.
Jan. 5	Classes begin.
Jan. 16	Last day for registration and course changes in the winter term.
Jan. 31	Last day for a full fee adjustment when withdrawing from winter term courses or from the winter portion of two-term courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.
Feb. 16	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Feb. 16-20	Winter Break – no classes.
Mar. 15	Last day for academic withdrawal from fall/winter and winter courses.
Mar. 25	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, in winter term or fall/winter courses before the official examination period.
Apr. 3	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Apr. 8	Last day of two-term and winter term classes. <i>Classes follow a Friday schedule.</i> Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for two-term and for winter term courses.
Apr. 9-10	No classes or examinations take place.
Apr. 11-23	Final examinations for winter term and two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 23	All take-home examinations are due.

Addresses:

Department of Philosophy:
www.carleton.ca/philosophy
520-2110

Registrar's Office:
www.carleton.ca/registrar
520-3500

Academic Advising Centre:
www.carleton.ca/academicadvising
520-7850

Writing Services:
<https://carleton.ca/csas/support/>
520-3822

MacOdrum Library
<http://www.library.carleton.ca/>
520-2735