**PHIL/COMS/LING 2504-A**

# Language and Communication

Carleton University
Department of Philosophy

**Term**: Winter 2021
**Meetings**: online; asynchronous course
**Venue**: culearn
**Instructor**: Eros Corazza
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## 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 access CuLearn for this course.

**Assignments**

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

- Short Essay 1 (400 words maximum) weight: 20%
- Short Essay 2 (400 words maximum) weight: 20%
- Short Essay 3 (400 words maximum) weight: 20%
- Final Essays (answer 2 questions out of 4) weight: 40%

**Due Assignment**

See date posted with assignements questions

**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

*On Frege:*

**Martinich (ed.). 2012. The Philosophy of Language. Oxford UP**

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

  Beaney, M. (ed.), 1997, *The Frege Reader*. Blackwell, "**On Sinn und Bedeutung**" (p.151-71) and "**Thought**" (p.325-345)

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

Dummett, M., 1993, *The Origins of Analytical Philosophy*, Harvard UP, ch. 2, ch. 4, ch. 10, ch. 13

Perry, J., 1977, "Frege on Demonstratives", in Perry, J., 1994, *The Problem of the Essential Indexical*, Oxford UP, ch. 1

*On Wittgenstein:*

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

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

Backer, G.P. & Hacker, P.M.S, 1980, *Wittgenstein: Meaning and Understanding Vol. 1*, Blackwell

Backer, G.P. & Hacker, P.M.S, 1985, *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity Vol. 2*, Blackwell

Hacker, P.M.S, 1990, *Wittgenstein: Meaning and Mind Vol. 3*, Blackwell

Kripke, S. 1982. *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*. Blackwell

*On Direct Reference:*

Corazza, E., 2004, *Reflecting the Mind*, Oxford UP, Oxford

Kaplan, D., 1977, "Demonstratives", in Almog, J. et als. (eds.), 1989, *Themes From Kaplan*, Oxford UP, pp. 481-563

Kaplan, D, 1989, "Afterthought", in Almog, J. et als. (eds.), 1989, *Themes From Kaplan*, Oxford UP, pp. 565-614

Perry, J., 2001/12, *Reference and Reflexivity*, CSLI Publications, Stanford

**Essay Topics**

You should write one essay of 400 words (or 6 typewritten double-spaced pages) ***maximum***.

Essay 1. (deadline: January 31)

Is the following inference valid?
Mary believes that Hesperus is a star
Hesperus is Phosphorus
So: Mary believes that Phosphorus is a star
Why?

Essay 2. (deadline: February 28)

What's the difference between Frege and Dummett's Frege?

Essay 3. (deadline: March 30)

"If a lion could talk, we could not understand him." (*PI*: pg. 223)
Explain and discuss.

Final Essay (deadline: April 27)

Answer 2 questions out of the following 4 (each question maximum 400 words)

1. Explain and evaluate Kripke's and Donnellan's arguments against Frege's semantics.

2. "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." (*PI*: § 201) Explain and discuss.

3. "To Imagine a language is to imagine a form of life." (*PI*, § 7) Explain and discuss.

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

**Topics to be discusses and suggestions for reading**

One topic per week

1. **Introduction: Terminological Remarks**

2. **Frege's Puzzles**
   Primary reading: Frege. "Sense and Reference"
   Secondary reading: Dummett, *Frege Philosophy of Language*. ch. 5, ch. 6

3. **Fregean Thoughts**
   Primary reading: Frege. "Thought"
   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"
   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: Backer & Hacker. *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity*.
    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: Kripke. *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*
Secondary reading: Hacker. *Wittgenstein: Meaning and Mind*

**12. Revision Class**

Suggestions for Writing an Essay

Source: *Episteme Links*

*http://www.epistemelinks.com/index.aspx*

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 assigments are focussed 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 mak 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."

## Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Fall/Winter 2020/21)

**Assignments:**
Please follow your professor's instructions on how assignments will be handled electronically. There will be NO hard copies placed in the essay box this coming year.

**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 EDC 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:**

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| Sept. 9 | Classes start. |
| Sept. 23 | 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. 12 | Statutory holiday. University closed. |
| Oct. 26-30 | Fall Break – no classes. |
| Nov. 27 | 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. 11 | Last day of fall term classes. ***Classes follow a Monday schedule***. 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. 12-23 | 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. 23 | All take-home examinations are due. |
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| Jan. 6 | Classes begin. |
| Jan. 20 | 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. 15 | Statutory holiday. University closed. |
| Feb. 15-19 | Winter Break – no classes. |
| Mar. 26 | 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. 2 | Statutory holiday. University closed. |
| Apr. 9 | Last day of two-term and winter term classes. Last day for academic withdrawal from fall/winter and winter 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 two-term and for winter term courses. |
| Apr. 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:
http://www.carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/
520-3822

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