

**WESTERN UNIVERSITY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**  
**Undergraduate Course Outline 2017-18**

**Philosophy 2260F: Introduction to the Philosophy of Language**

**Fall Term**

**M 2:30-3:30, W 2:30-4:30**

**AHB-2B04**

**Instructor: David Bourget**

**Office hours M 3:30-4:30, Stvh 3143**

**519-661-2111 x 87770**

**dbourget@uwo.ca**

**DESCRIPTION**

This course surveys core topics in philosophy of language, including: Frege's sense/reference distinction and the meaning of names, vagueness, propositional attitude reports, illocutionary acts, the Russell-Strawson debate on definite descriptions, Grice on meaning and conversational implicature, Quine on meaning, Davidson's program, and Lewis on semantics and possible worlds. This course is part of a necessary foundation for students interested in studying advanced topics in philosophy of language, philosophy of mind, or metaphysics in the analytic tradition.

**TEXTS**

Chris Daly (2013) *Philosophy of Language: An Introduction*. Bloomsbury Academic. (Available at the UWO bookstore.)

**OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this course, students should:

- be able to explain and evaluate the main philosophical arguments and positions discussed in this course both orally and in writing
- be able to appreciate the relevance of the topics discussed in this course to philosophy in general and bring to bear considerations in philosophy of language to other topics
- have acquired and/or improved upon general skills useful for critically engaging with philosophical ideas as well as other pursuits: skills involved in analyzing and critically evaluating arguments, skills involved in effective oral and written communication, and skill involved in fruitful engagement with peers

**REQUIREMENTS**

- End-of-lecture group exercises (10%):
  - Lectures will sometimes end or start with a group exercise. You will be asked to form groups of 4-5 (depending on class size) in order to answer a question. The question will bear on the content of the week's lectures. Answers will be handed in at the end of the class. All reasonable answers will be worth 1% of the final mark, for a maximum of 10% for the term. There will be 13 such exercises, so you are allowed to miss up to 3 without penalty. The exercises will be randomly distributed throughout the term.
- Participation (5%):
  - Points are awarded for participation and good conduct in class. To obtain these points, you need not speak frequently, but you must be present, be attentive, and respectfully and constructively engage with peers during class activities and discussions. If you're playing/chatting on your phone or tablet during the class, you will have 0 as your participation mark.
- Papers (85%):
  - Essay 1: 700 words, due on October 6 (20%)
  - Essay 2: 900 words, due November 8 (30%) (grades to be return before November 12, the deadline for dropping a course without academic penalty)
  - Essay 3: 900 words, due December 8 (35%)

Paper topics will be distributed in advance. Late papers will be penalized by 3% per day late, including weekends, up to a maximum of 50%. **Papers must be submitted through OWL** in PDF, Microsoft Word, or OpenOffice (LibreOffice) format. OpenOffice is free. I do not accept hard copy submissions.

No papers will be accepted after the end of classes on December 8. This is a university policy. An exemption requires authorization from the student's Dean Office.

More specific expectations for papers will be provided in class.

### **AUDIT**

Students wishing to audit the course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first week of classes.

### **DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY POLICIES**

The **Department of Philosophy Policies** which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses is available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website at <http://uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html>. It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.

### **ACCOMMODATION**

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at [http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf).

### **ACADEMIC OFFENCES**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

### **PLAGIARISM CHECKING**

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

### **SUPPORT SERVICES**

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>  
Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>  
Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>  
Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning 519.661.3030 (during class hours) or 519.433.2023 after class hours and on weekends.