

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
Department of Philosophy
Undergraduate Course Outline 2024-25

PHILOSOP 2260F-001
Introduction to Philosophy of Language

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Information including instructor contact details and course location can be found on the course Owl BrightSpace: <https://westernu.brightspace.com/>

PREREQUISITE CHECKING

NA

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the prerequisites for this course or have special permission to take the course without the prerequisites. [Student Responsibility for Course Selection](#)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course begins with a brief overview of differing theories about what languages are. This is followed by a traditional look at issues central to the philosophy of language in the 20th century including reference, meaning, speech acts, and metaphor. Alternative perspectives to these views are then presented from feminist and indigenous philosophers. Finally, how languages influence our thinking and identity are considered.

Topics

Unit 1 Reference, Text chapters 1-4	Sept. 6-27
Unit 2 Meaning, Text chapters 5-10	Oct. 2-25
Unit 3 Pragmatics and Use, Text chapters 11-13, 15	Oct. 30- Nov. 8
Unit 4 Alternative Perspectives, readings provided	Nov. 13- Dec. 6

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Improve critical reading and writing skills.
2. Learn different theories about what languages are.
3. Learn the main views in 20th century philosophy of language.
4. Understand contemporary critiques and alternative approaches to studying language.
5. Study the role of language in shaping our thinking and identity.

TEXTS

Lycan, W. (2019). *Philosophy of Language: A Contemporary Introduction*. 3rd Edition. Taylor and Francis.

Readings for Unit 4 will be available online.

METHOD OF EVALUATION

Essay 1 (900-1200 words)	33.3 %
Essay 2 (900-1200 words)	33.3 %
Essay 3 (900-1200 words)	33.3 %

Essays will be assigned each Friday beginning Sept. 13 and ending Nov. 29. Essays are due two weeks after they are assigned except for the Essay 11 assigned Nov. 29 which is due in one week on Dec. 6 since all term work must be submitted by the last day of classes, Dec. 6, 2024. The late penalty is 5% per day including weekends to a maximum penalty of 25%. Students are required to complete 3 of the 11 assigned essays to give flexibility and choice of topic. To ensure a comprehensive assessment, the three essays must be submitted from different units. Students may submit a fourth essay (one from each unit) and the three highest grades will count for their final mark.

The link below outlines the university policy for academic consideration.

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY POLICIES

The Department of Philosophy policies that govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses are available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website <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.

AUDIT

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

STATEMENT ON THE USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

“If plagiarism or unauthorized AI use is suspected, the instructor will ask for research notes and/or drafts of assignments after the assignment has been submitted. Students must keep all notes and first drafts until the assignment is returned to them.”

In this course, the use of AI (automatic translation tools, grammar checkers, ChatGPT...) is prohibited. If unauthorized AI use is suspected, the instructor will ask for **research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines**, and other materials used in **preparing assignments**. Students are expected to **retain** these materials until after final grades have been entered. In the unlikely event of concerns being raised about the authenticity of any assignment, students may be asked to produce these materials; an inability to do so may weigh heavily against them.

ACADEMIC CONSIDERATION

Students may request academic consideration in cases of extenuating circumstances – that is, personal circumstances beyond the student’s control that have a substantial but temporary impact on the student’s ability to meet essential academic requirements.

1. Requests for academic consideration are made to the Academic Advising office of Faculty in which the student is registered.
2. Requests for academic consideration include the following components:
 - a. Self-attestation signed by the student;
 - b. Indication of the course(s) and assessment(s) relevant to the request;
 - c. Supporting documentation as relevant

Requests without supporting documentation are limited to one per term per course.

Documentation for medical illness, when required, includes the completion of a [Western Student Medical Certificate \(SMC\)](#) or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation, by a health care practitioner. Requests linked to examinations scheduled by the Office of the Registrar during official examination periods as well as practice laboratory and performance tests typically scheduled in the last week of term always require formal supporting documentation.

[Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#)

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

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration.pdf

The Student Medical Certificate is available at

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION

Western's Policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays can be found here:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_religious.pdf.

In the case of mid-term tests, notification is to be "given in writing to the instructor as early as possible, but not later than **one week** prior to the writing of the test".

COURSE ASSIGNMENT

The last day of scheduled classes in any course will be the last day on which course assignments will be accepted for credit in a course. Instructors will be required to return assignments to students as promptly as possible with reasonable explanations of the instructor's assessment of the assignment.

SCHOLASTIC 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 the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Statement on the use of plagiarism-checking software

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>).

ACADEMIC ADVISING

Your Home Faculty's Academic Advising Office will support or refer whenever you have an issue that is affecting your studies, including information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters. Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you are struggling and unsure where to go for help. Contact info for all Faculties is here:

https://registrar.uwo.ca/faculty_academic_counselling.html

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) 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 (24/7 availability).

GENDER-BASED AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Western University [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.