



Philosophy of Language Course Descriptor

Course Title	Philosophy of Language	Faculty	Philosophy
Course Code	NCHPH754	Course Leader	Dr. Brian Ball
Credit Points	15	Teaching Period	Either
FHEQ Level	Level 7	Date Approved	June 2020
Compulsory/ Optional	Optional		
Pre-requisites	None		
Co-requisites	None		

COURSE SUMMARY

This course introduces students to foundational concepts, theories, and issues in the philosophy of language. Do names have senses as well as referents? How are the meanings of our expressions fixed? Are they determined by what's in our heads or are these meanings partly constituted by our environment and our practices of interpreting each other? And how do the meanings of simple expressions combine to determine those of more complex ones, especially in indirect discourse and ascriptions of propositional attitudes?

COURSE AIMS

The aim of this course is to:

- To develop students' skills in the interpretation, analysis, and evaluation of central philosophical theories of language.
- To promote students' ability to categorize, elaborate, and compare, the primary theories of the nature of language and linguistics phenomena.
- To enable students to form and defend their own estimates of the merits of alternative positions in the philosophy of language.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

- K1d Formulate, interpret, and analyse key questions and debates concerning the natures of language and linguistic phenomena.
- K2d Engage sensitively and creatively with the texts and theories of key philosophers of language.

SUBJECT-SPECIFIC SKILLS

- S1d Employ advanced scholarly techniques to interpret and clearly articulate key ideas and arguments in the philosophy of language.
- S2d Engage critically with central texts and theories in the philosophy of language, select and analyse information, and question assumptions.
- S3d Employ a range of philosophical devices to articulate, develop, and defend positions on contentious issues in relation to linguistic phenomena.

TRANSFERABLE AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

- T1d Show self-direction in working independently, creatively, and to deadlines.
- T2d Organize and synthesise information, question assumptions, and engage with competing arguments.
- T3d Produce clear, sophisticated, and persuasive presentations on complex topics.
- T3d Consistently apply an excellent level of technical proficiency in written English, using an advanced application of scholarly terminology, that demonstrates the ability to deal with complex issues both systematically and with sophistication.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching and learning strategies for this course will include:

- 15 hours of lectures
- A one-hour one-to-one tutorial

Course information and supplementary materials are available on the College's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

Students are required to attend and participate in all the formal and timetabled sessions for this course. Students are also expected to manage their directed learning and independent study in support of the course.

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

Studying the philosophy of language cultivates skills that are employable across a range of sectors. These include the abilities to:

- Work independently, creatively, and to deadlines

- Conduct research and explore relevant existing knowledge.
- Analyse, contextualise, and interpret complex ideas and materials.
- Synthesise and evaluate information against a backdrop of uncertainty.
- Solve problems through logical reasoning.
- Present findings and opinions in a clear, structured manner, whether orally or in writing.

ASSESSMENT

FORMATIVE

Students will be formatively assessed during the course by means of set assignments. These do not count towards the end of year results, but will provide students with developmental feedback, both written and oral.

SUMMATIVE

Assessment will be in the form of a single summative essay:

AE:	Assessment Activity	Weighting (%)	Online submission	Duration	Length
1	Written assignment	100%	Yes	N/A	4000 words

The written assignment will be assessed in accordance with the assessment aims set out in the Programme Specification.

FEEDBACK

Students will receive formal feedback in a variety of ways: written (including via email correspondence); oral (within one-to-one tutorials, in discussion phases of lectures, and on an *ad hoc* basis). Students will also individually attend Collections, in which they will receive constructive and developmental feedback on their performance.

Feedback is provided on summative assessment and is made available to the student either via email, the VLE or another appropriate method.

INDICATIVE READING

Note: Comprehensive and current reading lists for courses are produced annually in the Course Syllabus or other documentation provided to students; the indicative reading list provided below is used as part of the approval/modification process only.

INTRODUCTIONS

Kemp, G. (2013), *What is this Thing Called Philosophy of Language?*, Abingdon: Routledge.

ANTHOLOGIES

Byrne, D., and Kolbel, M. (2010), *Arguing about Language*, Abingdon: Routledge.

PRIMARY TEXTS

Davidson, D. (1967), 'Truth and Meaning', *Synthese*, 17.

Frege, G., 'On Sense and Reference' in Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege, P. Geach and M. Black (eds and trans.) (1980), Oxford: Blackwell, 3rd edition.

INDICATIVE TOPICS

Students will study topics such as the following:

SENSE AND REFERENCE

Do words simply express ideas as Locke thought? If not, is there nonetheless some component of meaning beyond reference, as Frege thought?

TRUTH-CONDITIONAL SEMANTICS

And can we specify the meaning of a sentence by giving its truth-conditions?

EXTERNALISM AND ANTI-INDIVIDUALISM

Are the meanings of our words determined by what's in our heads?

Title: NCHPH754 Philosophy of Language Course Descriptor					
Approved by: Academic Board					
Location: Academic Handbook/Programme specifications and Handbooks/ Postgraduate Programme Specifications/MA Philosophy & AI Programme Specification/Philosophy Course Descriptors					
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2.0	April 2022	April 2022	Brian Ball	April 2025	Category 3: Changes to Course Learning Outcomes
1.0	June 2020	June 2020	Brian Ball	April 2025	