

## PHIL 3---: Philosophy of Language

**Class Time:** TBD

**Class Location:** TBD

**Instructor:** Chris Rahlwes

**Email:** TBD

**How to reach me:** *Please drop by my open office hours (TBD) or email me to make an appointment (either in-person or online). Always include PHIL 3--- in the subject of your email for a quicker response. I will respond within 48 hours Monday-Friday.*



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### Course Description:

This course introduces you to some of the central issues of philosophy of language in the Russellian-Fregean Tradition (or “analytic” tradition). Some principal questions we will address are:

- How does language allow us to communicate and gain knowledge?
- What determines the meaning of someone’s words?
- What is the relationship between meaning, truth, and reference?
- How does language tie to social power structures and subordination?

In short, this course is meant to provide the necessary vocabulary and framework to understand the function of language. Much of the material will be from primary sources, but I will also refer to Green (2020) *The Philosophy of Language* as a resource for further clarifications.

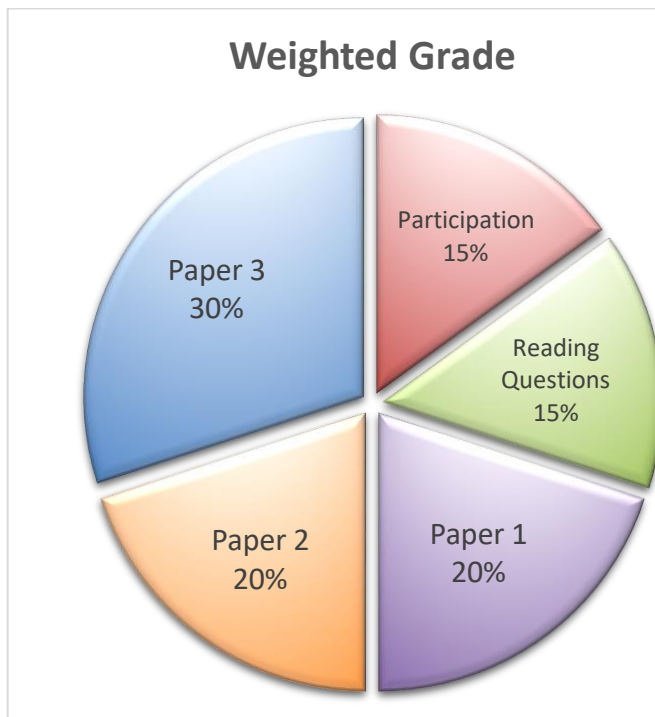
### Course Goals:

By the successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Communicate (orally and in writing) the ideas and arguments presented in the readings as well as your own.
  2. Develop answers to the course questions in the course description.
  3. Evaluate and distinguish the distinction between semantics and pragmatics regarding the meaning of statement within a social context.
  4. Evaluate the role of language in social oppression and injustice.
  5. Develop a research project within Russellian-Fregean philosophy of language.
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## Means of Evaluation

- **Participation (15%).** Participation will be measured through active class engagement as well as group questions and workshops.
- **Reading Questions (15%).** The Sunday before each class you are required to email two questions you have regarding the readings for the week (at least one question must be on the primary text). These will help guide the lecture throughout the week.
- **Paper 1 (20%) 4–6 Pages.** This paper focuses on your ability to explain a key philosophical principle clearly and precisely from one of our texts. Your grade is determined by your accuracy in demonstrating you understand the author's position, the structure of your paper, and if your argument is compelling. You are allowed up to two revisions of this paper.
- **Paper 2 (20%) 4–6 Pages.** Same as Paper 1, but you must focus on a different philosophical principle or text.
- **Paper 3 (30%) 8–10 Pages.** This paper is a revision of Paper 1 or Paper 2, in which you further develop your explanation, ideas, and/or argument. This paper is the culmination of the course and shows your ability in designing a research project that is philosophically fruitful. You will be asked to submit a brief prospectus for this paper.



### Letter Grade Cutoffs:

Grade	Percentage
A	93%
A-	90%
B+	87%
B	83%
B-	80%
C+	77%
C	73%
C-	70%
D+	67%
D	63%
D-	60%
F	Below 60%

Note: These are cut-off points: *decimals will not be rounded up.* Temporary grades: N (no basis for grade), I (incomplete grade), X (final assessment absence)

### Required Materials:

- All course readings will be available online.
- Recommended: Mitchell Green (2020) *The Philosophy of Language*, Oxford University Press.
- You will need to bring material to write, take notes, and access the internet during class.
- You will need a word processor (such as [Google Docs](#) or [Microsoft Word](#)), a pdf reader (such as [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#)), and a web browser.

## Tentative Schedule (Subject to Change)

	Date	Topic/Readings	Assignments
<b>Module 1: Reference and Referring Expressions</b>			
<b>Week 1</b>		<b>Introduction to the Course</b>  <b>Introduction to Meaning and Reference</b> <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Russell, “On Denoting”</li> <li>• Russel, “Descriptions”</li> </ul> <u>Recommended Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green (2020) Chapters 1 and 2</li> </ul>	
<b>Week 2</b>		<b>The Critique of Russell’s Theory of Descriptions</b> <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strawson, “On Referring”</li> <li>• Donnellan, “Reference and Definite Descriptions”</li> </ul> <u>Recommended Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green (2020) Chapters 3 and 4</li> </ul>	Weekly Questions
<b>Week 3</b>		<b>Proper Names</b> <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kripke, <i>Naming and Necessity</i>, excerpts</li> <li>• Evans, “The Causal Theory of Names.”</li> </ul>	Weekly Questions
<b>Module 2: Theories of Meaning</b>			
<b>Week 4</b>		<b>Use</b> <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wittgenstein, <i>Philosophical Investigations</i>, sections 1–35</li> </ul>	Weekly Questions

<b>Week 5</b>		<b>Verificationism</b> <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hempel, "Empiricist Criteria of Cognitive Significance: Problems and Changes"</li> <li>Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism"</li> </ul>	Weekly Questions
<b>Week 6</b>		<b>Communicative Intentions</b> <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grice, "Meaning"</li> <li>Ziff, "Truth and Meaning"</li> <li>Grice, "Utterer's Meaning and Intentions"</li> </ul>	Weekly Questions
<b>Week 7</b>		<b>Truth-condition Theory</b> <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Davidson, "Truth and Meaning"</li> <li>Strawson, "Meaning and Truth"</li> </ul>	Weekly Questions
<b>Week 8</b>		<b>Intensional Truth Conditions</b> <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lewis, "General Semantics," sections I–V</li> </ul>	Paper 1 Due Weekly Questions
<b>Module 3: Speech Acts</b>			
<b>Week 9</b>		<b>Illocutionary Acts</b> <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Austin, "Performative Utterances"</li> <li>Searle, "The Structure of Illocutionary Acts"</li> </ul> <u>Recommended Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Green (2020) Chapter 5</li> </ul>	Weekly Questions
<b>Week 10</b>		<b>Conveyed Meaning and Conversational Implicature</b> <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grice, "Logic and Conversation"</li> </ul> <u>Recommended Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Green (2020) Chapter 6</li> </ul>	Weekly Questions

<b>Module 4: Non-ideal Language</b>			
<b>Week 11</b>		<p><b>Unspeakable Acts</b></p> <p><u>Required Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Langton, "Speech acts and Unspeakable Acts"</li> </ul> <p><u>Recommended Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Green (2020) Chapter 7</li> </ul>	Weekly Questions
<b>Week 12</b>		<p><b>Slurs</b></p> <p><u>Required Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anderson and Lepore, "Slurring Words"</li> <li>Camp, "Slurring Perspectives"</li> </ul>	Paper 2 Due Weekly Questions
<b>Week 13</b>		<p><b>Political Language</b></p> <p><u>Required Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Saul, "Dogwhistles, Political Manipulation and the Philosophy of Language"</li> </ul>	Weekly Questions
<b>Finals Week</b>			Paper 3 Due

Resources Available to All Students: **TBD**

College is a challenging time in your life.

Here is a list of resources that can help you navigate your experience as a student at TBD. It is important to remember that you are not alone, and these resources are there for you when you need help to achieve your academic goals.