



# TEACHING DOSSIER

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## 1 Teaching Philosophy Statement

My approach to teaching philosophy is defined by three commitments: 1) emphasizing philosophical questions, 2) training basic philosophical skills, 3) promoting active learning. With these goals in mind, I strive to enable my students to actively apply critical thinking skills to philosophical problems, as well as issues relevant to their lives.

**Philosophical Questions.** My teaching always emphasizes the role of philosophical questions. This is because understanding philosophical theories and arguments requires understanding what philosophical questions they address. To appreciate the connections and differences between Cartesian dualism, functionalism, and identity theory, for example, a student must understand that they all answer the same question, i.e., the mind-body problem. Given this goal, my classes implement question-oriented teaching in three ways. First, my classes have a component dedicated to introducing and discussing philosophical questions, before introducing philosophical theories and arguments. For instance, instead of starting the class with the justified true belief theory and the Gettier cases, I explain the question, "what is knowledge?", and its significance beforehand. Second, my classes deepen students' understanding of philosophical questions by showing the connections between the questions. For example, I illustrate how the question "what is knowledge" is related to further questions like "what are the sources of knowledge?", "how much can we know?", etc. Third, I help students to understand philosophical questions by connecting them with real-life cases. I have designed a "philosophy meets reality" activity, where students contribute real-life scenarios (e.g., fairness of standardized tests, machine learning of knowledge, etc.) where the question "what is knowledge?" matters.

**Philosophical Skills.** I believe that basic philosophical skills should be taught explicitly, especially in introductory level classes. Students need a basic understanding of how to read philosophy, write philosophy, and criticize philosophy before engaging with dense philosophical materials. Otherwise, they would be lost in them. This commitment is reflected in my course design. In my classes, special sections are dedicated to training those basic skills. These skills, rather than being merely defined and explained, are demonstrated with examples and exercises. For instance, I have designed a "Find the Argument" reading exercise (see section 5.1), in which students are required to identify and list the premises and the conclusion of an argument in a given paragraph. To help students understand valid arguments, I have come up with a "Completing the Argument" exercise (see section 5.3)

which asks students to fill in the missing premise to make an argument valid. To train students to read papers, I have also designed a “reading checklist,” which asks students to write down the conclusion of the paper, the argument for the conclusion, and their criticism, each in a few sentences.

**Active Learning.** Active participation is essential in a philosophy class because philosophical skills are better learned from actively doing philosophy, rather than passively observing course materials. Implementing active learning is analogous with training a person with a fishing rod, instead of merely reading Introduction to Fishing 101. To achieve this goal, my classroom adjusts active learning activities to different contexts in order to maximize active participation. First, activities are adjusted according to the size of the class. For smaller classes, such as tutorials, I use group discussion models such as case studies, buzz groups, brainstorming, etc. When the discussion is limited by time or the big size of a class, I adopt alternative activities. For instance, I ask students to show their positions about an issue by raising hands, and I require students to come up with a question and e-mail it to me before each class. Second, the difficulty of activities is dynamically adjusted during the class. Easy questions (e.g., coming up with an example of a concept) are discussed at the beginning to make students feel comfortable in participation. Harder questions (e.g., developing objections to a particular premise) are gradually added to challenge their philosophical skills.

My aim is that, through active participation in learning, my students understand the depth of philosophical questions and employ the philosophical skills to address them. These will enable them to be active inquirers and critical thinkers throughout their careers and lives.

## 2 Teaching Responsibilities

The followings sections summarize my teaching responsibilities as instructor, teaching assistant, and guest lecturer, respectively.

### 2.1 Course Instruction

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#### **Philosophy 2400F: Introduction to Philosophy of Mind**

University of Western Ontario

Fall 2018

- This was an intermediate level course for undergraduate students. It provided two classes (3 hours in total) each week over a 14-week period. 48 students enrolled in the course. The first half of the course introduced the historical development of the mind-body problem. The second half of it explored the contemporary debates in philosophy of mind.
- My responsibilities, as a co-instructor, included teaching one of the two classes each week, holding weekly office hours, designing course syllabus, and designing examination materials.
- Course syllabus can be found in section 6.1 in Sample Teaching Materials

### 2.2 Teaching Assistantship

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#### **Philosophy 1020: Introduction to Philosophy**

University of Western Ontario

Fall 2017, Winter 2018

- This was a whole-year introductory course for first-year undergraduate students. It offered two 1-hour classes and a 1-hour tutorial (3 hours in total) per week, for two terms. 217 students enrolled in the course, and 24 students signed up for my tutorial session. The course introduced the essential issues in metaphysics and epistemology in the first term, and then it shifted to normative ethics and applied ethics in the second term.
- As a teaching assistant, my responsibilities consisted of preparing tutorial sessions every week, holding office hours, grading assignments and examinations, as well as coordinating with other teaching assistants in weekly meetings.

## 2.3 Guest Lecture

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### **Philosophy 3410G: Philosophy of Mind**

University of Western Ontario

Winter 2019

- This was an advanced undergraduate course. It offered two classes (3 hours in total) each week over a 14-week period. 23 students enrolled in the course. The course covered the contemporary debates on issues such as consciousness and mental representation.
- My responsibilities, as a guest lecturer, included observing Prof. Bourget's lectures and teaching three lectures for him.

### **“Subordinating Speech and Pornography”**

University of Western Ontario

March 2018

- This was a guest lecture for the graduate course “Philosophy 9500B Survey of Feminist Philosophy”. 11 graduate students attended the lecture.

### 3 Evidence of Teaching Effectiveness

The following two sections present data gathered from teaching evaluations. Section 3.1 shows the numeral results, while section 3.2 presents the written comments from students.

#### 3.1 Numerical Results

Below is a summary of my teaching evaluations for the course 2400F *Introduction to Philosophy of Mind* (co-instructor) and the course 3410G *Philosophy of Mind* (guest lecturer). The scores are out of 7, where 7=Outstanding and 1=Very Poor

	2400 Intro to Philosophy of Mind (n=19)			3410G Philosophy of Mind (n=7)		
Questions	Avg	Med	St.Dev	Avg	Med	St.Dev
1. Displays Enthusiasm	6.3	6.0	0.8	6.9	7.0	0.4
2. Well organized	6.4	7.0	0.7	6.6	7.0	0.8
3. Explain concepts clearly	5.7	6.0	1.4	6.7	7.0	0.5
4. Encourages participation	5.9	6.0	1.1	6.7	7.0	0.8
5. Responses clear and thorough	5.4	5.5	1.4	6.1	7.0	1.2
6. Interesting presentation	5.9	6.0	1.0	6.3	6.0	0.8
7. Shows concern	6.2	6.0	0.9	6.3	7.0	1.0
8. Available for consultation	5.9	6.0	1.0	6.8	7.0	0.4
9. Communicates well	6.1	6.0	0.8	6.3	7.0	1.0
10. Adheres to course objectives	6.3	7.0	0.9	6.9	7.0	0.4
11. Relates topics well	6.1	6.0	0.9	6.3	6.0	0.8
12. Provides fair evaluations	6.1	6.5	1.0	n/a	n/a	n/a
13. Grades work promptly	6.5	7.0	0.7	n/a	n/a	n/a
14. Good motivator	5.9	6.0	1.0	6.4	6.0	0.5
Average of 1 to 14	<b>6.0</b>	6.2	1.0	<b>6.5</b>	6.8	0.7
15. Overall effectiveness	<b>6.0</b>	6.0	1.2	<b>6.9</b>	7.0	0.4
Course as a Learning Experience	<b>6.1</b>	6.0	0.8	n/a	n/a	n/a

This is a summary of my TA teaching evaluations for the course *Introduction to Philosophy* (1020). The scores are out of 5, where 5=Excellent and 1=Poor.

	1020 Intro to Philosophy (n=16)		
Questions	Avg	Med	St.Dev
1. Prepared for tutorials	4.7	5.0	0.6
2. Available for consultation	4.5	5.0	0.7
3. Fair evaluations	3.8	4.0	1.1
4. Knowledge of material	4.8	5.0	0.4
5. Interesting presentation	4.0	4.0	0.7
6. Generating discussion	3.8	4.0	1.0
Average of 1 to 6	<b>4.3</b>	4.4	0.7
7. Overall rating	<b>4.2</b>	4.0	0.7

## 3.2 Selected Written Comments

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Below you will find selected comments from teaching evaluations, as well as teaching award nominations.

### **Introduction to Philosophy of Mind (2400) - Instructor**

- “I really enjoy your classes and I think you do a great job at explaining concepts. The way you structure your lectures makes it easy to follow, and the information and examples you use are very effective. Overall, I think you will make an amazing professor... I hope I have you again next year!”
- “Chang has been a great teacher for this course. He comes to lecture always organized and prepared and teaches each class enthusiastically. He ensures that students are on track and understand course material while lecturing it. He makes the course content interesting.”
- “Chang was excellent in always providing real-life examples to make concepts easier.”
- “Clear and concise lecture. I had a great experience in this course.”

### **Introduction to Philosophy (1020) – Teaching Assistant**

- “Chang Liu did an amazing job at clarifying material I did not understand in the lectures, and in an interesting way as well. I had a hard time focusing in lectures, but not tutorials.”
- “I think he did a good job with generating discussion and explaining the concepts. Did a really good job with respect to answering our questions and make sure we understand.”
- “My TA had a very good understanding of the concepts that were taught in the lecture. He was able to easily convey these concepts in an easy and comprehensive fashion.”
- “He was always prepared for the tutorial very well. He was always on time. He is very good at making his own examples to explain course content in a more understandable way.”
- “He knew the course content very well. Made great presentations. Helped with the essay writing process.”



***GSTA (Graduate Student Teaching Assistant Awards) Nomination***

- “Chang impacted me with his thoughtful discussions and presentations every Monday. He brought the course to the next level and deserves praise for his passion in philosophy!”
- “Committed to giving his students a good learning experience, and always strives to improve his class. He is very helpful in explaining concepts, both from class and for essays, and it is obvious he enjoys what he does!”

## 4 Professional Development in Teaching

### 4.1 Teaching Support Centre (TSC), Future Professor Workshop Series, University of Western Ontario

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- Supporting the Wellness of Undergraduate Students February 2018
- Great Ideas for Teaching Panel February 2018
- Preparing Your Teaching Dossier March 2018
- Writing a Teaching Philosophy Statement March 2018
- Hands-on Teaching Philosophy Workshop for Graduate Students March 2018
- Negotiating Office Hours October 2018
- Engaging Students through Active Learning October 2018
- Webinar on Teaching Philosophy Statements October 2018
- Strategies for Finding Focus and Overcoming Procrastination November 2018
- Getting Feedback on Your Teaching November 2018

### 4.2 Teaching Support Centre (TSC), Training Programs:

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#### **Western Certificate in University Teaching and Learning** February 2019

The goal of the Teaching Certificate is to prepare graduate students for university-level teaching and future faculty career. Obtaining this certificate requires the completion of five components: 1) Teaching Assistant Training Program, 2) ten workshops in the Future Professor Series, 3) Teaching Mentor Program, 4) writing a Teaching Dossier, and 5) designing a course syllabus. The letter of accomplishment for my certificate be found in section 7.1 in the Appendix.

#### **Teaching Mentor Program (TMP)** December 2017

TMP participants (5 graduate students) formed mentor groups of 4. Over the course of the semester, they observed each other's classes and provided feedbacks on teaching.

#### **Teaching Assistant Training Program (TATP)** September 2017

TATP Program provided two-and-a-half-day training for TAs on fair grading practices, diversity in the classroom, lesson design, and giving feedback on written work. Participants taught a microteaching session and received feedback from peers.

## 5 Teaching Strategies and Innovations

In my classes, exercises are designed to train specific skills of students. The following three exercises are selected as examples. Exercise 5.1 trains the skills to formulate an argument, while exercise 5.2 teaches students how to criticize an argument. Exercise 5.3 promotes reading skills to find arguments in texts.

### 5.1 How to Identify Premises and Conclusions of Arguments

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Definition: An **argument** is a group of statements, one or more of which (the **premises**) are claimed to support the truth of one of the others (the **conclusion**).

Conclusion indicators: therefore, accordingly, entails that, wherefore, we may conclude, hence, thus, it must be that, it follows that, consequently, for this reason, implies that, we may infer, so, as a result

Premise indicators: since, in that, seeing that, as indicated by, may be inferred from, for the reason that, because, as, in as much as, for, given that, owing to

When there is no indicator, look for implicit inferential relations, i.e., which statement is supported by which statement?

#### **Exercise 1,**

Each of the following passages contains a single argument. Using the letters “P” and “C,” identify the premises and conclusion of each argument, writing premises first and conclusion last. Find a paper and write your answer on it.

## Example argument:

“The space program deserves increased expenditures in the years ahead. Not only does the national defense depend on it, but the program will more than pay for itself in terms of technological spinoffs. Furthermore, at current funding levels the program cannot fulfill its anticipated potential.”<sup>1</sup>

## Write down the premises and the conclusion like this:

P1: The national defense is dependent on the space program.

P2: The space program will more than pay for itself in terms of technological spinoffs.

P3: At current funding levels the space program cannot fulfill its anticipated potential.

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C: The space program deserves increased expenditures in the years ahead.

1. “Titanium combines readily with oxygen, nitrogen, and hydrogen, all of which have an adverse effect on its mechanical properties. As a result, titanium must be processed in their absence.”
2. “Since private property helps people define themselves, since it frees people from mundane cares of daily subsistence, and since it is finite, no individual should accumulate so much property that others are prevented from accumulating the necessities of life.”
3. “Poverty offers numerous benefits to the nonpoor. Antipoverty programs provide jobs for middle-class professionals in social work, penology, and public health. Such workers’ future advancement is tied to the continued growth of bureaucracies dependent on the existence of poverty.”
4. “Anyone familiar with our prison system knows that there are some inmates who behave little better than brute beasts. But the very fact that these prisoners exist is a telling argument against the efficacy of capital punishment as a deterrent. If the death penalty had been truly effective as a deterrent, such prisoners would long ago have vanished.”

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<sup>1</sup> This example and the following examples come from Hurley, Patrick. 2014. A concise introduction to logic. Nelson Education.

## 5.2 How to Criticize an Argument

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An argument is a bad argument (unsound or uncogent) when

- 1) some of its premises are false; or
- 2) its premises do not support the truth of the conclusion.

### Two methods to criticize an argument

Method 1: Attack the premises

Try to prove that certain premises are false.

Method 2: Attack the reasoning.

Try to prove that the premises do not support the conclusion

### Exercise 2

Each argument below *either* 1) has false premises, or 2) its premises do not support the conclusion. Try to attack the following arguments *either* by 1) attacking the premises or 2) attacking the reasoning. Find a paper and write your answer on it.

1. “Since Moby Dick was written by Shakespeare, and Moby Dick is a science fiction novel, it follows that Shakespeare wrote a science fiction novel.”<sup>2</sup>
2. “All leopards with lungs are carnivores. Therefore, all leopards are carnivores.”
3. “Every province in Canada has exactly one city as its capital. Therefore, since there are thirty provinces in Canada, there are thirty provincial capitals.”
4. “Since some fruits are green, and some fruits are apples, it follows that some fruits are green apples.”

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<sup>2</sup> This and the following examples come from Hurley, Patrick. 2014. A concise introduction to logic. Nelson Education.

### 5.3 Completing the Argument

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#### Exercise 1, Completing the Dream Argument

The following formulation of the Dream Argument is missing premise 2. Please read the following passage and fill in premise 2. Also, identify and highlight the key sentence in the paragraph that provides premise 2.

##### *The Dream Argument*

P1: In dream, I can have the same sensory experiences as I am awake.

P2: \_\_\_\_\_

C: Therefore, it is possible that I am dreaming and all my sensory beliefs are false.

(Descartes, *First Meditation*, ap. 19 p. 13) "A brilliant piece of reasoning! As if I were not a man who sleeps at night, and regularly has all the same experiences while asleep as madmen do when awake - indeed sometimes even more improbable ones. How often, asleep at night, am I convinced of just such familiar events - that I am here in my dressing-gown, sitting by the fire - when in fact I am lying undressed in bed! Yet at the moment my eyes are certainly wide awake when I look at this piece of paper; I shake my head and it is not asleep; as I stretch out and feel my hand I do so deliberately, and I know what I am doing. All this would not happen with such distinctness to someone asleep. Indeed! As if I did not remember other occasions when I have been tricked by exactly similar thoughts while asleep! As I think about this more carefully, I see plainly that there are never any sure signs by means of which being awake can be distinguished from being asleep. The result is that I begin to feel dazed, and this very feeling only reinforces the notion that I may be asleep."

#### Exercise 2, Completing the Deceiving God Argument

The following formulation of the Deceiving God Argument is missing premise 3. Please read the following passage and fill in premise 3. Also, identify and highlight the key sentence in the paragraph that provides premise 3.

##### *The Deceiving God Argument*

P1: I believe that there is an all-powerful God who created me.

P2: God has the power to make me deceived about sensory beliefs.

P3: \_\_\_\_\_

C: It is possible that my sensory beliefs and even mathematical beliefs are false.

(Descartes, *First Meditation*, ap. 21 p. 14) "And yet firmly rooted in my mind is the long-standing opinion that there is an omnipotent God who made me the kind of creature that I am. How do I know that he has not brought it about that there is no earth, no sky, no extended thing, no shape, no size, no place, while at the same time ensuring that all these things appear to me to exist just as they do now? What is more, since I sometimes believe that others go astray in cases where they think they have the most perfect knowledge, may I not similarly go wrong every time I add two and three or count the sides of a square, or in some even simpler matter, if that is imaginable? But perhaps God would not have allowed me to be deceived in this way, since he is said to be supremely good. But if it were inconsistent with his goodness to have created me such that I am deceived all the time, it would seem equally foreign to his goodness to allow me to be deceived even occasionally; yet this last assertion cannot be made. "

## 6 Sample Teaching Materials

Two sample syllabi can be found below. The first one is for 2400F *Introduction to Philosophy of Mind*, an introductory undergraduate course that I co-taught with Prof. Chris Viger in 2018. The second one, *Philosophy of Language*, is designed for an advanced undergraduate course on philosophy of language. I have omitted department policies in the second syllabus for brevity.

### 6.1 Introduction to Philosophy of Mind

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**WESTERN UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
Undergraduate Course Outline 2018-19**

**Philosophy 2400-001: Introduction to Philosophy of Mind**

<b>Fall Term 2018</b>	<b>Instructor: Chris Viger</b>
<b>W 10:30-11:30 F 10:30-12:30</b>	<b>STVH 4149</b>
<b>Classroom: WL 258</b>	<b>Fall Office Hours W 11:30-1:30</b>
<b>Instructor: Chang Liu</b>	<b>519-661-2111 x 85755</b>
<b>STVH 3153</b>	<b>cviger@uwo.ca</b>
<b>cliu486@uwo.ca</b>	

#### **DESCRIPTION**

The course surveys historical and contemporary views about the relationship between the mind and body and the place of mental properties in the natural world. The readings are from primary sources with accompanying commentary. Topics include metaphysical questions about the nature of the world (materialism, idealism, or dualism), materialist theories of mind (behaviorism, identity theory, functionalism), and questions about the possibility of artificial intelligence, the special nature of consciousness, what mental states are, how they get their meaning, and how they cause behavior.



**TEXTS**

*A Historical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind*, 2nd Edition, Peter Morton. Broadview (2010).

**OBJECTIVES**

1. Develop critical reading and writing skills.
2. Develop oral presentation skills through class discussions.
3. Understand the historical development of the mind-body problem.
4. Understand contemporary views about the mind-body problem.
5. Understand specific problems associated with each view about the nature of the mind.

**REQUIREMENTS**

Term paper 1	25%
Term paper 2	35%
Final Exam	40%

**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.

**Reading List Fall 2018**

All readings are from the text, *A Historical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind*

Sept. 11 Intro lesson, pp. xi-xvii

*Week 1*

14 Plato, pp. 3-19

16 Plato, pp. 19-26

18 Aristotle, pp. 27-44

*Week 2*

21 The Scientific Revolution, pp. 45-66

23 Descartes (intro), pp.67-78

25 Descartes (skepticism) pp. 79-94

*Week 3*

28 Descartes (Dualism), pp. 95-107

30pp. 108-124

Oct. 2 Materialism and Idealism, pp.125-136, Hobbes, pp. 137-141

*Week 4*

5 Berkeley, pp. 142-150

7 Behaviorism, pp. 153-176, Skinner, pp. 177-180

9 Chomsky, pp. 177-195

*Week 5*

14 Ryle & Wittgenstein, pp. 196-212

16 Identity Theory, pp. 213-231, Place, pp. 232-237

*Week 6*

19 Smart, pp. 238-247

21 Kripke, pp. 248- 256

23 Functionalism, pp. 257-279, Armstrong, pp. 280-287

*Week 7*

26 Fodor, pp. 288-299

28 Block, pp. 300-308 **Essay 1 Due**

*Week 8*

Nov. 2 Artificial Intelligence, pp. 311-329

4 Turing, pp. 330-346

6 Searle, pp. 347-361

*Week 9*

9 Boden, pp. 362-374

11 Consciousness, pp. 375-403, Nagel 404-412

13 Jackson, pp. 413-420

*Week 10*

16 Dennett, pp. 421-445

18 Chalmers, pp. 446-464

20 Hardcastle, pp. 465-474

*Week 11*

23 Mental Causation, pp. 625-640

25 Davidson, pp. 641-654

27 Kim, pp. 654-669

*Week 12*

30 Propositional Attitudes, pp. 475-498, Fodor, pp. 499-516

Dec. 2 Churchland, pp. 517-531

4 Dennett, pp. 532-548

*Week 13*

7 Mental Content, pp. 549-560, Dretske, pp. 561-574

9 Millikan, pp. 575-587 **Essay 2 Due**

### Assignments

#### *Essay 1*

Value: 25% of the final course grade

Due: Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Late Penalty: 5% per day including weekends to a maximum penalty of 50%.

Word Limit: 1000-1250

Topic 1: Argue for one of dualism, idealism, or materialism. Respond to one objection to the view you support. Refer to at least two of the readings in the course.

### **OR**

Topic 2: Argue for one of behaviorism, identity theory, or functionalism. Respond to one objection to the view you support. Refer to at least two of the readings in the course.

#### *Essay 2*

Value: 35% of the final course grade

Due: Wednesday, December 9, 2015

Late Penalty: No papers can be accepted after the last of classes, so late submissions will result in a grade of 0.

Word Limit: 1500-1750

Topic 1: Discuss whether the mind can be naturalized in light of the problems associated with either consciousness or mental causation. Respond to one objection to the view you support. Refer to at least two of the readings in the course.

### **OR**

Topic 2: Are propositional attitudes and qualia real? Respond to one objection to the view you support. Refer to at least two of the readings in the course.

**OR**

Topic 3: Can we build an intelligent machine? How would we know? Respond to one objection to the view you support. Refer to at least two of the readings in the course.

## 6.2 Philosophy of Language

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**WESTERN UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
Undergraduate Course Outline 20xx**

**Philosophy xxxx: Philosophy of Language**

**Class Days and Hours: TBD**

**Classroom: TBD**

**Phone: xxx-xxx-xxxx**

**Instructor: Chang Liu**

**Office: STVH 2132**

**Office Hours: TBD**

**cliu486@uwo.ca**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The course surveys the essential questions and theories in philosophy of language. Part I concerns the questions in semantics, such as “what is the meaning of a sentence?”, “what is the meaning of a proper name?”. Part II introduces the issues in pragmatics, e.g., “How does context affect meaning?”, “How can a speaker mean something beyond what is literally said?”. The readings are selected from both primary sources as well as textbooks. Topics include proper names (Millianism, descriptivism), definite descriptions (Russellian theory, Strawson’s theory), theories of meaning (Frege’s theory, propositional theory, use theory, truth-conditional theory, possible worlds theory), indexicals, conversational implicature, speech acts.

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Read and write philosophical texts.
  - Reading philosophy is a unique skill. In particular, you will learn to identify the key components in a philosophy text, e.g., the definition of a theory, premises, and conclusions of an argument. You will also be able to reformulate those key components in your own words.
  - Writing philosophy is essential for doing philosophy. You will know how to introduce a theory or an argument in your writing. Most importantly,

- students will know how to present their own philosophical arguments.
2. Articulate the key questions in philosophy of language in their own understandings.
    - Philosophy questions provide the reference points for you to navigate through the maze of philosophical theories and arguments. You cannot understand a theory unless you have understood what question it answers.
  3. Explain the major theories and arguments in philosophy of language.
    - You will learn the major theories and their positions on philosophical issues. Moreover, you will be able to appreciate their strength and weakness by understanding the argument for and against them.
  4. Critically evaluate theories and arguments in writing philosophy essays.
    - Making arguments is the most important skill for doing philosophy. It is not enough for you to just understand the theories taught in the course. You must be able to make your own arguments to support or reject them. There is no philosophy without arguments.

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

### **Part I, Semantics**

1. Proper Names (Sept. 7)
  - What is the meaning of a proper name like “Aristotle”? Does it mean something like “the teacher of Aristotle”? What does the name “Santa Clause” mean, if Santa does not exist? Readings include:
    - i. Frege, G. 1948. On Sense and Reference
    - ii. Kripke, S. 1980. Naming and Necessity
2. Definite Descriptions (Sept. 14)
  - How can a definite description like “the King of France” be meaningful if there is no such a king? Russell proposes that definite descriptions should be analyzed as conjunctions of three quantified claims. Strawson argues against Russell. Reading include:
    - i. Russell, B. 2005/ 1905. On Denoting
    - ii. Strawson, P. F. 1950. On Referring
3. Traditional Theories Meaning (Sept. 21)
  - Traditional theories take meanings to be propositions, a kind of abstract entities. In particular, Frege and Russell propose different theories of propositions. Readings include:
    - i. Frege, G. 1956. The Thought A Logical Inquiry

- ii. Russell, B. 1919/1956. On Propositions: What They Are and How They Mean
- 4. Use Theory of Meaning (Sept. 28)
  - Unlike the traditional propositional theories of meaning, the use theory takes the meaning of an expression to be its use. Wittgenstein offers a classic version of the use theory, while Brandom's inferentialism is a contemporary variation of the use theory.
    - i. Wittgenstein, L. 1953. Philosophical Investigations
    - ii. Brandom, R. 1994. Making It Explicit
- 5. Davidson's Truth-conditional Theory (Oct. 5)
  - Like the use theory, Davidson's truth-conditional theory is another non-propositional theory of meaning. It is based on Tarski's semantic concept of truth.
    - i. Davidson, D. 1970/1975. Semantics for Natural Languages
    - ii. Tarski, A. 1956. The Concept of Truth in Formalized Languages.
- 6. Possible World Semantics (Oct. 19)
  - The notion of possible worlds has been borrowed from modal logic to develop a semantics of natural language. Montague proved the possibility of treating English as a formal language.
    - i. Lewis, D. 1970. General Semantics.
    - ii. Montague, R. 1970. English as a Formal Language

## Part II, Pragmatics

- 7. Indexicals and Demonstratives (Oct. 26)
  - The meaning "I am hungry" depends on the contexts, i.e., who is the speaker. Kaplan offers the classic analysis of indexicals like "I", "here", and "now".
    - i. Kaplan, D. 1989. Demonstratives
- 8. Conversational Implicature (Nov. 2)
  - Paul Grice famously distinguishes what is implied from what is said. Is conversational implicature governed by rational principles or psychological mechanisms?
    - i. Grice, P. 1989. Logic and Conversation
    - ii. Dan S. & Wilson D. 2013. *Precis of Relevance: Communication and Cognition*.
- 9. Speech Acts (Nov. 9)
  - Language is not used to represent the world, but also to do things, e.g.,



promising, apologizing, congratulating, etc. Austin pioneered the speech act theory, while Searle further developed it.

- i. Austin, J. L. 1961. *Performative Utterances*.
- ii. Searle, J. R. 2002. *What is a Speech Act*

#### 10. Metaphor (Nov. 16)

- What is the meaning of a metaphor like “Juliet is the sun?”. Does it have a literal meaning? Davidson offers a classic account of metaphor.
  - i. Davidson, D. 1978. *What Metaphors Mean*

**Reading requirements:** students are required to read the assigned texts before the class each week.

### **TEXTS**

Required Readings:

- William G. Lycan (2008). *Philosophy of Language: A Contemporary Introduction*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. London: Routledge.
  - Lycan’s introduction surveys the major issues in philosophy of language in a systematic and accessible way. It will be used as our textbook.

Recommended Readings:

- Robert J. Stainton (2000). *Perspectives in the Philosophy of Language*. Peterborough: Broadview.
  - This anthology compiles the classic articles in philosophy of language. You can find the readings assigned in this course from this book.
- Martinich, A. P. & Sosa, David (2012). *The Philosophy of Language*. Oxford University Press USA.
  - This anthology has a more comprehensive selection of classic articles in philosophy language. Recommended for further readings.

**Acquiring Text Books:** These textbooks are available for purchase in the UWO bookstore.

### **REQUIREMENTS**

Essay Assignment 1                      25%

- Essay topic: What is descriptivism of proper names? If you disagree with this theory, make an argument against it. If you agree with the theory, defend descriptivism

from an objection against it.

- No more than 700 words, due on Nov. 2. Grades will be released after a week.

Essay Assignment 2                      35%

- Essay topic: What is the use theory of meaning? If you disagree with this theory, make an argument against it. If you agree with the theory, defend the use theory from an objection against it.
- No more than 900 words, due on Dec. 7. Grades will be released after a week.

Final Exam                                40%

- Due date: Scheduled by the Registrar

**Essay Policy:** Essay topics will be distributed in advance. Late papers will be penalized by 3% per day late, including weekends, up to a maximum of 50%. Essays should be prepared for anonymous grading. Include your student number, but NOT your name. More specific expectations for papers will be provided in class.

**Advice on Essay Writing:** Each short essay should contain four components. This format is useful for training philosophy writing, because it contains the basic elements of a philosophy essay.

- First, the introduction section should briefly summarize 1) the issue or the topic of the essay, 2) the theory or the argument you are discussing, and 3) your criticism of the theory or the argument, in one or two sentences each.
- Second, the summarization section introduces the theory or the argument you want to discuss. Be sure to break down the theory or the argument in specific theses or premises. Use examples to illustrate each point.
- Third, in the criticism section, you should make your own argument against the theory or the argument introduced in the second part. Present each premise of your argument clearly and distinctively.
- Finally, the conclusion section should summarize what you have presented in the essay.

**Advice on the Final Exam:**

- The final exam is designed to test your understanding of the course materials. It will contain three parts, 1) definitions, 2) short answers, 3) long essay. For the definition section, you will have to define a concept in a sentence or two. In the short answer section, you will be asked to explain a theory or an argument with a few sentences.

Finally, the long essay should be written in the format as the two essay assignments, but with fewer words. There is no word limit. However, a longer essay does not always mean a higher grade.

- To prepare for the final exam, try to write a glossary for yourself. Compile a list of key concepts in the course. Then try to define them in one or two sentences without looking at the references. Memorize the definitions. You should have no problem at the final exam, if you could do this all by yourself.

## 7 Appendix

### 7.1 Letter of Accomplishment for the Western Teaching Certificate

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February 6, 2019

Dear Colleagues,

This letter certifies that **Chang Liu** has completed all the requirements of the Western Certificate in University Teaching and Learning.

The Western Certificate in University Teaching and Learning engages graduate students in a series of professional development workshops and activities that aim to develop three main areas of competence:

- The first group of program components enhances teaching competence through hands-on practice, mentoring and peer feedback. They provide participants with an opportunity to enhance their teaching and presentation skills, and to gain experience in facilitating group interaction.
- The second group of program components encourages reflective practice by engaging participants in dialogue about current issues in university teaching and learning. Sample topics in this group include active learning, experiential education, academic integrity, teaching in an intercultural classroom, problem based learning and the scholarship of teaching. All participants also submit a teaching philosophy statement in order to complete the certificate.
- The third group of program components focuses on competencies required to enter the academic profession. Participants learn about the academic job search process, and prepare a teaching dossier.

The Certificate consists of five main components which participants complete during their program of graduate study at Western University. A complete description of these components is attached to this letter, and additional information is available at:

<https://teaching.uwo.ca/programs/certificates/cutl.html>

If you have any questions about the Western Certificate, please feel free to contact me at 519-661-2111 #84621, or by e-mail at [Nanda.Dimitrov@uwo.ca](mailto:Nanda.Dimitrov@uwo.ca)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nanda".

Nanda Dimitrov, Ph.D.

Director

Centre for Teaching and Learning



## COMPONENTS OF THE WESTERN CERTIFICATE IN UNIVERSITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

### 1. MICROTEACHING/TA TRAINING REQUIREMENT

- Satisfied by participating in one of four intensive instructor training programs: (1) The Teaching Assistant Training Program, (2) The Advanced Teaching Program, (3) Teaching in the Canadian Classroom, or (4) Graduate Studies 9500: Theory and Practice of University Teaching. The first three courses involve ~20 hours of instruction, while GS 9500 is a 40-hour course. All programs include two or more microteaching sessions during which participants present short mini-lessons to peers in a small group format. Participants in GS 9500 also prepare a teaching philosophy statement and design a new course syllabus.

### 2. TEN WORKSHOPS IN THE FUTURE PROFESSOR: PATH TO TEACHING EXCELLENCE SERIES

- Completed by participating in ten dynamic 1.5-hour seminars that introduce teaching tools and strategies, and provide insight into the world of academia. A list of past workshops and a list of alternative credits are available at this link (look for the dropdown menus under "Series Information"): <https://teaching.uwo.ca/programs/allprograms/futureprof.html>

### 3. MENTORING REQUIREMENT

- Completed by enrolling in the Teaching Mentor Program. This program is a unique opportunity for participants to be observed in their personal teaching environments. Small groups of peers observe one another and provide each other with verbal and written feedback on their instruction methods.

### 4. TEACHING PORTFOLIO

- Participants must prepare a Teaching Portfolio that includes a teaching philosophy statement, and documents courses taught, teaching evaluations, strategies/activities, and any professional development, leadership, or scholarship related to teaching and learning.

### 5. ONE OF TWO WRITTEN PROJECTS

- **Course Design**  
Design a course in your discipline and submit a ten-page course outline that includes: (1) a course description, (2) rationale and learning outcomes for the course, (3) an outline of course topics and class activities, (4) a list of required and recommended readings, (5) a description of assignments, and (6) a description of most frequently used teaching methods and activities.
- **Research Proposal**  
Submit a ten-page research proposal that: (1) reviews at least five scholarly articles on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in your discipline, (2) identifies critical issues for learning in the discipline, (3) articulates a research question to explore these critical learning issues, and (4) proposes several ways in which you could investigate the research question.