

**San José State University**  
**Department of Philosophy**  
**PHIL158 / Fall 2018**  
**PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE**  
**Syllabus & Schedule**  
(2018-2-23 tentative version)

<b>Instructor:</b>	Dr. Bo Mou [ <a href="http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/bmou/">http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/bmou/</a> ]
<b>Office Location:</b>	Faculty Office Building (FOB) 225
<b>Telephone:</b>	(O): 408-924-4513
<b>Email:</b>	bo.mou@sjsu.edu [Alternative back-up email address: mr068us@yahoo.com]
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Due to the full-online format of this class, there are no formal “in-office-location” office hours; you can raise your questions anytime online at the relevant “discussion” sections (I will reply whenever I login in at the class website). However, in case you do need a face-to-face meeting, you can stop by at my office during 13:30-15:30 pm, each Tuesday (unless indicated otherwise), or by appointment.
<b>Class Days/Time:</b>	Intensive online sessions to be held on Wednesdays (see specifications below)
<b>Class Website Address:</b>	<a href="http://www.sjsu.edu/ecampus">www.sjsu.edu/ecampus</a> (via “Canvas” where the class website is located)
<b>Prerequisite:</b>	3 units of philosophy or instructor consent.

**Course Description:**

The philosophy of language is philosophical investigation into language in view of its relation to reality/objects, thought and logic. It has been considered to be one of the core areas of philosophy especially in the setting of contemporary development of philosophy. (1) It has its intrinsic value for philosophical or other intellectual thinking because it provides powerful conceptual and explanatory resources that are needed for in-depth philosophical exploration. (2) It explores a range of significant issues, such as: What is meaning? What is the relationship between language and the world? What is the relationship between language and thought? How is language communication possible? (3) It is closely related to some other important subjects of philosophy (e.g., metaphysics, philosophy of mind, logic, and epistemology) and some other disciplines (e.g., linguistics, psychology, and cognitive science).

This course as given in Fall 2018 is an “advanced” introduction to the philosophy of language on a range of closely related significant issues concerning the relationship between language, reality and thought, especially the issues of reference and of predication which significantly bear on many other issues in philosophy of language and in other areas of philosophy. With a unifying understanding of language as a system of symbols that is known and used to talk about things and that is means/medium of our thought, this course emphasizes constructive engagement of distinct perspectives to the issues under examination.

**Required Textbooks:**

- *The Course Reader* [CR]. [Available at the class website; unless indicated otherwise, the articles are from A. P. Martinich & D. Sosa (eds) *The Philosophy of Language* (Oxford, 2013)]
- Textbook: *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Language*, by Michael Morris (Cambridge, 2007) [IPL].\
- Other Readings: Class Handouts and supplementary readings posted at the class website.

## Course Objectives

- (1) To introduce the student to theoretical resources on some closely related central issues in the contemporary philosophical studies of language, which contribute to core parts of the main content of contemporary philosophy (especially in the analytic tradition);
- (2) To introduce the student to some important conceptual and explanatory resources and techniques of philosophical analysis provided by contemporary philosophy of language so as to effectively and strictly conduct philosophical and other intellectual investigations;
- (3) To help the student look at some of the issues under discussion from a broad and dynamic point of view through comparative approach in view of valuable ideas and resources in another major philosophical tradition (the Chinese philosophical tradition);
- (4) To improve the student's ability to read and think critically, creatively and precisely and to write clearly and strictly.

## Course Format

All the regular class communications and required class activities will be made fully online (via the class website and/or the email) without requiring in-person meetings at physical locations on SJSU campus. SJSU currently uses the online class-learning software "Canvas" at <http://www.sjsu.edu/ecampus> where the class website is located. Depending on need and situation (especially in case there would be technical difficulties with "Canvas"), we might also use regular email accounts as a back-up means for communication.

With consideration of the students' variety of timeline availability, each week's online sessions is to be carried out this way:

- The instructor's lecture note is to be posted at the class website before 9 am on the week's **Wednesday**;
- You arrange your own timeline(s) sensitive to your own schedules on that day (anytime before 9 pm) to do the following learning/studying things: <1> carefully read the lecture note and understand /think about its addressed points and explanations/argumentations (via either its online version or its downloaded hardcopy), <2> raise your reflective questions (if any), and <3> discuss some of your classmates' questions (either the pre-session reading questions or the questions raised on the scene) as far as you can [the foregoing <2> and <3> constitute **Part II** of your "**Online Class Discussion Participation**" as specified below in "Course Requirements and Assignments" and would count in your class participation credit points];
- The instructor is to reply your questions (if any) when he is online (is to login in the class website multiple times on that day between 9 am and 9 pm).

In case you cannot make it to participate in an online session on the Thursday, you can check its content later as the contents of all the posted lecture-note presentations and discussions are to be kept at the class website until the end of the semester; you can still post your question(s)/participate in the discussion on the class content of that day's online session any time [or any time within one week **before the next Wednesday**, if your participation via the foregoing <2> and <3> is intended to be counted in your class participation credit].

During one regular online session, instead of repeating everything that appears in the class handout(s) and the readings for the contents of that session, my posted lecture note and my replies to your raised questions (if any) on the content of that session will focus on: <1> emphasizing major points/argumentation lines; <2> explaining difficulty points; <3> being sensitive to the specific contents of your raised questions (if any).

## Course Requirements and Assignments

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in University Policy S12-3 at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>.

- **Online Class Discussion Participation** 15%  
 Reflective discussion is one central part of doing philosophy, whose participation is carried out in two ways:  
**Part I:** 10 points for for **raising pre-session reflective questions concerning the readings** for each of any 10 sessions of the 13 regular intensive online sessions (1 point for for each), except the first one: **one reflective question concerning some point(s) in the assigned reading(s) for the coming Wednesday session** is posted at the indicated location in the “Discussions” part of the class website by **the Tuesday, 6 pm**, of each of these weeks (before its Wednesday on which my lecture note is posted).  
**Part II:** 5 points for participating in the discussions at each of any of 10 sessions of the 13 regular intensive sessions (0.5 point for each) except of the first one: <1> raising reflective questions that show your carefully (i) reading the class textbooks and pre-session reading assignments (**note: the raised-on-scene question about the reading assignment if any is expected to differ from your already posted pre-session one if any**) and/or (ii) thinking about the issues under examination; and/or <2> contributing to discussions on classmates’ reflective questions (either **the pre-session questions on readings** or **the questions raised on the scene**).
- **Midterm exam** (take-home format) 25% (10/19)
- **Term Paper** 30%  
 (1) First version for feedback [20%; due 11/26]  
 (2) Final version [10%; due 12/10]
- **Final exam** (take-home format) 30% (due 12/14)

### Grading Policy

Normal grade rules. The final grade will be based on a computation of all of your scores and on the following scale:

A+ = 100-97%	A = 96-93%	A- = 92-90%
B+ = 89-87%	B = 86-83%	B- = 82-80%
C+ = 79-77%	C = 76-73%	C- = 72-70%
D+ = 69-67%	D = 66-63%	D- = 62-60%
F = 59-0% Unsatisfactory		

### Term paper

- This is the main philosophical writing of each student. The term paper topic assignment will be made around four weeks before the first-version submission due date (11/26, 23:59).
- The first version of the term paper goes with 5 [for undergraduate students] or 7 [for graduate students] full pages [about 300 words each page], typewritten double-spaced with 1 inch margin and font size 12.
- The term paper (MS Word files) is submitted online by the due time via the “Dropbox” at Canvas. For the late submission policy, see the term paper assignment.

### Exams

- The Midterm Exam and the Final Exam will take the take-home exam format.

**University Policies**

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

**TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE****Phil 158 / Fall 2018**

(2018-2-23 tentative version)

<b>Timeline</b> Note: the lecture note for each regular weekly session is posted on <b>Wednesday</b> (intensive online-learning day)	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Reading Assignments</b> (To be completed before the Wednesday intensive session)
Intensive Session 8/22 (W)	Introduction Preliminaries	None
<b>I. Language and Objects: Reference</b>		
Intensive Session 8/29 (W)	Locke on nature of language; Mill on reference	CR: Readings 1 (Lock) and 2 (Mill); IPL: Ch. 1
Intensive Session 9/5 (W)	Sense and Reference: Frege on sense and Reference / Searle's refinement	CR: Readings 3 (Frege) and 4 (Searle); IPL: Ch. 2
Intensive Session 9/12 (W)	Sense/description-identified reference: Russell on denoting and his Theory of Descriptions	CR: Readings 5 and 6 (Russell); IPL: Ch. 3 (3.1-3.4)
Intensive Session 9/19 (W)	Speaker-identified reference: Strawson on referring and Donnellan on reference and descriptions	CR: Readings 7 (Strawson), 8 (Russell), 9 (Donnellan); IPL: Ch. 3 (3.5-3.8)
Intensive Session 9/26 (W)	Non-epistemic direct reference: Kripke and Putnam on reference	CR: Readings 11 (Kripke) and 12 (Putnam); IPL: Chs. 4 and 5
Intensive Session 10/3 (W)	Further engagements (1): (1) Further modifications of Fregean and Kripkean approaches (2) Kripke on Russell-Strawson-Donnellan Debate	CR: Readings 10 (Kripke), 13 (Evans); 14 (Jackson) Supplementary reading #1 (Capuano)

Intensive Session 10/10 (W)	Further engagements (2): (1) The double-reference character of “Hexagram” names in the <i>Yi-Jing</i> text (2) A double-reference account of Gongsun Long’s approach	<u>CR</u> : (1) Supplementary reading #2 (2) Supplementary reading #3
Midterm-Exam Week	<b>Take-home midterm exam due 23:59, 10/19 in “Dropbox for Midterm Exams”</b> [Term paper assignment will be made by the end of October]	Midterm-Exam question sheet will be assigned on 10/12
<b>II. Language, World and Thought: Meaning, Communication and Predication</b>		
Intensive Session 10/24 (W)	Frege on thought	<u>CR</u> : Readings 15 (Frege)
Intensive Session 10/31 (W)	Object-related meaning: Tarski’s semantic conception of truth; Davidson on truth and meaning	<u>CR</u> : Readings 16 (Tarski) and 17 (Davidson); <u>IPL</u> : Ch. 9
Intensive Session 11/7 (W)	Thought-related meaning: Grice; Speech-act-related meaning: Austin and Searle	<u>CR</u> : (1) Readings 18 (Grice) and 19 (Grice); <u>IPL</u> : Ch. 13; (2) Readings 20 (Austin) and 21 (Searle); <u>IPL</u> : Ch. 12
Intensive Session 11/14 (W)	Further debate: the semantic vs. the pragmatic approaches	<u>CR</u> : Readings 22 (Cappelen & Lepore), 23 (Bach), and 24 (Davidson)
Thanksgiving Holiday	As the Wednesday (11/21) of this week is Non-Instructional Day (before Thanksgiving Day), there is no online session this week; the student can use this week to work on and finish the first version of the term paper	
Nov. 26 (M)	<b>First version of term paper due by midnight (11:59 pm)</b>	
<b>III. Translation, Interpretation, and Philosophical Interpretation of Texts</b>		
Intensive Session 11/28 (W)	(1) Quine on radical interpretation and indeterminacy of translation (2) Davidson on radical interpretation	(1) <u>CR</u> : Reading 25; <u>IPL</u> : Ch. 10 [10.1-10.2] and Ch. 11 (2) <u>CR</u> : Reading 26; <u>IPL</u> : Ch. 10 [10.3-10.6]
Intensive Session 12/5 (W)	(1) Kripke on the rule-following paradox (2) Wittgenstein’s challenges (3) Philosophical interpretation of texts	(1) <u>IPL</u> : Ch. 14 (2) <u>IPL</u> : Ch. 15 (3) Supplementary readings
<b>December 10 (M)</b>	<b>Final version of term paper due by 23:59 in “Dropbox for Term Papers” at Canvas</b>	
<b>December 14 (F)</b>	<b>Take-home Final Exam due 23:59 in</b>	Final exam-question sheet

	<b>“Dropbox for Final Exams” at Canvas</b>	will be assigned on 12/11
<p>Notes:</p> <p>(1) The above schedule is for guidance only and may change in the event of extenuating circumstances.</p> <p>(2) There might be added readings (required or supplementary), depending on situations.</p>		