

## Philosophy of Language

*Philosophy 154 • Fall 2018*

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### Required Materials

- Philosophy of Language, ed Martinich and Sosa
- Turning Technologies QT Clicker Device; the older NXT model is compatible

**Catalog Description: Philosophy of Language.** Study of philosophical issues concerning language: theories of the nature of linguistic meaning, in particular those involving the concepts of sense, reference, truth conditions, intention, convention, speech act, and force. Topics include the relation between meaning and reference to objects, and between meaning and mental processes. Emphasis on contemporary views, including views on the promise of a theory of language to shed light on fundamental philosophical problems in metaphysics and the philosophy of mind.

**Graded:** Graded Student. **Units:** 3.0

### Course Objectives

Students will be expected to:

- Demonstrate a developed ability to read and understand contemporary philosophical texts in the Philosophy of Language
- Demonstrate a precise and detailed understanding of the views and arguments of the philosophers studied.
- Evaluate critically the concepts and arguments contained in the texts;
- Maintain and defend with reasons their own critical views on the philosophers.

Students will demonstrate their achievement of the course objectives and expectations through:

- Daily in-class quizzes
- An essay final
- Participation in in-class discussion;
- Composition of short papers

## Course Grade

A basic requirement for passing this course is that the student make an evidently serious attempt to complete all of the assignments listed below. Assuming this requirement is met, the following cutoff scheme represents the maximum course total required for each letter grade. Target scores for the individual assignment totals are also provided.

The instructor will be following [the Philosophy Department's grading standards](#). There will be a handout in the handouts folder on Canvas providing a general rubric for your papers.

Canvas will automatically calculate your percentages for each assignment. Assignments will be weighted as follows:

Clickers:	25%
Papers:	50% (25% each)
Final Exam:	25%

The maximum scores for each letter grade are as follows. "Maximum score" means e.g. that if you score 80%, you are *guaranteed* at least a B- in the course, though you may do better; these cutoffs may be lowered, i.e. changed in your favor, at the end of the semester.

A-	88%
B-	80%
C-	70%
D-	60%

## Description of Requirements

**Papers:** Students are asked to write two 1000-word essays (about 3 ½ pages each) in response to specific prompts given by the instructor. *These are not research papers*; please make use only of the assigned course material. The emphasis of these will be on the critical examination of complex philosophical argumentation. Comments will be given on all writing assignments to help students improve their skills in both analytic reasoning and composition on subsequent assignments. For an explanation of what is involved in philosophical writing, please see [the Philosophy Department's writing guidelines](#).

Essays will be checked for originality by Turnitin.com. They may be submitted up to 24 hours late with no penalty and will be accepted for another 24 hours after that for a 10% penalty. After 48 hours, essays will be accepted, for a limited time, for half credit. Late essays may receive minimal comments. Essays are read in the order received.

A makeup paper will be accepted at the end of the semester. There will be a 20% penalty on this paper.

It is your responsibility to ensure that all your papers are properly submitted. It is a requirement of this course that you check to be sure you have received credit for each essay before the next one is due. Negligence in this regard can mean failing the course even though you have done all of the work. You cannot get credit for your essays if you do not succeed in turning them in.

**In-Class Quizzes:** Students should expect to answer quiz questions each day in class, beginning with the second class meeting. These will normally be interspersed with the lecture and responses will be given via clicker. Some questions may cover a reading assignment, and some may be review of a previous lecture; others may deal with online instruction material. Some questions may be aimed at polling the class regarding their philosophical views; for these, all answers will be scored as correct.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have a working clicker- your own- with you in class. There will be no makeups for quizzes missed either as a result of absence or a missing or malfunctioning clicker. In order to accommodate such problems, I will add a bonus equal to 15% of the total possible clicker points. This bonus will not allow your clicker score to exceed the maximum possible number of correct in-class clicks- i.e. it will not give you extra credit.

It is your responsibility to regularly check your clicker scores online to ensure that your clicker has been properly registered, and that you are getting the appropriate credit for your clicker quizzes. Please notify me right away of any problem you encounter in registering your clicker. Failure to do so may result in you failing to get credit for any affected clicker quizzes. You will not be compensated for clicker points lost due to malfunctioning clickers, in excess of the 15% bonus described above. For that reason, it is important that you check your clicker scores regularly to make sure that your clicker is functioning properly.

**Final Exam:** The exam will consist of three essay questions. Recommended length of response is 3 pages for each question. Essay topics will be drawn from a list handed out in advance; at least one question will be mandatory and chosen at random. You will be allowed to use four pages of notes; the required format for these will be described in a separate handout.

**Disability Accommodation:** If you have a disability and require accommodations, you need to provide disability documentation to [Services to Students with Disabilities](#), Lassen Hall 1008, (916) 278-6955. Please discuss your accommodation needs with me after class or during my office hours early in the semester.

**Basic Needs Support:** If you are experiencing challenges in the area of food and/or stable housing, help is available. Sacramento State offers basic needs support for students who are experiencing challenges in these areas. Please visit our Basic Needs website to learn more about your options and resources. <https://www.csus.edu/basicneeds/>

**Extra Credit:** You will be offered extra credit of up to 15 points for participating in instructor evaluations. No other form of extra credit will be available.

**Withdrawal from the course:** Please be mindful of drop deadlines. After the end of the second week of classes, you will be asked to justify any request to withdraw, and if your explanation is not satisfactory your petition to drop will be denied. In the majority of cases, if a student does not withdraw during the first two weeks, she is committed to finishing the class.

**Communication:** Please check your Saclink email at least once each week. Please also check weekly for announcements on our Canvas page; it's wise to check on Mondays to see if there are any announcements relevant to our work during the coming week. This is especially important if you have missed class, and thereby possibly missed important announcements.

**Laptop Use:** Laptops, tablets, and smart phones may not be used during lecture. Exceptions will be made only under special circumstances, e.g. to accommodate disability. If you are

found to be using one of these devices during class, you will be asked to put it away; repeat offenses will be penalized at a rate of 10 clicker points per incident.

**Proper Comportment:** University students are expected to know that it is not appropriate to interact privately with their classmates during lecture. This distracts other students as well as the instructor. Repeat offenders will be penalized at a rate of 10 clicker points per incident.

**Habitual Tardiness/Leaving Early:** Students are expected to be in their seats when class begins and to not leave until class is over. Occasional exceptions for good cause are acceptable, but habitually arriving late or leaving early will be penalized at the rate of 10 clicker points per incident. If you know you will need to leave class early, I appreciate you letting me know before class begins.

**Academic Dishonesty:** This usually involves using unauthorized notes during an exam or plagiarism, which is presenting the work of someone else—whether copied or paraphrased—as one's own. When material is copied without use of quotation marks, plagiarism is presumed. Please understand that it is not enough simply to reword material you find online to avoid the charge of plagiarism. You are responsible for what you turn in; check to be sure all appropriate citations are included in your work. If unauthorized notes are found to be accessible to you during an exam, you will be presumed to be using them. Those who permit others to cheat are considered accomplices and are guilty of cheating.

You must not use, or even handle, anyone else's clicker after the start of lecture. This will be considered cheating.

Please review the [University's policies regarding academic dishonesty](#). The library also maintains [a very useful page on plagiarism](#).

Anyone caught cheating will lose credit for the assignment on which they cheated, with no possibility of make-up. The minimum penalty will be 15% of the course grade, which is likely to drop the offender 1-2 letter grades in the course. If your clicker is used while you are not in attendance, the penalty will be 15% against you as well as the person who uses your clicker on your behalf. Egregious cases (e.g. multiple infractions, failure to cooperate with an investigation into academic dishonesty) will result in a student's failing the course. Please be aware that I am required to report all cases of cheating to the University's Office of Student Conduct, which may take further action.