PH244-15 Words and Things

20/21

Department
> Philosophy

Level
> Undergraduate Level 2

Module leader
> Hemdat Lerman

Credit value
> 15

Module duration
> 9 weeks

Assessment
> 100% coursework

Study location
> University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

PH244 - Words and Things

Module aims

The module aims to provide an introduction to some key issues in contemporary philosophy of thought and language. We use language to express thought, as when I express the thought that John lives in London by uttering the words 'John lives in London'. The general issues to be explored concern how we should think about language and thought in order to understand how language can express thought about things in the world (e.g., about John and about London). Topics include the following. Gottlob Frege's distinction between sense and reference: his account of how the sentences 'Superman is Superman' and 'Superman is Clark Kent' can be used to express different thoughts, even though Clark Kent is Superman. Bertrand Russell's theory of descriptions: his account of how we are able to think about things—like Russell himself—that are not immediately present to us. Saul Kripke's view of proper names: his view that the way proper names are used to talk about things is not to be accounted for by appeal to descriptions that we associate with those names, but rather by appeal to our causal relations to those things.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Preliminary syllabus: 1. Introductory reflections on the relationships between language, thought, and things. 2. Frege's distinction between sense and reference. 3. Russell's theory of descriptions. 4. The description theory of names. 5. The causal picture of reference. 6. Demonstrative reference. 7. Reference and acquaintance.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Students should be able to understand and evaluate key theoretical approaches to reference in contemporary philosophy of thought and language.
- Students should be able to articulate complex arguments and ideas, and critically engage with them.
- Students should have the ability to analyse, evaluate, critique and apply complex information gathered from reading, reflection, reasoning or communication.

Indicative reading list

Useful textbooks:
Miller, Alexander. Philosophy of Language (Routledge, 3rd edition, 2018).
Lycan, William. The philosophy of language (Routledge, 2nd edition, 2008).
Luntley, Michael. Contemporary philosophy of thought: truth, world, content. (Blackwell, 1999).
Neale, Stephen. Descriptions (MIT Press, 1990)
Useful collections:
Ludlow, P. (ed.), Readings in the Philosophy of Language (MIT Press, 1997).
Martinich, A. P. (ed.), The Philosophy of Language (OUP, 6th edition, 2012).
Moore, A. (ed.) Meaning and Reference (OUP, 1993).
Hale, B. & Wright, C. (eds.) A Companion to the Philosophy of Language (Blackwell, 1997).
Hornsby, J. and Longworth, G. (eds.) Reading philosophy of language: selected texts with interactive commentary (Blackwell, 2006).
Samples of core texts:
Frege, Gottlob. 'On Sense and Reference'.
Russell, Bertrand. 'On Denoting'.
Kripke, Saul. Naming and Necessity (Wiley-Blackwell, 1981).
Evans, Gareth. 'The Causal Theory of Names'.
Frege, Gottlob. 'The Thought: A Logical Inquiry'.

Subject specific skills

At the end of the module students should have knowledge and understanding of philosophical ideas that figure in the background to contemporary work in a range of areas (including philosophy of mind, epistemology and metaphysics).
The module should contribute to the development of students' ability (i) engage critically with philosophical arguments and views; (ii) to understand complex philosophical texts, identifying the

key claims and arguments; (iii) to articulate philosophical ideas and arguments, and to communicate them (both orally and in writing).

Transferable skills

The module should contribute to the development of students' ability (i) to think clearly and critically; (ii) to communicate complex ideas and arguments effectively, both orally and in writing; (iii) to read demanding texts effectively and critically.

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	9 sessions of 2 hours (12%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Private study	123 hours (82%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

No private study requirements defined for this module.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Students can register for this module without taking any assessment.

Assessment group A2

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
Short essay 500 word exercise	10%		Yes (extension)

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification

Reassessment component is the same

Assessment component

Assessed Essay	80%		Yes (extension)

A 2,500-word essay.

Reassessment component is the same

Assessment component

short essay	10%		Yes (extension)

500 word exercise

Reassessment component is the same

Feedback on assessment

Feedback on essays will be provided on the coversheet for the essay, addressing standard areas of evaluation and individual content.

Availability

Courses

This module is Optional for:

- UPHA-V700 Undergraduate Philosophy
    - Year 2 of V700 Philosophy
    - Year 3 of V700 Philosophy
- Year 4 of UPHA-V701 Undergraduate Philosophy (wiith Intercalated year)
- UPHA-VQ72 Undergraduate Philosophy and Literature
    - Year 2 of VQ72 Philosophy and Literature
    - Year 3 of VQ72 Philosophy and Literature
- UPHA-V7MM Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics (with Intercalated year)
    - Year 4 of V7MQ Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite) with Intercalated Year
    - Year 4 of V7MH Philosophy, Politics and Economics - Economics/Philosophy Bipartite

(Economics Major) (with Intercalated year)
- Year 4 of V7MF Philosophy, Politics and Economics - Economics/Politics Bipartite (Economics Major) (with Intercalated year)
- Year 4 of V7MI Philosophy, Politics and Economics - Philosophy/Economics Bipartite (Philosophy Major) (with Intercalated year)
- Year 4 of V7MJ Philosophy, Politics and Economics - Philosophy/Politics Bipartite (with Intercalated year)
- Year 4 of V7MG Philosophy, Politics and Economics - Politics/Economics Bipartite (Politics Major) (with Intercalated year)

This module is Core option list A for:

- Year 3 of UMAA-GV17 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy
- Year 3 of UMAA-GV19 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy with Specialism in Logic and Foundations

This module is Core option list B for:

- Year 2 of UMAA-GV17 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy
- Year 2 of UMAA-GV19 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy with Specialism in Logic and Foundations

This module is Option list A for:

- UPHA-VL78 BA in Philosophy with Psychology
  - Year 2 of VL78 Philosophy with Psychology
  - Year 3 of VL78 Philosophy with Psychology
- Year 4 of UPHA-VL79 BA in Philosophy with Psychology (with Intercalated year)

This module is Option list B for:

- Year 2 of UHIA-V1V5 Undergraduate History and Philosophy
- UPHA-VQ72 Undergraduate Philosophy and Literature
  - Year 2 of VQ72 Philosophy and Literature
  - Year 3 of VQ72 Philosophy and Literature

This module is Option list C for:

- Year 3 of UHIA-V1V5 Undergraduate History and Philosophy
- Year 4 of UHIA-V1V6 Undergraduate History and Philosophy (with Year Abroad)