PH244-15 Thought & Language

23/24

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 - Thought and Language

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 they can be 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 that are not immediately present to us (such as Aristotle). 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. Russell on names and acquaintance. 5. Kripke's objections to the Description Theory of Names. 6. The causal/historical picture of reference. 6. Demonstrative reference. If time allows: 7. Empty singular terms. 8. Quine's indeterminacy of reference.

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

Samples of core texts:
Frege, Gottlob. 'On Sense and Reference'.
Russell, Bertrand. 'On Denoting'.
Russell, Bertrand. 'Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description'.
Kripke, Saul. Naming and Necessity.
Evans, Gareth. 'The Causal Theory of Names'.

Samples of recommended secondary texts:
Miller, A. 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).
Hornsby, J. and Longworth, G. (eds.) Reading philosophy of language: selected texts with interactive commentary (Blackwell, 2006).
Hale, B. & Wright, C. (eds.) A Companion to the Philosophy of Language (Blackwell, 1997).
Neale, S. Descriptions (MIT Press, 1990).
Soames, S. Philosophical Analysis in the Twentieth Century, Vols I and II. (Princeton University Press, 2003).

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) to 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 clearly (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 (67%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour (33%)
Total	27 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 A4

	Weighting	Study time
500 word exercise 1	10%	
2500 word essay	80%	
500 word exercise 2	10%	

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-L1CA Undergraduate Economics, Psychology and Philosophy
  - Year 2 of L1CA Economics, Psychology and Philosophy
  - Year 2 of L1CC Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Behavioural Economics Pathway)
  - Year 2 of L1CD Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Economics with Philosophy Pathway)
  - Year 2 of L1CE Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Philosophy and Psychology Pathway)
  - Year 3 of L1CA Economics, Psychology and Philosophy
  - Year 3 of L1CC Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Behavioural Economics Pathway)
  - Year 3 of L1CD Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Economics with Philosophy Pathway)
  - Year 3 of L1CE Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Philosophy and Psychology Pathway)
- UPHA-L1CB Undergraduate Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (with Intercalated Year)
  - Year 4 of L1CG Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Behavioural Economics Pathway) (with Intercalated Year)
  - Year 4 of L1CH Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Economics with Philosophy Pathway) (with Intercalated Year)
  - Year 4 of L1CJ Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Philosophy and Psychology Pathway) (with Intercalated Year)
  - Year 4 of L1CB Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (with Intercalated Year)
  - Year 4 of L1CB Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (with Intercalated Year)
- UHIA-V1V8 Undergraduate History and Philosophy (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
  - Year 3 of V1V8 History and Philosophy (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
  - Year 4 of V1V8 History and Philosophy (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
- Year 3 of UHIA-V1V7 Undergraduate History and Philosophy (with a term in Venice)
- UPHA-V700 Undergraduate Philosophy
  - Year 2 of V700 Philosophy
  - Year 2 of V700 Philosophy
  - Year 3 of V700 Philosophy
  - Year 3 of V700 Philosophy
- Year 4 of UPHA-V701 Undergraduate Philosophy (with Intercalated year)
- Year 4 of UPHA-V702 Undergraduate Philosophy (with Work Placement)
- UPHA-VQ72 Undergraduate Philosophy and Literature
  - Year 2 of VQ72 Philosophy and Literature

- ○ Year 3 of VQ72 Philosophy and Literature
- UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics
  - ○ Year 2 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
  - ○ Year 2 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
  - ○ Year 2 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
  - ○ Year 3 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
  - ○ Year 3 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
  - ○ Year 3 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
- 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)
- UPHA-V7MW Undergraduate Politics, Philosophy and Law
  - ○ Year 2 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law
  - ○ Year 2 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law
  - ○ Year 3 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law
  - ○ Year 3 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law
- Year 4 of UPHA-V7MX Undergraduate Politics, Philosophy and Law (with Intercalated Year)

This module is Unusual option for:

- UPHA-L1CA Undergraduate Economics, Psychology and Philosophy
  - ○ Year 2 of L1CA Economics, Psychology and Philosophy
  - ○ Year 2 of L1CC Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Behavioural Economics Pathway)
  - ○ Year 3 of L1CA Economics, Psychology and Philosophy
- UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics
  - ○ Year 2 of V7MR Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite with Economics Major)
  - ○ Year 2 of V7MP Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite)
  - ○ Year 2 of V7MP Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite)
  - ○ Year 2 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
  - ○ Year 2 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
  - ○ Year 2 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
  - ○ Year 3 of V7MR Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite with Economics Major)
  - ○ Year 3 of V7MP Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite)
  - ○ Year 3 of V7MP Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite)
- UPHA-V7MM Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics (with Intercalated year)
  - ○ Year 4 of V7MS Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite with Economics Major) (with Intercalated Year)

- - Year 4 of V7MS Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite with Economics Major) (with Intercalated Year)
    - Year 4 of V7MQ Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite) with Intercalated Year
    - Year 4 of V7MM Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite) (with Intercalated year)
  - UPHA-V7MW Undergraduate Politics, Philosophy and Law
    - Year 2 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law
    - Year 2 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law
    - Year 3 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law
    - Year 3 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law
  - Year 4 of UPHA-V7MX Undergraduate Politics, Philosophy and Law (with Intercalated Year)

This module is Core option list A for:

- UMAA-GV17 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy
  - Year 3 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy
  - Year 3 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy
  - Year 3 of GV17 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:

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

This module is Core option list C for:

- Year 4 of UMAA-GV19 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy with Specialism in Logic and Foundations

This module is Core option list F for:

- UMAA-GV18 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy with Intercalated Year
  - Year 4 of GV18 Mathematics and Philosophy with Intercalated Year
  - Year 4 of GV18 Mathematics and Philosophy with Intercalated Year

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
- Year 2 of UPHA-VQ52 Undergraduate Philosophy, Literature and Classics
- UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics
    - Year 2 of V7MP Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite)
    - Year 2 of V7MP Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite)

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)
- UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics
    - Year 3 of V7MP Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite)
    - Year 3 of V7MP Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite)
    - Year 3 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
    - Year 3 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
    - Year 3 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
- UPHA-V7MM Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics (with Intercalated year)
    - Year 4 of V7MS Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite with Economics Major) (with Intercalated Year)
    - Year 4 of V7MS Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite with Economics Major) (with Intercalated Year)
    - Year 4 of V7MQ Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite) with Intercalated Year
    - Year 4 of V7MM Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite) (with Intercalated year)

This module is Option list D for:

- UHIA-V1V5 Undergraduate History and Philosophy
    - Year 2 of V1V5 History and Philosophy
    - Year 3 of V1V5 History and Philosophy
- Year 4 of UHIA-V1V6 Undergraduate History and Philosophy (with Year Abroad)
- Year 2 of UHIA-V1V7 Undergraduate History and Philosophy (with a term in Venice)
- UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics
    - Year 2 of V7MR Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite with Economics Major)
    - Year 3 of V7MR Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite with Economics Major)