

Philosophy of Logic and Language

Philosophy 431-001
Spring 2018
T, TH 3-4:20pm
218 Bessey Hall

Instructor Information

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Required Texts*

- Priest, G. 2008. *An Introduction to Non-Classical Logic*, 2nd edition. Cambridge UP.
- Read, S. 1995. *Thinking About Logic*. Oxford UP.
- Sainsbury, R. *Paradoxes*, 3rd edition. Cambridge UP.

*See the below schedule for what we will be reading from these texts

Course Content

In this version of PHL 431 students will critically examine a variety of logics in order to understand their rationales and techniques, assess their adequacy, and see their connections to philosophical topics such as the nature of vagueness, truth, rationality, and reality. By the end of the course, students will have developed an understanding of classical logic and its chief rivals that will enable them to appreciate some of the deep questions in the philosophy of logic.

Typically, it is classical logic that is taught in introductory logic courses offered by colleges and universities around the world (e.g., at MSU it is taught in PHL 130, PHL 330, and PHL 432). Our consideration of alternative logics will enable students to meaningfully engage the following philosophy-of-logic questions: How exactly, if at all, are these logics rivals to classical logic? Could there in principle be good reasons for adopting an alternative to classical logic? Are there reasons for adopting a non-classical logic for limited applications or must a change in logic be global? Students will have opportunities to develop their own answers to these and other questions in the philosophy of logic.

This is not a course in formal logic (e.g., it is not just an advanced version of PHL 330). It will be useful to have some familiarity with formal logic, but success in this

course does not presuppose it. Our aim is not to master the formal techniques of the various logics we consider in the Priest text. Rather, the course aims to familiarize students with these techniques in order to enable them to engage the aforementioned topics and questions, i.e., in order to enable them to philosophize about logic. Unless there is student demand for it, we will not do the meta-theory in the Chapters covered in the Priest text (e.g., completeness and soundness proofs) that establishes the formal adequacy of the techniques we learn.

Required work

The course requirements aim to engage students in various ways with both course material and course topics. There will be grading rubrics for all required work

- Two presentations, each worth 20% of your course grade. Students are encouraged to consult with me well in advance of their presentations for input regarding format and content
 - Presentation #1 is a 20-25 minute presentation (excluding question-answer session) on material in a required chapter in one of the three class texts. It must be delivered during the time frame that we are scheduled to cover the chapter (see tentative reading schedule below). Here you are asked to assume the role of a teacher and teach material introduced in the chapter to the class. Must sign up to present by January 22nd. No more than one student per chapter. Sign-ups are on a first-come, first-serve basis.
 - Presentation #2 is a 20-25 minute presentation (excluding question-answer session) on a course-related topic of your choice that is different from the topic of your term paper. Here you are asked to assume the role of a scholar and present the results of your investigation of a particular course-related problematic. Must sign up to present by February 1st.
- Four to five reflection papers. The average grade is worth 25% of your course grade. Periodically, the class will break up and write short reflection papers in response to questions posed by me. Students may use their notes and relevant readings. The reflection papers will often require you to interact with your fellow students. The reflection papers are intended to help stimulate discussion and consolidate student thinking on topics from the assigned readings. I will evaluate reflection papers and return them with comments the following class period. If you miss a reflection paper assignment (which may be unannounced), then it counts as a zero unless makeup criteria apply (see below in bold). Your lowest grade (including a zero) will be dropped.

- A 3000-word term paper due on the last day of class (April 27th). Worth 35% of your final grade. The seminar paper should be double-spaced, font 11 or 12pt. It should address a course-related topic, and must identify and attempt to resolve an interesting, difficult, and important question in the philosophy of logic or problem raised by a class reading. Students are encouraged to meet with me to explore possible topics and to plot the structure of the paper. Please note the paper milestones during the semester: By March 27th, a title and a 500-word abstract must be submitted; by April 3rd, a bibliography with at least seven sources must be submitted. Failure to comply with a deadline will result in a ½ grade deduction for the term paper. I will accept rough drafts for review up until April 12th.

Class Time and Attendance Expectations

The course will be run as a seminar: fewer lectures, more discussions. This places a good deal of responsibility on students to help make class time productive. Based on a thoughtful reading of the day's course material, come to class with questions, criticisms, and insights. This will be challenging given the amount of reading and the advanced topics in the philosophy of logic it covers. I want you to get the most out of this course and I want the course to get the most out of you. In order for this to happen, you must get the reading to speak to you. I will work with you so that you establish a voice in our semester-long conversation about logic that can serve as a foundation for doing well on the course requirements. The work motto for the course is: read, read, and read.

Regular, meaningful class participation may be used as a fudge factor to bump up borderline grades. Also, class time is your opportunity to get things clarified, try out ideas and lines of argument, hear constructive criticism, etc. In sum, students are expected to engage the reading material, and come to class prepared to critically discuss it and do philosophy of logic.

Deadline Expectations

Late work (e.g., missing a presentation or reflection paper, not meeting the term paper milestones) will be excused only in the event of hospitalization (yours not someone else's) with the proper documentation. I don't count a visit to the clinic or a doctor's appointment as hospitalization. I understand that there is life outside of class. Please plan accordingly. Again, there is no make-up for reflection paper assignments. If your absence is excused, then your average reflection-paper grade will be based one less paper.

Grading

Grades on assessments and exams will be on a 100-pt. scale. Your final grade will be first determined on a 100-pt. scale, and then converted to a 4.0 scale according to

the below tabulations. For example, a final grade of an 83% corresponds to a 3.0 and a 77% corresponds to a 2.5.

4.0=90% and above
3.5=85--89%
3.0=80--84%
2.5=75--79%
2.0=70--74%
1.5=65--69%
1.0=60--64%

Tentative Semester Schedule (30 classes)

1/09	Introduction
1/11-18	Read: Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2 Priest: Chapter 1
1/23-2/6	Read: Chapters 2-4 Priest: Chapters 2-5
2/8	—CLASS CANCELLED
2/13 & 15	Read: Chapter 8 Priest: Chapter 6
2/20- 3/15	Sainsbury: Chapters 5, 6, & 7 Read: Chapter 6 Priest: Chapters 7- 9
3/5-3/9	—SPRING BREAK
3/20-27	Read: Chapter 7 Sainsbury: Chapter 3 Priest: Chapter 11
3/29 & 4/3	Priest: Chapter 10
4/5-12	Read: Chapter 5 Priest: Chapters 12 and 13.
4/17-26	Priest: Chapters 14-16* *Depending on class progress and the schedule of student presentations, some or all of these classes may be needed to cover previously schedule material in which case we will not get to all, if any, of Chapters 14-16.

Academic Honesty

Article 2.3.3 of the [Academic Freedom Report](#) states that "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." In addition, the Philosophy Department adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in General Student Regulations 1.0, *Protection of Scholarship and Grades*; the all-University Policy on *Integrity of Scholarship and Grades*; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations. (See <http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/dishonestyFAQ.html>) [Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide](#) and/or the MSU Web site: www.msu.edu.) Therefore, unless authorized by me, you are expected to complete all course work without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work you completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Also, you are not authorized to use the www.allmsu.com Web site to complete any course work in PHL 431. Students who violate MSU academic integrity rules may receive a penalty grade, including a failing grade on the assignment or in the course. Contact me if you are unsure about the appropriateness of your course work.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities (from the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD))

Michigan State University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at 517-884-RCPD or on the web at rcpd.msu.edu. Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, you will be issued a verified individual services accommodation ("RISA") form. Please present this form to me at the start of the term and/or two weeks prior to the accommodation date (test, project, etc.). Requests received after this date will be honored whenever possible.