

# PHL390 H5S: Special Topics in Philosophy: Frege's Puzzle (Online)

July–August 2020

*Meetings:* See “Contact” below

*Instructor:* Rory Harder

*E-mail:* rory.harder@mail.utoronto.ca (see “Contact” below)

## Course Description

Frege's puzzle was originally about how two identity sentences, “ $a=a$ ” and “ $a=b$ ”, could differ in significance when the names “ $a$ ” and “ $b$ ” refer to the same object. For instance, why is “Clark Kent is Clark Kent” a triviality, while determining the truth of “Clark Kent is Superman” potentially surprising? Frege responded to this puzzle by arguing that names have as their meanings not objects, but ways of thinking of objects. Russell, however, held on to the view that names simply have objects as their meanings. This course covers ways that the traditional Fregean and Russellian views have been elaborated over the past century in relation to various reflexes of Frege's puzzle that arise within language, thought, and communication.

## Contact

For each lecture, I will upload about 1 hour worth of video of me working through material that will help understand the readings for that lecture. I will also host 1 hour of interactive office hours for each lecture. Please come to these prepared with specific questions or comments about the uploaded video lectures or course material in general.

The first and last lectures are different, however, and will be interactive lectures at specific times that you must attend.

While you should absolutely e-mail about important matters, I will ignore any e-mails with questions that are easily answered by this syllabus or on Quercus. It is your responsibility to keep informed about such matters. Furthermore, I will ignore any e-mails that ask questions about course content. These questions must be raised within office hours.

## Learning Objectives

Aside from mastery of arguments and positions in cutting-edge controversies in philosophy, the primary things you will gain from this course are the following general skills:

- how to draw out complex arguments and positions from difficult texts;
- how to evaluate complex arguments and positions;
- how to write clearly and concisely;

The assignments and lectures will be geared towards developing those skills, which will help you in your future philosophy courses and life in general.

# Course Materials

All readings will be made available through Quercus.

## Course Requirements

1. Four argument analyses (500 words): 12.5% each. For each of the second to fifth week, you must submit an argument analysis. Instructions will be uploaded to the course webpage.
2. One long paper (1500-2000 words): 35%. If you get at least an 80 percent average on your first three argument analyses, then you may choose to write on a topic of your choosing. If you choose so, you must schedule a one-on-one online meeting with me before the last class, in which you will get a topic approved. You must come to this meeting prepared with a couple topic proposals.
3. Attendance and Participation: 15%. You must attend the first and last lecture. You must also attend at least 5 office hours, and ask a question in each one of these five you attend in order for it to count.

## Reading List (Tentative)

### Part 1: Background

*July 7: Course Introduction and Frege*

#### Mandatory Interactive Lecture from 3–5pm

Reading: Frege, “Sense and Reference”, excerpt

Optional: Frege, “The Thought”; Evans, *The Varieties of Reference*, Chapter 1

*July 9: Russellianism*

Reading: Russell, “On Denoting”

Optional: Russell, “Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description”; Evans, *The Varieties of Reference*, Chapter 2

*July 14: Direct Reference Theory*

Reading: Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, Lecture II

Optional: Kripke, “A Puzzle about Belief”; Evans, *The Varieties of Reference*, Chapter 3

*July 16: Why Fregeanism?*

Reading: Campbell, “Is Sense Transparent?”

### First Argument Analysis Due

### Part 2: Frege’s Puzzle in Language and Thought

*July 21: Defending Direct Reference I*

Reading: Perry, “Frege on Demonstratives”

Optional: Kaplan, “Demonstratives”

*July 23: Defending Direct Reference II*

Reading: Fodor, *A Theory of Content and Other Essays*, Chapter 6

Optional: Fodor, “Methodological Solipsism Considered as a Research Strategy in Cognitive Psychology”; Fodor, *Psychosemantics*, Chapter 1

### Second Argument Analysis Due

*July 28: Neo-Fregeanism I*

Reading: Evans, “Understanding Demonstratives”

*July 30: Neo-Fregeanism II*

Reading: Campbell, “Sense, Reference, and Selective Attention”

### **Third Argument Analysis Due**

#### **Part 3: Frege’s Puzzle in Communication**

*August 4: Loar Cases*

Reading: Heck, “The Sense of Communication”

Optional: Bezuidenhout, “The Communication of De Re Thoughts”

*August 6: What is Sense?*

Reading: Dickie & Rattan, “Sense, Communication, and Rational Engagement”

Optional: Heck, “Do Demonstratives have Senses?”

### **Fourth Argument Analysis Due**

#### **Part 4: Relationism**

*August 11: Semantic Relationism*

Reading: Fine, *Semantic Relationism*, Chapter 2

Optional: Gray, “Relational Approaches to Frege’s Puzzle”

*August 13: Formal Relationism and Conclusion*

Reading: Heck, “Solving Frege’s Puzzle”

### **Mandatory Interactive Lecture from 3–5pm**

### **Long Paper Due**

## **Other Information**

*Accessibility:* I will only make accommodations (e.g. extensions) if you provide me with appropriate documentation, or that are requested of me through accessibility services or the departmental advisor. I will do my best to accommodate any disabilities. Here are two links that may help if you need support with the class: <https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/accessibility/welcome-accessibility-services> and <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/feeling-distressed>.

*Late Policy:* Argument analyses must be handed on time; otherwise, you will automatically receive a 0. For the long paper, one half of a letter grade (5%) will be subtracted per day late, and you will receive a grade of 0 if more than seven days late.

*Regrade Policy:* If you think your argument analysis or long paper was graded unfairly, then you must e-mail me requesting a regrade. I will only regrade an assignment if contacted within two weeks of when the assignment was first graded and returned to you, and you must provide a reason for wanting a regrade. All regrade requests must be made in writing and you must acknowledge that your new mark may be less than the original one.

*Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct:* The University of Toronto takes plagiarism (and academic misconduct in general) very seriously. For a complete statement of the policies governing academic conduct, see the University’s *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters*. You are responsible for knowing what plagiarism is, and also for knowing the particular plagiarism penalties.

*Quercus Use:* You are expected to check the course webpage page regularly to access the readings and check for updates.

*Assignment Submission:* You must submit your assignments through the course webpage unless otherwise instructed.