Teaching Dossier

Richard Lawrence

Contents

Additional sample materials are available at: `https://www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~rwl/teaching.html`

1 Areas of Teaching Competence

My teaching competences lie broadly in Metaphysics and Epistemology, and include:

Graduate level

- Philosophy of Language
- Philosophical Logic
- Philosophy of Mathematics

Undergraduate level

- Ancient Philosophy
- Philosophy of Biology
- Mathematical Logic

2 Teaching Statement

My primary goal when teaching philosophy is for my students to learn how to engage in philosophical inquiry. I want my students to grasp the questions of philosophy, to see why they are challenging and difficult, and to work out answers for themselves. As a student, my most valuable learning experiences came from grappling with challenging questions; and as a researcher, these questions continue to motivate me. In my experience, it is by wrestling with such questions that students become more curious, more analytical, and more engaged with the thoughts of others. Those are the outcomes that I aim to produce in my teaching.

I therefore design my courses to guide students toward understanding particular philosophical questions. For instance, my Philosophy of Language course is organized around a single broad question: in virtue of what do our words mean what they do? The different units of the course explore different ways of responding to this question. Some of the readings try to answer it directly, by developing, say, a causal theory of reference, or a theory of meaning based on speakers' intentions. Other readings argue that the question about meaning should be reconceived, perhaps as a question about social practices or rules. In each case, we look at several authors in dialogue about a given approach. The course as a whole is thus designed to give students a sense of the vastly different answers one could give to the question about meaning, and of how different possible answers to this question inform our understanding of other important concepts, like knowledge and truth. Structuring the course this way shows students why this question is interesting, and also why it is more difficult than it first appears.

Oral discussion is a crucial part of how philosophers develop answers to our questions, and so discussion among students is also important in my teaching. To facilitate discussion, I use a variety of techniques. For example, I sometimes ask students to send me questions they have about readings, and I initiate discussion with these questions. I then use different methods to sustain the discussion and encourage wide participation—especially in larger classrooms—such as breaking the class into smaller groups, inviting students by name to contribute, and asking students to summarize the points that have emerged. I consciously adapt my own role in discussions, keeping discussion on track while ensuring that as many students as possible take part.

When assigning written work, my main goal is for students to make a sustained effort to develop their own answers to a philosophical question. To that end, my essay topics normally ask students to develop a line of thought that goes beyond what I present in class. To help students formulate their essays, I sometimes host in-class writing workshops, where students share their thesis statements, discuss strategies for organizing their essays, and review written drafts with their peers. When grading individual essays, I comment on the ways that students can further engage with the question they've chosen to write about.

When I teach logic classes, it remains important to me that students make a sustained effort to answer challenging questions on their own. For this reason, I regularly assign problems which require reflecting on the course material from a more abstract perspective. For example, in my introductory logic class, I assign problems about defining new truth-functional connectives, and about what happens when we eliminate certain proof rules, to get students thinking about truth-functional and proof-theoretic completeness. Although I would only expect students to master these topics in more advanced courses, such problems prepare them for further inquiry.

I have developed these techniques over ten years of teaching experience, and I am proud of the success I've had with them. My students consistently rate my teaching very highly, and many have commented that they find my teaching methods and course design very helpful. As I've matured as a teacher, I've become more convinced of the pedagogical value of structuring course content around challenging questions. And as I enter the next phase of my teaching career, I am well prepared to guide students to confront those questions for themselves.

3 Summary of Teaching Evaluations

The following table summarizes student evaluations from my semesters teaching at the University of California, Berkeley from 2010 to 2018.[1] On a voluntary, confidential survey at the end of each term, students were asked to rate instructors' overall teaching effectiveness on a scale from 1 ('not at all effective') to 7 ('extremely effective'), and to provide written comments. *n* indicates the number of survey responses. *Complete teaching evaluations for all courses are available upon request.*

Course	Semester	Mean score, out of 7	*n*
Ancient Philosophy (Primary instructor)	Summer 2014	6.40	20
	Summer 2015	6.54	12
	Summer 2018	6.83	18
Ancient Philosophy (GSI)	Summer 2012	6.67	12
	Fall 2012	6.03	36
	Fall 2013	6.65	41
	Fall 2016	6.11	46
Aristotle	Fall 2014	6.25	33
Introduction to Logic (Primary instructor)	Summer 2017	5.53	30
Introduction to Logic (GSI)	Summer 2010	5.38	14
	Fall 2010	6.63	35
	Fall 2011	6.67	29
	Spring 2012	6.50	28
Philosophical Methods	Spring 2011	6.20	5
Philosophy of Mathematics	Spring 2013	6.43	23
	Fall 2015	6.70	23
Philosophy of Language	Spring 2016	6.18	29
	Spring 2017	6.53	38

3.1 Selection of student comments

3.1.1 As primary instructor

I'm incredibly impressed by how quickly he learned all our names and how accessible he was for questions and comments. Pr. Lawrence was diplomatic, challenging, and helpful when responding to my objections/questions. (Ancient Philosophy, Summer 2014)

Reviewing my notes from lecture has made me appreciate how well-designed Richard's class was, especially deriving Socrates' method to lay a groundwork for Plato's epistemology and metaphysics and then picking the Socratic dialogues back up for the ethics section. (Ancient Philosophy, Summer 2015)

Richard Lawrence is phenomenal at using the chalkboard. I am not even kidding. Each lecture begins with an outline on the board. Then the writings appear in order. Also, the simple diagrams help. The formatting of the writing is nice. (Ancient Philosophy, Summer 2014)

Richard was eager to engage us in finding the answers ourselves, which I thought was particularly helpful. (Introduction to Logic, Summer 2017)

[Richard] has an extraordinary ability to see through your puzzled face and get what you are confused about. (Introduction to Logic, Summer 2017)

[1] Unfortunately, data is not yet available for my teaching at the University of Tübingen in 2019–2020.

3.1.2 As Graduate Student Instructor

I do not know if I could sincerely rave enough about Richard Lawrence. In section, he was for us a brilliant, witty, clear, genuinely dedicated mentor, unafraid to both ask big questions and gently guide us along some sort of path to a good answer. I wish I went to his office hours and I'll do everything in my power to seek him out as a GSI for the next philosophy course I take! (Ancient Philosophy, Fall 2013)

I am very glad I took this course because this was the best experience I've had with a GSI. He is very talented at teaching and I wish I could take another course with him teaching.... [His] manner of teaching, I feel, helped me learn at a much deeper level. (Aristotle, Fall 2014)

He was always prepared. He was the only GSI for the course that went out of his way to make extra credit worksheets for the students.... He has a natural disposition to teach extremely well and be understood thoroughly. (Introduction to Logic, Fall 2010)

Richard is distinct in that you sense he really wants you to learn the material. I would specifically take a class next semester in order to have Richard again. (Introduction to Logic, Fall 2010)

His easy-to-laugh nature makes for a good learning environment. (Introduction to Logic, Spring 2012)

The fact that Richard actually knew the material was apparent when helping students. Office hours were tremendously helpful, as Richard would guide you in the right direction, but force students to arrive at their own conclusions. (Philosophy of Mathematics, Spring 2013)

He was relaxed and made the effort to learn our names, which was nice and made him approachable. His essay comments were *fantastic*! (Philosophy of Mathematics, Spring 2013)

I particularly enjoyed the fact that he had a clear plan for each section as well as a clear rubric for grading. This helped immensely when it came to *improving* my philosophical writing skills. He was also responsive and nonjudgmental. (Philosophy of Mathematics, Fall 2015)

Richard was extremely effective at distilling difficult concepts in lecture into something manageable and understandable. He answered questions clearly and was responsive to all questions. He helped tremendously with developing our papers and included very thorough comments on each essay. (Philosophy of Mathematics, Fall 2015)

Richard was very well prepared and very conversational which made it easy to chime in during section. He responded to every one of my inputs for discussion thoughtfully. (Philosophy of Mathematics, Fall 2015)

I particularly liked the writing workshops/group work. It is something I haven't done in other classes and I found it helpful. (Philosophy of Language, Spring 2016)

I really appreciate his capacity to understand that although I found the class interesting, health issues still got in the way...his support meant a lot to me, as a student at Cal. (Philosophy of Language, Spring 2016)

Quite frankly, I would not have passed this course if I did not have Richard as my GSI.... I was particularly grateful for his use of the boards to draw models and break down the theories with visual maps and examples. Richard, I hope you read this: *I thank you greatly*. (Philosophy of Language, Spring 2016)

Richard is honestly the best GSI I've ever had. He's the most approachable GSI I've met and he's helpful in clarifying really difficult concepts. He's super nice and always goes the extra mile to help us students. Thanks again for always staying, sometimes, 30 minutes over office hours to answer questions!! (Philosophy of Language, Spring 2017)

Reference to Numbers and Other Abstract Objects

Richard Lawrence

Winter Semester 2019

1 Course Description

How do we refer to numbers in natural language? When we use an expression like "the number 7", are we referring to an object, in the same way that we refer to concrete objects with proper names like "Frege", or with descriptions like "the heaviest book on the shelf"? If not, how should we understand our talk about numbers? We will focus on questions about numbers in this course, which serve as a case study for a more general question about abstract objects. What does it mean to refer to abstract objects in language? How is such reference possible, if it is possible at all?

To address these questions, we will read a variety of classic pieces in analytic philosophy, including texts from Frege, Russell, Carnap and Quine. These readings will introduce the notion of reference and some of the problems with reference to abstract objects. They provide the necessary background for understanding the debate about reference to numbers in more contemporary literature, which we will introduce toward the end of the course.

1.1 Seminar information

Instructor	**Seminar meetings**
Richard Lawrence richard.lawrence@uni-tuebingen.de Office hours: Fridays 8:30AM–10:30AM Raum 319	Wednesdays 6PM–8PM Schellingzimmer (Raum 218)

The class is held in English, and readings will be made available in English. However, many of the readings are also available in German; and a few of them, notably those by Frege, were originally published in German, so if you are a native German speaker, please feel free to read and share your perspective on the originals! Term papers and reading notes should be written in English, but I would be happy to practice my German with you during office hours.

2 Course Requirements

2.1 Participation in seminar

To prepare for the discussion, you should read the assigned material for the week, preferably more than once. You should also read the questions I post about this material and think about how you would answer them, even if you are not submitting a written reading note for that week (see below).

2.2 Reading notes

To get credit for attending the course, you must submit five *reading notes*. Each reading note should be about 1 page (maximum 500 words) in length, and must be turned in at the beginning of the seminar meeting in which we discuss the text you write about. It should respond to one or more of the questions about the reading that I will make available before the seminar meeting each week.

2.3 Term papers

Your own *Studienordnung* determines what else you need to do to get full credit for the seminar. If you are going to write a term paper (Hausarbeit), you need to submit a *proposed essay prompt* and *summary* of your term paper plan by the **final seminar meeting**. You must submit the term paper itself by **31.3.2020**.

3 Schedule and Readings

All readings will be made available in ILIAS (course password: *Bedeutung*).

Week	Date	Reading
		Unit 1: A brief history of reference
1	16.10	J.S. Mill, "Of Names"
2	23.10	G. Frege, "On Sense and Reference"
3	30.10	B. Russell, "Descriptions"
		Last day for **first** reading note
4	6.11	W.O. Quine, "On What There Is"
5	13.11	S. Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (selections)
		Unit 2: Frege on reference to abstract objects
6	20.11	G. Frege, *Begriffsschrift* (selections)
		Last day for **second** reading note
7	27.11	G. Frege, *The Foundations of Arithmetic* (selections)
8	4.12	G. Frege, *The Foundations of Arithmetic* (selections)
9	11.12	G. Frege, "Function and Concept"
10	18.12	G. Frege, *The Basic Laws of Arithmetic* (selections)
		Last day for **third** reading note
		Holiday break
		Unit 3: The contemporary debate about numbers
11	8.1	R. Carnap, "Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology"
12	15.1	M. Dummett, *Frege: Philosophy of Mathematics* (selections)
13	22.1	T. Hofweber, "Innocent statements and their metaphysically loaded counterparts"
		Last day for **fourth** reading note
14	29.1	K. Felka, "Number words and reference to numbers"
15	5.2	R. Lawrence, TBD
		Last day for **fifth** reading note and for **term paper plan/prompt**

Introduction to Logic (Philosophy 12A)

Richard Lawrence

First Summer Session 2017

1 Course Description

In a valid deductive argument, the conclusion *follows* from the premises. But what exactly does this involve? Logic aims to answer that question by giving a mathematically precise account of the relation of the premises to the conclusion in a valid argument. In this course we will study two systems of symbolic logic: truth-functional logic, and first-order logic. We will learn how to represent the logical forms of English arguments, and then develop a semantics as well as a system of natural deduction in each system to determine the validity of arguments given such formal representations.

1.1 Course learning objectives

By the conclusion of the course, the student will:

- understand and be able to explain basic logical concepts, including *argument*, *validity*, *entailment*, *proof*, *interpretation* and *counterexample*
- learn a syntax, semantics, and proof system for truth-functional logic
- learn a syntax, semantics, and proof system for first-order logic
- learn techniques for symbolising sentences and arguments from English in formal languages
- learn techniques for constructing proofs and counterexamples in truth-functional and first-order logic
- reflect on these logical systems from a basic metalogical perspective

1.2 Contact information

	Instructor	**GSI**	**GSI**
	Richard Lawrence	Pia Schneider	Yifeng Ding
	richard.lawrence@berkeley.edu	pia_schneider@berkeley.edu	yf.ding@berkeley.edu
Office:	243 Moses	301 Moses	1070 Evans
Office hours:	Thurs., 3:30PM–5:30PM	Weds., 4PM–6PM	Tues., 3:30PM–5:50PM

1.3 Meeting Times

	Day	**Time**	**Location**
Lecture:	Tuesday–Thursday	1PM–3:30PM	GPBB 107
Lab 1:	Friday	1PM–3:30PM	206 Dwinelle/155 Barrows
Lab 2:	Monday	1PM–3:30PM	206 Dwinelle/155 Barrows

2 Texts

Our text is *forall x Calgary Remix: an Introduction to Formal Logic*, by P.D. Magnus et al. (This is an open access introductory textbook.) The text will be made available electronically as a PDF, and for sale via a print-on-demand service.

3 Course Requirements

	Weight in final grade
Quizzes	50%
Problem Sets	30%
Participation in Lab	20%

You will take charge of your own learning in this course. The course is designed so that you will get feedback quickly and frequently, which you can use to improve your understanding at your own pace. Your job is to use that feedback wisely: use the quizzes, the problems, and your classmates to assess how well you understand the material, and figure out where you need to improve.

3.1 Quizzes

The main component of your grade in this course will derive from a series of six quizzes. We will grade the quizzes using **mastery-based grading**. Each quiz will test your mastery of a set of concepts from the course, emphasizing one week's worth of material.

The quizzes will be given one of three grades: **Complete** (2 points), **Almost** (1 point), or **Not Passed** (0 points). The quiz component of your grade will be based on the number of points you accumulate, as follows:

Points	Quizzes grade
12	A
11	A-
10	B+
9	B
8	B-
7	C+
6	C
5	C-
4	D+
3	D
2	D-

If you do not receive the grade of Complete on a quiz, you will have the option to retake it once, during a session of Lab 2. If you wish to retake a quiz, **you must let your GSI know by the end of the day on the preceding Friday**.

3.2 Participation in Lab

There are two sections of **laboratory** each week. Working through problems is an important part of learning logic. Laboratory will give you experience working through problems, in an environment where you can get individual help from your peers and your GSI.

Part of your grade in this course is based on your participation in laboratory. Being a good participant in laboratory requires more than just showing up! **You are expected to take an *active* role in laboratory**, regardless of your background or level of skill. That means:

- asking questions
- answering questions asked by others
- trying problems that you find difficult
- helping others with problems that they find difficult

3.2.1 Lab 1 (Friday)

In Lab 1, you will work in groups to complete problems and prepare for the weekly quiz. During Lab 1, you will **turn in your problem set**, and **take the quiz** on the current week's material. You will be assigned to a lab group by your GSI.

3.2.2 Lab 2 (Monday)

In Lab 2, you will have the chance to evaluate your mistakes on quizzes and further improve your understanding of the assigned problems, working with your peers and your GSI. You can retake quizzes you have not yet Completed during Lab 2.

3.3 Problem Sets

Every week, you must complete a set of problems, to help you understand the material and to prepare for the quizzes. The problems will be in three groups:

A Group These are intended to be *diagnostic* problems. If you can't answer them quickly and easily, then you missed something important in lecture or the reading. You should revisit the material until you can complete these problems almost automatically.

B Group These are problems intended to develop your *mastery* of the material. You will be expected to complete problems at (roughly) this level of difficulty on the quizzes.

C Group These are intended to get you to *reflect* further on the material, from a new perspective. These problems will be more difficult, but thinking about them will be useful for understanding the other problems, and for preparing for more advanced courses.

The problems will be made available at the beginning of the week. You should look at them before lecture, and start working on them as soon as they are made available. You will turn in your solutions to the problems during Lab 1.

3.4 Academic honesty

You are encouraged to work with your Lab group members to prepare your answers on the problem sets. But you must write up your answers on your own, and **you should *never* directly copy another student's work**. (Group work is an *aid* to individual understanding, not a replacement for it!) On quizzes, you must complete all problems on your own, without help from others.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your work in this course accords with the University's standards for academic honesty. Students found to be cheating or misrepresenting their work will be reported to the Center for Student Conduct and may fail the course, at the determination of the instructor. For further information on academic misconduct and how to avoid it, see: http://sa.berkeley.edu/conduct/integrity/definition

4 Schedule

4.1 Unit 1: Basic concepts and Truth-Functional Logic

	Topic	*Chapters*
2017-05-22 Mon	*Lab organizational meeting*	
	Basic logical concepts	1–3
2017-05-23 Tue	Sentences, arguments, and truth values	
	Validity and necessary truth	
	Syntax and semantics of truth-functional logic	4–10
	Atomic sentences and truth-functional connectives	
	Valuations and constructing truth tables	
2017-05-22 Mon	*Academic Holiday (Memorial Day); no lab*	
2017-05-30 Tue	Symbolising English arguments in truth-functional logic	
	Validity and proofs in truth-functional logic	11–19
	Tautologies, consistency, entailment, equivalence	
	Checking validity with truth tables	
2017-06-06 Tue	Natural deduction for truth-functional logic	
	Derived rules for truth-functional logic	

4.2 Unit 2: First-Order Logic

	Topic	*Chapters*
	Predicate structure in sentences and arguments	21–24
	Quantifiers, predicates, constants, and variables	
	Symbolising English arguments in first-order logic	
2017-06-13 Tue	Binary predicates, identity, and multiple generality	
	Syntax and semantics of first-order logic	26–30
	Terms, formulas, and sentences	
2017-06-20 Tue	Constructing interpretations and counter-interpretations	
	Validity and proofs in first-order logic	31–35
	Logical truth, consistency, entailment, equivalence	
2017-06-27 Tue	Natural deduction for first-order logic	
	Derived rules for first-order logic	
2017-06-29 Thu	Final quiz (given in lecture)	

Philosophy of Language

Richard Lawrence

Fall 2021

1 Course Description

How should we think about linguistic meaning? What do our words mean, and in virtue of what do they mean what they do? According to a traditional philosophical picture, words express ideas and refer to things in the world, and sentences are true or false depending on the facts about those things. In the twentieth century, philosophers began to question and criticize this picture of meaning, by asking such questions as: Are there different kinds of meaning? What is done by means of language, besides referring to things in the world and stating facts? How do speakers' intentions influence the meaning of their words? We will examine some of the more sophisticated views of language that emerged, focusing especially on the idea that in some sense, meaning lies in how language is used. But this view faces its own challenges. Which aspects of use are relevant to meaning? How do we know when words are used correctly? How do we know what others use words to refer to? These challenges will lead us to re-examine the traditional picture. Does the idea that we use language to speak *about* things in the world make any sense at all? If so, how can we make sense of it?

Course learning objectives

By the conclusion of the course, the student will:

- understand the traditional picture of language and be able to explain both why it was intuitively appealing and what its shortcomings were
- understand and be able to explain several philosophical views about the meaning of language and its relationship to use
- practice analysis, reconstruction, and evaluation of philosophical arguments from both historical and contemporary philosophical literature

Contact information

	Instructor	**GSI**
	Richard Lawrence	TBD
	richard.lawrence@berkeley.edu	
Office:	301 Moses Hall	
Office hours:	Thursdays, 1PM–3PM	

Course meeting times

	Day	**Time**	**Location**
Lecture:	Tuesday	10:30AM-12PM	204 Wheeler
	Thursday	10:30AM-12PM	204 Wheeler
Discussion:	Friday	TBD	TBD

2 Course Requirements

	Due date	Length	Weight in final grade
Participation and study questions	Weekly	1 page	25%
Essay 1	*Thursday, September 28*	5–6 pages	25%
Essay 2	*Thursday, November 8*	5–6 pages	25%
Final examination		2 hours	25%

2.1 Study questions

A few study questions will be provided about the reading each week. Their purpose is to help you review and practice articulating the important ideas and arguments from the week's reading. You should answer these questions in writing, totaling approximately one page, and turn in your answers at the beginning of the following week.

2.2 Essays

You will write two essays in this course. You generally have two tasks to complete in the essays: first, to reconstruct one or more philosophical arguments from the texts we have read; and second, to present your own philosophical argument in response, saying why the author's arguments are correct or incorrect, whether you agree with their conclusions, and why. Your analysis of arguments in the readings, the structure of your own argument, and correct spelling, grammar, and citations are all important.

2.3 Final examination

There will be a final examination in this course. The exam will cover material from the entire course, and will include both short-answer questions and a longer essay. A good way to prepare for the exam is to review your answers to the study questions provided throughout the course.

2.4 Attendance and participation

Attendance and active participation is required in lecture and discussion. The lectures will focus on explaining the important ideas in the texts and relating them to the themes of the course, and will leave plenty of time for discussion. To prepare for lecture, you should read the assigned material, and make notes to yourself about the important points in the reading and any questions you have. You will get the most out of the course if you read each assigned reading twice, once before the lecture, and once after, as you prepare your responses to the study questions.

Participating in discussion does not simply mean sharing a thought once per class. Rather, you are expected to:

- be an active listener
- ask clarificatory questions when you do not understand something
- answer questions posed by your classmates and instructors
- raise objections when you do not think that proposals made by others are true

2.5 Academic honesty

It is your responsibility to ensure that your work in this course accords with the University's standards for academic honesty. Students found to have plagiarized will be reported to the Center for Student Conduct and may fail the course, at the determination of the instructor. For further information on plagiarism and how to avoid it, see: `http://sa.berkeley.edu/conduct/integrity/definition`.

3 Readings and Schedule

The texts for the course are readings from contemporary philosophical literature. They will be made available electronically and as a course reader.

	The traditional picture
Week 1	Aristotle, *De Interpretatione* 1–8
	John Locke, "Of Words"
	John Stuart Mill, "Of Names"
Week 2	Gottlob Frege, *Begriffsschrift* (selections)
	Gottlob Frege, *The Foundations of Arithmetic* (selections)
	Gottlob Frege, "On Sense and Reference"
Week 3	Bertrand Russell, "Descriptions"
	P. F. Strawson, "On Referring"
	Speech acts and intentions
Week 4	H. P. Grice, "Meaning"
	J. L. Austin, "Performative Utterances"
Week 5	H. P. Grice, "Logic and Conversation"
	Elisabeth Camp, "Contextualism, Metaphor, and What is Said"
	Language as a rule-governed practice
Week 6	Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (selections)
Week 7	Wilfrid Sellars, "Some Reflections on Language Games"
	Lewis Carroll, "What the Tortoise said to Achilles"
Week 8	Saul Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* (selections)
	Hannah Ginsborg, "Primitive Normativity and Skepticism about Rules"
	A. N. Prior, "The Runabout Inference-Ticket"
	Indeterminacy and the new theory of reference
Week 9	W. O. Quine, *Word and Object* (selections)
	W. O. Quine, "Ontological Relativity"
Week 10	Hilary Putnam, "Meaning and Reference"
	Saul Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (selections)
Week 11	Ruth Barcan Marcus, "Modalities and Intensional Languages" (selections)
	David Kaplan, "Demonstratives" (selections)
	Interpretation, intensionality, and truth
Week 12	John Perry, "The Problem of the Essential Indexical"
	Elizabeth Anscombe, "The First Person"
Week 13	Daniel Dennett, *The Intentional Stance* (selections)
	Donald Davidson, "On Saying That"
Week 14	Donald Davidson, "Radical Interpretation"
	Donald Davidson, "Belief and the Basis of Meaning"