

Theories of Truth

University of Houston, Fall 2024
ILAS 2350-01 (15006) Knowledge and Methods

Instructor: Dr. Luca Oliva
Email: loliva@uh.edu
Teaching Fellow: Dr. Robert Tierney
Email: rbtierne@uh.edu

Course Description

The course surveys the cognitive methods pertaining to our understanding of diverse disciplines (including natural sciences, mathematics, philosophical logic, social sciences, cultural studies, and the arts). It aims to raise students' awareness of the distinctive research methods of the diverse disciplines associated with their chosen majors and minors.

The course will focus on theories of truth in Fall 2024. Its central topics are the following.

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| 1. Intensionalism and Extensionalism | 7. Phenomenological Evidence (Heidegger) |
| 2. Implication and Equivalence | 8. Tarski's Semantic Theory of Truth |
| 3. Necessity and Contingency | 9. Theory of Meaning (Davidson-Dummett) |
| 4. Coherentism and Pragmatism | 10. The Liar Paradox |
| 5. Correlation and Congruence | 11. Deflationary Theories (Strawson, Horwich, Ramsey, Williams) |
| 6. Fundamentalism and Justification | |

Time and Place

Weekly lectures occur on Tuesdays (11-12:30 pm) in Teaching Unit 2 building (TU2), room 240. Relevant information and materials (including syllabus, readings, and submission links) are available on *Canvas*. The teaching fellow (Dr. Tierney) weekly organizes virtual or in-person office hours (by appointment) to clarify the class subjects. On Thursday, the class consists of an asynchronous assignment (see below).

Requirements and Assessments

The course consists of understanding and writing about the assigned readings. Each lecture pertains to some readings, which students should complete before class as lectures presuppose familiarity. Readings are complex and require close study. Also, lectures can introduce material not included in the readings, so attending every lecture is crucial if you want to do well. Check the class's schedule regularly since the readings can change a week before class. Below is the breakdown of your final grade.

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| 30% | <i>Attendance and Participation.</i> Students must be on time for class (doctoral notes are required for excused absences). |
| 10% | <i>Weekly Class Reviews.</i> On Thursday, students must submit a brief paper (around 700 words) on the arguments discussed in Tuesday's class. Links for submissions are available on <i>Canvas</i> . |
| 60% | <i>Two Papers</i> (2000 words each). The teaching assistant will suggest modifications for resubmission if needed. Late submissions are accepted within one week but penalized. Detailed guidelines are available on <i>Canvas</i> . |

Writing and Policies

In writing your papers, you can rely on the assistance of the teaching fellow (Dr. Tierney). He organizes weekly office hours (by appointment) to clarify the class subjects. In addition, the UH Writing Center can provide further help with your writing. Whether you need support with any part of your paper or check your final draft, the UH Writing Center can complement the class assistance with additional aid. To learn more about one-on-one consultations or to book an appointment, visit the [Writing-Center-Webpage](#). Here is the link for CLASS's students: [UH-Writing-Center](#).

Students must comply with the university policies about ethics and academic honesty. See the following links and read the documents thoroughly: [Student-Conduct-Policy](#) and [Academic-Honesty](#). For counseling and psychological services, visit [CAPS](#). Requests for special accommodations are available here: [Adjustments/Auxiliary-Aids](#). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the University of Houston has issued extraordinary policies listed at the end of the syllabus. Finally, the use of any ChatGTP-like software is forbidden.

Schedule

Aug 20	Class Introduction
Aug 27	Extensionality-Intensionality, Necessity (Kirkham, pp. 1-31)
Sep 3	Justification, Truth Bearers (Kirkham, pp. 41-73)
Sep 10	Non-Realist Theories (Kirkham, pp. 73-104)
Sep 17	The Correspondence Theory (Kirkham, pp. 119-24; Russell)
Feb 24	Phenomenological Variations over Correspondence (Brentano, Heidegger)
Oct 1	The Semantic Theory (Kirkham, pp. 141-73)
Oct 3	First Paper Due (11:59 pm)
Oct 8	Foundationalism (Kirkham, pp. 211-21)
Oct 15	Davidson (Kirkham, pp. 223-48)
Oct 22	Dummett (Kirkham, pp. 248-69)
Oct 29	The Liar Paradox (Kirkham, pp. 271-82)
Nov 5	Kripke's Theory (Kirkham, pp. 282-305)
Nov 12	Strawson (Kirkham, pp. 307-17)
Nov 19	Ramsey's Redundancy and Horwich's Deflationism (Kirkham, pp. 317-49)
Dec 2	Second Paper Due (11:59 pm)

Bibliography

Richard L. Kirkham, *Theories of Truth*. MIT 1992.
Bertrand Russell, "Truth and Falsehood." In *The Problems of Philosophy*. Cambridge 1912: 69-76.

Grading

Canvas uses turn-it-in software and programs like ChatGPT to check similarities. In both cases, the paper will be considered plagiarism and penalized accordingly.

Final Grades	Paper Grades
95-9 = A	A = 30
90-4 = A-	A- = 27
85-9 = B+	B+ = 24
80-4 = B	B = 21
75-9 = B-	B- = 18
70-4 = C+	C+ = 15
65-9 = C	C = 12
60-4 = C-	C- = 9
55-9 = D	D = 6
0-54 = F	D- or F = 0