

PHL 214/414 Logical Methods in Philosophy: Nonclassical Logic
Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30-1:45pm
Harkness 210

Professor Ney
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Office Hours: Tuesdays 10:00am - noon

The goal of this course is to provide students with the foundation required to understand the logics and logical concepts they might find in the philosophical literature. We will study several logics that build on and several that reject classical propositional logic including several versions of modal logic, conditional logic, many-valued logics, and paraconsistent logic. We will discuss several meta-logical issues of general philosophical importance such as the meaning of validity, the correct understanding of the conditional, and the status of the law of non-contradiction. We will also engage with several philosophical issues that arise as a result of the logics we consider such as the metaphysics of modality, semantic vagueness, and the paradox of the liar.

This course presupposes an understanding of classical propositional logic that one would have acquired in PHL 110: Introductory Logic or its equivalent.

Text:

There is one required book for this course available at the bookstore:
Graham Priest, *An Introduction to Non-Classical Logic*, 2nd Edition. Cambridge, 2008.

All other readings will be found on Blackboard.

Grading:

Assessment in this course will be on the basis of weekly problem sets, written assignments, and three exams. Attendance is mandatory.

All students in the course will be allowed the option of giving a presentation in lieu of taking the final exam, subject to approval of a presentation proposal prior to the Thanksgiving recess.

I. Problem Sets

Students are responsible to submit, over the course of the semester, six problem sets. Under no circumstances will these be accepted late. They should be turned in to Professor Ney's box (next to her office door) any time before class on the Tuesdays they are due, or in class that day. To receive full credit on these, students will need to make a genuine attempt to answer correctly each problem of the assignment. Otherwise, no credit will be given for the problem set. Students are welcome to come by Professor

Ney's office if difficulties arise during completion of the assignments. Please note that she holds office hours where she will be available for help Tuesday mornings from 10am-noon. Satisfactory completion of these problem sets will be worth 20% of your final grade.

II. Weekly Assignments

Students are responsible to submit, over the course of the semester, two written discussion pieces of approximately 2 pages each (double spaced) on assigned questions. Assignments will be graded on a satisfactory/no credit basis. These will be turned in electronically via Blackboard by Tuesday at noon, and will under no circumstances be submitted late. Satisfactory completion of these written assignments will be worth 20% of your final grade.

III. Exams

A first examination will be held in class on Tuesday, October 20. This will cover the materials in the readings from the first half of the course. The second exam will be held in class on Thursday, December 10 and will cover material from the second half of the course. There will also be a final examination (offered Thursday, December 17 at 7:15pm) covering material from the entire course. Students who would prefer not to take this final should consult the directions for presentations below. Each exam will be worth 20% of your final grade.

IV. Presentation

All students have the option of replacing their final examination with a short (20-30 minute) presentation on a topic we have covered in the course. Presentations will involve explanation of the issue and the views of earlier logicians on the topic, as well as a critical evaluation of the debate by the student.

If a student would like to give a presentation, he or she should select a topic and some additional reading to complete beyond what was required during the course. Presentations will likely build on an earlier discussion from a weekly written assignment. To complete a presentation, the student will be required to prepare a short (one-page) proposal and come meet with the professor for approval of the presentation proposal prior to the Thanksgiving recess. Only those students whose presentation proposals are accepted will then be assigned a time to give the presentation.

Topics and Assigned Readings [modified 10/8/09]:

Sept. 1	Priest Ch. 1	3	Priest Ch. 1
8	\supset reading (HW1 due)	10	\supset reading
15	Priest Ch. 2 (Weekly 1 due)	17	Priest Ch. 2
22	Possible worlds reading (HW2 due)	24	Possible worlds reading
29	Priest Ch. 3 (Weekly 2 due)	Oct. 1	Priest Ch. 3
Oct. 6	Priest Ch. 4 (HW3 due)	8	Priest Ch. 4
13	Explosion reading (HW4 due)	15	Priest Ch. 5
20	Exam #1 Chapters 1-4	22	no class
27	Priest Ch. 5	29	Priest Ch. 7
Nov. 3	Priest Ch. 7 (HW 5 due)	5	Many-valued logic reading
10	Many-valued logic reading	12	Priest Ch. 8
17	Priest Ch. 8 (Weekly 3 due)	19	Priest Ch. 8
24	Priest Ch. 9 (HW 6 due)	26	Thanksgiving break
Dec. 1	Priest Ch. 9 (HW 7 due)	3	Paraconsistency reading
8	Paraconsistency reading	10	Exam #2 Chapters 5, 7-9

Readings on Blackboard:

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Required:

- C.I. Lewis and C.H. Langford, excerpt from *Symbolic Logic*, pp. 86-89
- H.P. Grice, "Logic and Conversation"

Recommended:

- Dorothy Edgington, "Do Conditionals have Truth-Conditions?"

Possible Worlds reading

Required:

- Gideon Rosen, "Modal Fictionalism"

Recommended:

- David Lewis, excerpt from *On the Plurality of Worlds*, pp.1-20
- Alvin Plantinga, excerpt from *The Nature of Necessity*, pp. 44-49.

Explosion reading

Required:

- Graham Priest, “Sylvan’s Box”

Recommended:

- Graham Priest and Richard Routley, “The Philosophical Significance and Inevitability of Paraconsistency”

Conditionals reading

Recommended:

- Robert Stalnaker, “A Theory of Conditionals”
- Brian Weatherson, Section 3 of his *Stanford Encyclopedia* entry on David Lewis

Many-valued logic reading

Required:

- Michael Tye, “Sorites Paradoxes and the Semantics of Vagueness”

Recommended:

- Timothy Williamson, excerpt from *Vagueness*, pp. 185-198

Paraconsistency reading

Required:

- J.C. Beall, “Introduction: At the Intersection of Truth and Falsity”

Recommended:

- Graham Priest, “What’s So Bad about Contradictions?”