

History of Analytic Philosophy (Upper Division)

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Tu Th 12:30-2

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Course Description:

This course will be a survey of the beginnings of analytic philosophy, one of the dominant contemporary philosophical schools. There never was any single tenet in common to all of analytic philosophy, so the class will not be unified by any theme, or ideology. The purpose of this class is to understand the development of analytic philosophy, and to see what made it what it has become today. Together, we will think about, and you will write about, the sources of many of its defining problems, as well as its most instructive failures. We will begin at the end of the 19th century, and end around the middle of the 20th, which marks the demise of what was at the time the most influential movement within analytic philosophy, logical positivism. The main themes will belong to metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of language, and philosophy of mathematics.

The class will be spent discussing classic texts within this tradition. I will assign no secondary readings, though those in need would do well to consult any relevant articles from the excellent Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, and, if you end up interested in a particular topic, I would be more than happy to point you in the direction of more texts. Some basic familiarity with logic and with modern philosophy will be an asset, though neither will be required.

Overview:

We will cover five major topics in this course:

- 20th Century Common Sense Philosophy and Its Critics
- Frege and Russell: Philosophy of Language
- Logicism
- Logical Positivism
- The Death of Logical Positivism

Course Requirements:

Students are expected to regularly attend lectures and sections. There will be four essay assignments for this course, worth 20%, 20%, 25%, and 30%, respectively. Essay assignments will be due on the following dates:

1st Essay: 9/20, at 5:00pm.

2nd Essay: 10/6, at 5:00pm.

3rd Essay: 11/8, at 5:00pm.

4th Essay: 12/13, at 5:00pm (this is a take-home exam.)

Late papers will be accepted up to one week after the due date and will be marked down 1/3 of a grade point (e.g. from a B+ to a B) for each 24 hour-period of lateness. Section participation is worth 5% of the full grade and can make a real difference in borderline cases.

Texts:

- The required readings have been collected in a packet that can be bought at the bookstore.

Schedule of Readings:

The schedule is subject to change. Revisions will be announced in class and posted on the course website.

I. 20th Century Common Sense Philosophy and Its Critics

Week 1	8/23	Introduction – No Reading
	8/25	Ayer: Selections from <i>Language, Truth and Logic</i> – Ch. 1
Week 2	8/30	Moore: “A Defense of Common Sense”
	9/1	Selections from <i>Some Main Problems of Philosophy</i> – Ch. 5
Week 3	9/6	Selections from <i>Some Main Problems of Philosophy</i> – Ch. 6
	9/8	Moore: “Proof of An External World”
Week 4	9/13	Moore: “Proof of An External World” (ctd.)
	9/15	Austin: Selections from <i>Sense and Sensibilia</i> – Chs. 1–3
Week 5	9/20	Austin: Selections from <i>Sense and Sensibilia</i> – Chs. 5, 9, 10

II. Frege and Russell: Philosophy of Language

	9/22	Frege: “On Sense and Nominatum”
Week 6	9/27	Frege: “The Thought”
	9/29	Russell: “On Denoting”
Week 7	10/4	Russell: “On Denoting”
	10/6	Russell: “Knowledge by Acquaintance, and Knowledge by Description”

III. Logicism

Week 8	10/11	Frege: Selections from <i>The Foundations of Arithmetic</i> – Introduction, §§1–4, 7–10, 23–25.
	10/13	Frege: Selections from <i>The Foundations of Arithmetic</i> – §§55–69
Week 9	10/18	Frege: Selections from <i>The Foundations of Arithmetic</i> – §§70–83
	10/20	Hempel: “On the Nature of Mathematical Truth”

IV. Logical Positivism

Week 10	10/25	Wittgenstein: Selections from <i>Tractatus</i> – §1–§3.5
	10/27	Wittgenstein: Selections from <i>Tractatus</i> – §4–§5.02, §5.473–§5.476, §6.1–§7
Week 11	11/1	Stevenson: “Emotive Meaning of Ethical Terms”
	11/3	Neurath: “Protocol Sentences”
Week 12	11/8	Schlick: “The Foundations of Knowledge”
	11/10	Hempel: “The Empiricist Criterion of Meaning”
Week 13	11/15	Carnap: “Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology”

V. The Death of Logical Positivism

	11/17	Quine: “Truth by Convention”
Week 14	11/22	Quine: “Two Dogmas of Empiricism”
	11/24	No class – Thanksgiving recess
Week 15	11/29	Quine: “On What There Is”
	12/1	Concluding Class (No reading).