



Department of Philosophy

PHIL 3130

“Contemporary British and American Philosophy”

Fall 2005

MWF 11:30–12:20, MacKinnon 228

COURSE OUTLINE

Please read this outline carefully and retain it for future reference.

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Office hours: Monday and Friday 3:30–4:30, or by appointment.

Course prerequisites: 1.50 credits in philosophy.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is an examination of some significant trends and topics in twentieth-century ‘Anglo-American’ philosophical thought, designed as a fairly general introduction to this period of philosophical activity but with a focus on analytic philosophy. We will look at the development of logical atomism and logical positivism in the early part of the century, the mid-century emphasis on linguistic analysis (including so-called “ordinary language” philosophy), and the post-positivistic thought of Sellars and Quine. Themes we will encounter include the relations between language and the world, language and thought, and philosophy and science.

Our primary objectives for the course are to:

- explore some of the main recurring themes of this period of philosophical thought, and to see how later ideas emerged out of, and in reaction, to earlier ones;
- understand and critically evaluate some of the principal theses advanced by important analytic philosophers; and to
- develop skills in reading and writing about complex and abstract ideas.

Ultimately, we hope to acquire a solid foundation for understanding some main currents of late twentieth century thought and, in particular, philosophical research as it is practised by the majority of English-speaking philosophers today.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- A.J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic* (second edition, 1946)
- Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921, trans. Pears and McGuinness 1961)
- J.L. Austin, *Sense and Sensibilia* (1962)
- Wilfrid Sellars, *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind* (1956)
- W.V. Quine, *From Stimulus to Science* (1995)

It is (or should be) impossible to do well in this class without carefully reading and re-reading these short books, and to do this *it will be necessary to own copies*. (You can legitimately save yourself a bit of money by photocopying “Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind” from the journal where it was first published: *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, Vol. 1, 1956. This journal issue is available on reserve at the library. An e-text version is also available on the course web site.)

EVALUATION:

The evaluation for this course will consist in two essays (the first worth 32% of the final grade and the second 36%) and a final exam (worth 32% of the grade). You do not need to pass all of the assignments in order to pass the course, but you do need to sit the final exam.

A: Two Essays.

- The first essay is due in-class on Monday, **October 24th**. The second essay is due in-class on the last day of lectures, Friday **December 2nd**.
- For each paper I'll give you a choice of topics. You may write on a different topic, of your choice, *but only in consultation with me*: that is, you should come to see me with a topic in mind—or preferably sketched out on paper—and get my approval for it. Papers written on an unapproved subject will be considered ‘off-topic’ and graded accordingly.
- Each essay should be between 2,500 and 4,000 words in length, or (if you prefer) eight to fourteen double-spaced pages. However this is only a guideline: the real moral is that papers much shorter than this are likely to be inadequate, papers much longer need to be carefully checked for lack of concision. In grading the essays, I will take into consideration your ability to use correctly and effectively the language appropriate to the assignment: in particular, you should strive to write grammatically, accurately, clearly, precisely and concisely. More detailed evaluation criteria and advice will be provided with the essay topics.
- Please note that essays cannot be submitted or returned via the department administrative office or through the campus mail system. Papers can be submitted by e-mail only in an emergency.
- I invite students to show me drafts of their essays: I try and will comment on, and discuss with you, successive drafts until two days before the paper deadline. Assistance with writing essays is also available from the Learning Commons (Library, 1st floor) and from Writing Services (<http://www.learningcommons.uoguelph.ca/writing/>).

B: Final Exam.

- This will be held on Wednesday, **December 7th**, in a location to be announced (probably our regular classroom). During the exam you will have to answer four short-essay questions from a

choice of eight. Each of these essays will receive a letter grade, and each will be weighted at 8% of the final grade.

- At the back of this outline is a list of twenty questions. None of these questions will appear on the exam; however, if you can answer all of these questions (in sufficient detail) you should be able to answer any question that may appear on the exam.
- The exam will not be open book, but you can bring a 'cheat sheet.' On *one side* of a standard sheet of 8½"×11" paper you can write anything at all that you think might help you, and you can refer to that sheet (but nothing else) during the exam.

The essays and exam will be graded according to standards described in Section VIII of the Undergraduate Calendar. Procedures for grade reassessment and information on Academic Consideration can be found in the same section.

E-MAIL COMMUNICATION:

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the university and its students.

WHEN YOU CANNOT MEET A COURSE REQUIREMENT:

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor in writing, with your name, ID number, and e-mail contact. Where possible, this should be done in advance of the missed work or event, but otherwise, just as soon as possible after the due date, and certainly no longer than one week later. Note: if appropriate documentation of your inability to meet that in-course requirement is necessary, the course instructor, or delegate, will request it of you. Such documentation will rarely be required for course components representing less than 10% of the course grade. Such documentation will be required, however, for Academic Consideration for missed end-of-term work and/or missed final examinations. See the undergraduate calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration. (http://www.uoguelph.ca/undergrad_calendar/c08/c08-ac.shtml). Also see the BA Counselling Office website (www.uoguelph.ca/baco).

DROP DATE:

The last date to drop one-semester Fall 2005 courses, without academic penalty, is Monday, November 7th, 2005. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the Undergraduate Calendar (http://www.uoguelph.ca/undergrad_calendar/c08/c08_drop.shtml).

COPIES OF OUT-OF-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS:

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and enjoins all members of the University community—faculty, staff, and students—to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. The University of Guelph takes a serious view of academic misconduct, and it is your responsibility as a student to be aware of and to abide by the University's policy. Included in the definition of academic misconduct are such activities as cheating on examinations, plagiarism, misrepresentation, and submitting the same material in two different courses without written permission from the relevant instructors. To better understand your responsibilities, read the Undergraduate Calendar (http://www.uoguelph.ca/undergrad_calendar/c01/index.shtml) for a statement of Students' Academic Responsibilities; also read the full Academic Misconduct Policy (http://www.uoguelph.ca/undergrad_calendar/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml). You are also advised to make use of the resources available through the Learning Commons (<http://www.learningcommons.uoguelph.ca/>) and to discuss any questions you may have with your course instructor, TA, or academic counsellor.

Instructors have the right to use software to aid in the detection of plagiarism or copying and to examine students orally on submitted work. For students found guilty of academic misconduct, serious penalties, up to and including suspension or expulsion, can be imposed. Hurried or careless submission of work does not exonerate students of responsibility for ensuring the academic integrity of their work. Similarly, students who find themselves unable to meet course requirements by the deadlines or criteria expected because of medical, psychological or compassionate circumstances should review the university's regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration in the calendar (http://www.uoguelph.ca/undergrad_calendar/c08/c08-ac.shtml) and discuss their situation with the instructor and/or the program counsellor or other academic counsellor as appropriate.

STUDENTS REQUIRING ADDITIONAL SUPPORT:

Resources are available to you if you require additional support in the course (e.g. if you have a learning disability or are dealing with other issues that are impacting on your ability to meet the course requirements). I encourage you to come and discuss this with me, and to contact the appropriate university resource. The Centre for Students with Disabilities (which includes learning disabilities) is on Level 3 of the University Centre (<http://www.uoguelph.ca/csrc/csd/>), as is Counselling Services (<http://www.uoguelph.ca/csrc/counsel/>).

OTHER INFORMATION:

The best resource for general academic counselling (e.g. about degree requirements, or for approval to add/drop a course) is your program counsellor: these are listed at http://www.uoguelph.ca/uaic/students_faculty.shtml. The Philosophy Department's academic advisor for undergraduates is currently Prof. Peter Eardley, extension 53211, peardley@uoguelph.ca.

PROVISIONAL CLASS SCHEDULE, PHIL 3130, FALL 2005

MONDAY	WEDNESDAY	FRIDAY
Sept. 12 th : Introductory Stuff	Sept. 14 th : Background	Sept. 16 th : Logical Positivism <i>Ayer, Chaps. 1–2</i>
Sept. 19 th : Logical Positivism <i>Ayer, Chaps. 3–5</i>	Sept. 21 st : Logical Positivism <i>Ayer, Chaps. 6–8</i>	Sept. 23 rd : Logical Positivism
Sept. 26 th : Logical Positivism	Sept. 28 th : Logical Atomism <i>Wittgenstein's Tractatus</i>	Sept. 30 th : Logical Atomism
Oct. 3 rd : Logical Atomism	Oct. 5 th : Logical Atomism	Oct. 7 th : Logical Atomism
Oct. 10 th : NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)	Oct. 12 th : Logical Atomism	Oct. 14 th : Logical Atomism
Oct. 17 th : Logical Atomism	Oct. 19 th : Ordinary Language <i>Austin, Lectures I–IV</i>	Oct. 21 st : Ordinary Language <i>Austin, Lectures V–VIII</i>
Oct. 24 th : Ordinary Language <i>Austin, Lectures IX–XI</i> FIRST ESSAY DUE	Oct. 26 th : Ordinary Language	Oct. 28 th : Ordinary Language
Oct. 31 st : Sellars <i>Sellars, Sections I–IV</i>	Nov. 2 nd : Sellars <i>Sellars, Sections V–IX</i>	Nov. 4 th : Sellars <i>Sellars, Sections X–XVI</i>
Nov. 7 th : Sellars	Nov. 9 th : Sellars	Nov. 11 th : Sellars
Nov. 14 th : Sellars	Nov. 16 th : Quine <i>Quine, Lectures I–III</i>	Nov. 18 th : Quine <i>Quine, Lectures IV–VI</i>
Nov. 21 st : Quine <i>Quine, Lectures VII–VIII</i>	Nov. 23 rd : Quine	Nov. 25 th : Quine
Nov. 28 th : Quine	Nov. 30 th : Quine	Dec. 2 nd : Last Class! FINAL ESSAY DUE

NOTE: Readings are to be done *by the class date indicated*.

Date of Final Exam: Wednesday, December 7th, 7:00–9:00PM.

TWENTY QUESTIONS

- 1) What is A.J. Ayer's theory of meaning? What does 'verifiable' mean, for Ayer? What intuitions lie behind this account of meaning, and how compelling are they?
- 2) What, according to Ayer, is the nature of philosophical analysis? What is the role of philosophy, in his view, and how (if at all) does it differ from traditional notions of philosophy? How plausible is Ayer's stance on the nature of philosophy—what *reasons* does he have for it?
- 3) What is Ayer's view of a priori and a posteriori truth (or probability)? How satisfactory is it—for example, how well does it fit with our views of mathematics and natural science?
- 4) What is Ayer's critique of ethics and theology—what *arguments* does he have for this critique, and what is the *difference* between his views on ethics and theology? What is emotivism?
- 5) What is the 'picture' theory of meaning developed in Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*? What intuitions lie behind this account of meaning, and how compelling are they?
- 6) What is Wittgenstein's logical atomism? What implications does this theory have for the nature and limits of philosophy, and for the relationship between thought, language and the world?
- 7) Why and how does Wittgenstein argue that all language is truth-functional? Is it?
- 8) What is Wittgenstein's distinction between *saying* and *showing* supposed to capture? Why can the nature of meaning—the relation between thought/language and the world—only be shown and not said, according to Wittgenstein? Why can the nature of logic only be shown and not said? What else might be showable but not sayable? Is Wittgenstein *right* about all of this?
- 9) What is the traditional debate between direct and indirect realist views of perception? What kind of 'solution' does J.L. Austin attempt to provide to this debate? How does he argue for this solution—is his solution a compelling one?
- 10) What are Austin's views on 'reality' and 'in corrigibility'? How plausible are they? Are they in conflict with—and if so should they *replace*—the traditional positions on these topics?
- 11) What kind of philosophical method—the so-called 'ordinary language' method—does Austin exemplify? What are its main features, and how attractive or productive are they?
- 12) What is the notion of the given embedded in sense-datum theory and empiricist foundationalism? How does Wilfrid Sellars attempt to debunk this notion as a myth—what arguments does he use? Is he successful in doing so?
- 13) What is Sellars' own account of perceptual experience (which he intends to replace the traditional empiricist picture)? How attractive is it, and how good are Sellars' arguments for it?
- 14) What is Sellars' account of the nature of thought (e.g. its normativity) and its relation to language and to the world? What is 'the logic of means'? How attractive is this picture?
- 15) What is Sellars' account of the 'descriptive content' (as opposed to the propositional content) of perceivings? How does he use the Myth of Jones to attempt to establish this view? Is he successful?
- 16) What is W.V. Quine's naturalism? How radical is it—what implications does it have for the nature of philosophy? Is it plausible?
- 17) What are Quine's views on truth and denotation? How are they connected to his views on logic and empirical science? What are the implications of these views for ontology? Is Quine right about all this?
- 18) What are Quine's views on meaning and the mental? How are they affected by his naturalism and ontological relativity? Are they attractive?

- 19) What is the relationship between philosophy, science, and common sense? Where does metaphysics fit into this picture?
- 20) What is the relationship between language, thought, and the world?

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Some suggested additional background reading.

1. Background to Twentieth Century Analytic Philosophy

John Passmore, *A Hundred Years of Philosophy* (Penguin 1966)

Avrum Stroll, *Twentieth Century Analytic Philosophy* (Columbia UP 2000)

Geoffrey Warnock, *English Philosophy Since 1900* (Oxford UP 1969)

A.J. Ayer, *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century* (Vintage 1982)

Thomas Baldwin, *Contemporary Philosophy: Philosophy in English since 1945* (Oxford UP 2001)

D.S. Clarke, *Philosophy's Second Revolution* (Open Court 1997)

Richard Rorty, *The Linguistic Turn* (Chicago UP 1992)

'ABSOLUTE IDEALISM'

F.H. Bradley, *Principles of Logic* (1883)

F.H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality* (1893)

Josiah Royce, *The World and the Individual* (1900)

Harold Joachim, *The Nature of Truth* (1906)

Bernard Bosanquet, *The Principle of Individuality and Value* (1912)

J.E. McTaggart, *The Nature of Existence* (1921, 1927)

'PRAGMATISM'

C.S. Peirce, "How To Make Our Ideas Clear" (1878)

William James, "The Will to Believe" (1895)

William James, *Pragmatism* (1907)

William James, *The Meaning of Truth* (1909)

Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will* (1910)

C.I. Lewis, *Mind and the World Order* (1929)

John Dewey, *Logic, The Theory of Enquiry* (1938)

'BRITISH EMPIRICISM'

Auguste Comte, *Course in Positivistic Philosophy* (1830–42)

John Stuart Mill, *System of Logic* (1843)

Franz Brentano, *Psychology From An Empirical Standpoint* (1874)

Alexius von Meinong, *Investigations Into the Theory of Objects and Psychology* (1904)

2. Logical Positivism

A.J. Ayer (ed.), *Logical Positivism* (Free Press 1959)

Sahotra Sarkar (ed.), *The Emergence of Logical Empiricism* (Garland 1996)

Sarkar, Carnap, Neurath (eds.), *Logical Positivism at its Peak* (Garland 1996)

Rudolf Carnap, *The Logical Structure of the World* (U of California Press 1986)

Rudolf Carnap, *Meaning and Necessity* (U of Chicago Press 1988)
 Rudolf Carnap, *Philosophy and Logical Syntax* (AMS Press 1979)
 Rudolf Carnap, "Testability and Meaning" *Philosophy of Science* 3.4 and 4.1 (1936–1937)
 Otto Neurath, *Foundations of the Social Sciences* (U of Chicago Press 1970)
 Moritz Schlick, *Philosophical Papers* (Kluwer 1980)
 Moritz Schlick, *General Theory of Knowledge* (Open Court 1992)
 Friedrich Waismann, *Philosophical Papers* (Kluwer 1977)
 P. Frank, *Modern Science and its Philosophy* (Harvard UP 1949)

Paul Schilpp (ed.), *The Philosophy of Rudolf Carnap* (Open Court 1963)
 Paul Schilpp (ed.), *The Philosophy of A.J. Ayer* (Open Court 1992)
 Oswald Hanfling, *Logical Positivism* (Columbia UP 1981)
 Oswald Hanfling, *Ayer* (Phoenix 1997)
 John Foster, *A.J. Ayer* (Routledge 1985)
 Michael Friedman, *Reconsidering Logical Positivism* (Cambridge UP 1999)

3. Logical Atomism

Bertrand Russell, "On Denoting," *Mind* (1905)
 Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy* (1912)
 Bertrand Russell, *Our Knowledge of the External World* (1914)
 Bertrand Russell, *Mysticism and Logic* (1917)
 Bertrand Russell, *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy* (1919)
 Bertrand Russell, *The Analysis of Matter* (1927)
 Bertrand Russell, *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism* (1985)

J.O. Urmson, *Philosophical Analysis* (Oxford UP 1956)
 R.M. Sainsbury, *Russell* (Routledge 1979)
 Wayne A. Patterson, *Russell's Philosophy of Logical Atomism* (Peter Lang 1993)
 Bernard Linsky, *Russell's Metaphysical Logic* (CSLI 1999)
 G.E.M. Anscombe, *An Introduction to Wittgenstein's Tractatus* (Hutchinson 1959)
 Anthony Kenny, *Wittgenstein* (Penguin 1973)
 Robert J. Fogelin, *Wittgenstein* (Routledge 1976)
 J.P. Griffin, *Wittgenstein's Logical Atomism* (Oxford UP 1964)
 Richard McDonough, *The Argument of the Tractatus* (SUNY Press 1986)
 H.O. Mounce, *Wittgenstein's Tractatus, An Introduction* (University of Chicago Press 1981)
 Max Black, *A Companion to Wittgenstein's Tractatus* (Cambridge UP 1964)
 David Pears, *The False Prison, Vol. 1* (Oxford UP 1987)
 Herbert Irving Hochberg, *Thought, Fact and Reference* (University of Minnesota Press 1978)
 P.M.S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein's Place in Twentieth-Century Analytic Philosophy* (Blackwell 1996)

4. Ordinary Language Philosophy

- G.E. Moore, *Selected Writings* (Routledge 1993)
 Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (Penguin 1949)
 Gilbert Ryle, *Collected Papers Vol. II* (Barnes and Noble 1971)
 H.P. Grice, *Studies in the Ways of Words* (Harvard UP 1989)
 J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things With Words* (Oxford UP 1962)
 J.L. Austin, *Philosophical Papers* (Oxford UP 1970)
 John Wisdom, *Other Minds* (Blackwell 1952)
 Norman Malcolm, *Memory and Mind* (Cornell UP 1977)
 Norman Malcolm, *Knowledge and Certainty* (Prentice-Hall 1964)
 V.C. Chappell (ed.), *Ordinary Language* (Dover 1964)

- Thomas Baldwin, *Thomas Moore* (Routledge 1992)
 Paul Schilpp (ed.), *The Philosophy of G.E. Moore* (Open Court 1942)
 William Lyons, *Gilbert Ryle* (Harvester 1980)
 Stephen Neale, "Paul Grice and the Philosophy of Language" (Linguistics and Philosophy 1992)
 Geoffrey Warnock, *J.L. Austin* (Routledge 1990)
 A.J. Ayer, "Has Austin Refuted the Sense-Datum Theory?" *Synthese* 17 (1967)

5. Sellars

- Wilfrid Sellars, *Science, Perception and Reality* (Routledge 1963)
 Wilfrid Sellars, *Science and Metaphysics* (Routledge 1967)
 Wilfrid Sellars, *Essays in Philosophy and Its History* (Reidel 1974)
- Devries and Triplett, *Knowledge, Mind and the Given: Reading Wilfrid Sellars's "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind"* (Hackett 2000)
- Robert Brandom, "Overcoming a Dualism of Concepts and Causes: The Basic Argument of 'Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind'," in *The Blackwell Guide to Metaphysics*, ed. Richard Gale (Blackwell 2002)
- C.F. Delaney et al. (eds.), *The Synoptic Vision: Essays on the Philosophy of Wilfrid Sellars* (Notre Dame UP 1977)
- H.-N. Castaneda (ed.), *Action, Knowledge, and Reality: Studies in Honor of Wilfrid Sellars* (Bobbs-Merrill 1975)
- J.C. Pitt (ed.), *The Philosophy of Wilfrid Sellars* (Reidel 1978)
- Johanna Seibt, *Properties and Processes: A Synoptic Study of Wilfrid Sellars' Nominalism* (Ridgeview 1990)
- Robert Brandom, *Making it Explicit* (Harvard UP 1994)
- John McDowell, *Mind and World* (Harvard UP 1996)

Michael Williams, *Groundless Belief* (Princeton UP 1999)

Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton UP 1979)

6. Quine

W.V.O. Quine, *From a Logical Point of View* (Harvard UP 1953)

W.V.O. Quine, *Word and Object* (MIT Press 1960)

W.V.O. Quine, *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays* (Columbia UP 1969)

W.V.O. Quine, *Pursuit of Truth* (Harvard UP 1992)

Christopher Hookway, *Quine* (Stanford UP 1988)

Roger Gibson, *The Philosophy of W.V. Quine* (University of South Florida Press 1982)

Barrett and Gibson (eds.), *Perspectives on Quine* (Blackwell 1993)

George D. Romanos, *Quine and Analytic Philosophy* (MIT Press 1983)

S. Okasha, "Holism About Meaning and Evidence: In Defence of W.V. Quine," *Erkenntnis* 52, 2000

Grice and Strawson, "In Defense of A Dogma," *Philosophical Review* 65, 1956

Richard Kirkham, *Theories of Truth* (MIT Press 1992)