

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Graduate Course Outline**

Philosophy 9653A: Proseminar

Fall Term 2025

Class Days and Hours: Wed 12:30 –
2:30 pm

Classroom: TBA

Website and Blog:

<https://robertstainton.wordpress.com/>

Instructor: Robert J. Stainton

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Office Hours: Tu 2:00-3:00 pm

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DESCRIPTION

A survey of foundational and highly influential texts in Analytic Philosophy. Emphasis this year will be on four sub-topics, namely *Language and Philosophical Logic*, *Epistemology*, *Metaphysics (including Metaethics)* and *Metaphilosophy*. A focal point, regardless of sub-topic, will be the tools and techniques highlighted in these texts.

TEXTS

L. Wittgenstein (1933-34). *Blue and Brown Books* (Required).

<https://www.wiley.com/en-us/The+Blue+and+Brown+Books%3A+Preliminary+Studies+for+the+'Philosophical+Investigation'-p-9780631146605>
\$37.95

S. Schwartz (2012). *A Brief History of Analytic Philosophy* (Recommended)

<https://www.wiley.com/en-ie/A+Brief+History+of+Analytic+Philosophy%3A+From+Russell+to+Rawls-p-9780470672082>
\$44.95.

OBJECTIVES

The twin objectives are honing of philosophical skills and enriching students' familiarity with some "touchstone" material in 20th Century Analytic philosophy. In terms of skills, the emphasis will be on: professional-level philosophical writing; close reading of notoriously challenging texts; methodological reflection; and respectful but incisive philosophical dialogue.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Six "Briefing Notes": 50%

- On the day they are discussed in class, students will submit 2-3 page (i.e., 750-1000 words) “reader responses” to selected writings, consisting of an outline of the central *argument*, along with the student’s comments and questions. (This is to be sharply contrasted with an outline of the *paper*, section-by-section.)
- Each Briefing Note is worth 10%, and all are obligatory. However, the lowest grade will be dropped

Short Term Paper: 35%

- Students will write a brief paper, the length and style of a conference paper (i.e., about 4000 words) on one of the topics addressed in the class.

Class Participation: 15%

COURSE READINGS

Gottlob Frege (1892), “On Sense and Reference”

Gottlob Frege (1918), “The Thought”

Bertrand Russell (1905), “On Denoting”

Bertrand Russell (1911), “Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description”

G.E. Moore (1925), “A Defense of Common Sense”

G.E. Moore (1939), “Proof of an External World”

Ludwig Wittgenstein (1933-34), *Blue and Brown Books*

Peter F. Strawson (1950), “On Referring”

J.L. Austin (1961), “Performative Utterances”

W.V.O. Quine (1948), “On What There Is”

Rudolf Carnap (1950), “Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology”

W.V.O. Quine (1951), “Two Dogmas of Empiricism”

H. Paul Grice and Peter F. Strawson (1956), “In Defense of a Dogma”

H. Paul Grice (1957), “Meaning”

H. Paul Grice (1975), “Logic and Conversation”

Wilfred Sellars (1962), “Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man”

Saul Kripke (1971), “Identity and Necessity”

Elizabeth Anscombe (1971), “The First Person”

Elizabeth Anscombe (1958), “Modern Moral Philosophy”

Philippa Foot (1972), “Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives”