

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

Philosophy 9653A: Proseminar

Fall 2022
Thursday 2:30-5:30
Stevenson 1145

Instructor: Robert DiSalle
Office Hours : Tuesday 12:30-2:30 (and by
appointment)
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DESCRIPTION

This seminar offers a general orientation to some of the ideas and debates that have shaped contemporary philosophy. We approach this by careful reading and serious discussion of some central texts in the modern analytic tradition. Emphasis will be placed on critical engagement with philosophical works through papers, seminar presentations, and open discussion. Rather than attempting a complete survey, the course will focus on some of the problems in epistemology, metaphysics, and philosophy of language that have broadly influenced the discipline. Authors to be studied will include Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein, Schlick, Stebbing, Carnap, Quine, Kripke, Putnam, as well as contemporary responses to their work.

TEXTS

All texts will be posted on the OWL site under “Resources.”

OBJECTIVES

To engage with central ideas in analytic philosophy through the study of seminal works in the tradition, along with class discussion; to write careful and clear expository and critical papers.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Reading of all assigned texts and regular participation in seminar discussions.
One seminar presentation (25%) on one of the assigned readings, accompanied by a written outline or slide presentation
One short paper (25%)
One term paper (50%)

COURSE READINGS

Frege, “Sense and reference”, Excerpts; (Background: Coffa, “Logicism”; Potter, “Analytic philosophy”)

Russell, “Knowledge by acquaintance,” Problems of Philosophy;

Moore, "Defence of common sense"

Wittgenstein, Tractatus; Anscombe, "Tractatus"

Schlick, "Positivism and realism"; Reichenbach, "Verifiability" (Background: Einstein, Relativity)

Stebbing, "Logical positivism and analysis"; Austin, "Sense and sensibility"

Carnap, "The character of philosophic problems"; Quine, "On what there is"

Carnap, "Empiricism, semantics, and ontology";

Quine, "Two dogmas", "Carnap and logical truth"; Carnap, "Reply to Quine" (Further reading: Haack, "Preliminaries")

Grice and Strawson, "Defence"; Maddy, "Naturalism" (Further reading: Dummett, "On Quine's indeterminacy thesis")

Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations excerpt; Anscombe, "Cambridge Philosophers"

Kripke, Naming and Necessity (excerpts); Putnam, "The meaning of meaning" (Further: Donnellan, "Kripke and Putnam on natural kind terms")

Dummett, "Realism"