

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2017-18

Philosophy 3040G: Origins of Analytic Philosophy

Winter Term 2018

M 10:30-12:30, W 10:30-11:30

UCC 54B

Instructor: Prof. Gillian Barker

WIRB 7158, M 3:00-4:00, Th 1:00-@:00

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Analytic philosophy has been the predominant philosophical movement of the last century, in the English-speaking world. Its central aim is to elucidate the structure of **thought**, and so it is centrally concerned with questions concerning **logic** and the nature of **representation**. Its methods reflect the presumption that understanding of thought as such (as opposed to the psychological process of thinking) is best achieved through a close analysis of **language** (either natural or formal). In its inception it was a self-consciously revolutionary movement, dedicated to the overthrow of philosophical traditions that it saw as engaged in groundless metaphysical speculation and philosophical mystification. This course will explore the origins of analytic philosophy in the first half of the twentieth century and its early evolution.

We begin with a historical overview of the philosophical views dominant in the early years of the 20th century which formed the background for the emergence of the analytic tradition. We will read seminal papers from logical positivists and other influential early figures in the analytic tradition, such as Frege, Moore, Russell, Ayer and the early Wittgenstein. We will then examine the ‘middle period’ work of Wittgenstein, who is a key transitional figure in the movement, and some works of ordinary language philosophers such as Austin, Ryle, and Grice. We will conclude with an exploration of the paradigm-changing work of Quine and Sellars, and a brief look at how some of the issues and approaches of early analytic philosophy are now in play in work by Dennett.

Among the philosophical issues we will discuss are:

- The meaning of “meaning: What is it that a word or a sentence means, and how does it do it?
- The nature of knowledge: What are the roles of experience, logic and language in the formation of ordinary belief, scientific knowledge, and moral and religious conviction?
- The issue of conceptual relativism: Are alternative but equally legitimate conceptual frameworks for the organization and interpretation of our experience possible?

TEXTS

Readings will be posted on OWL.

OBJECTIVES

This course has three main aims:

- To acquaint students at a moderately advanced level with the basic philosophical orientation, assumptions and methods of the philosophical movement that has come to be known as “analytic philosophy,” and with its historical trajectory.
- To give students training and practice in the basic skills of analytic philosophy, including following, analyzing and evaluating logically complex arguments, contributing to fruitful exploratory discussions and debates with their peers employing the concepts of analytic philosophy, and constructing clear and cogent arguments in the analytic idiom.
- To provide students with the opportunities and models that they need to begin to do some analytic philosophy themselves—to make sense of the large-scale relationships among philosophical ideas in the analytic tradition, to identify and weigh philosophical problems, and to formulate substantial original philosophical claims and defend them both orally and in writing.

REQUIREMENTS

The class format will consist of lecture and discussion. Discussion will be an important element of the course, so it is important that you stay on top of the reading and do some thinking about it before class. Course requirements include active participation, several short informal writing exercises, one short (6 page) paper, a longer (10 page) final paper, and a short-essay final exam. They are weighted as follows:

Participation.....	10%
Informal Writing.....	15%
Short Paper.....	20%
Exam.....	25%
Final Paper.....	30%

AUDIT

Students wishing to audit the course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first week of classes.

The Department of Philosophy Policies which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses is available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website at <http://www.uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html>. It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Students are directed to view the Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness (<https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>).

Policy on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.”

Statement on Use of Plagiarism Software

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).”

Additional Links

- Registrar Services (<http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>)
- Student Support Services (<http://westernusc.ca/services/>)