

# History of Analytic Philosophy Syllabus

## Spring 2016

### Course and Contact Information

**Instructor:** Dr. James Pearson  
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**Office:** Tillinghast Hall 325  
**Course Number:** PHIL 306 - 001  
**Class:** TR 11:00am-12:15pm, Moakley Center 309  
**Office Hours:** M 11:00am-12:00noon, W 12:45pm-1:45pm, or by appointment. Please email me in advance to set up a specific time.

### Course Description

Inspired by groundbreaking developments in symbolic logic, the analytic tradition rose to dominate Anglo-American philosophy in the twentieth century. Analytic philosophers took the “linguistic turn,” believing that philosophical problems could be understood and resolved by carefully attending to the logic of our language. This course will examine the origins of this tradition by closely reading primary texts from key figures, including Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell, G.E. Moore, Rudolf Carnap, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Gilbert Ryle, and Elizabeth Anscombe. We shall explore the diverse and important contributions made by these philosophers to such areas as epistemology, the philosophy of mathematics, the philosophy of science, and the philosophy of mind. You will develop an understanding of the methods, claims, attractions, and limitations of analytic philosophy, and be well positioned to participate in contemporary philosophical debates.

First, we shall examine Frege's answer to core epistemological problems in the philosophy of mathematics. How do we know what numbers are? Could we be mistaken about theorems that we seem to have proved? Others applied the new logic Frege developed to answer these questions to further philosophical issues: how do we know about the external world? How can we use language to express meaningful possibilities about the way the world might be to one another? What is the logical form of our statements about minds and actions? Is the construction of artificial “logically perfect” languages useful for addressing philosophical questions?

### Course Objectives

This 300-level writing-intensive philosophy course will afford you with the opportunity to refine your logical, written, oral, and informational literacy skills. By the end of this course you will be able to:

1. *Identify* different conceptions of philosophical analysis
2. *Summarize* key problems in 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophy
3. *Discuss* the viewpoints of major 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophers
4. *Question* the canon of 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophy
5. *Evaluate* the successes and failures of the analytic approach to philosophy
6. *Construct* interpretive arguments that bring out the salient features of historical figures

## **Course Requirements**

Your grade for this course will be calculated using a 100-point scale:

### **Short Papers – 30%**

There will be two short papers (six pages) for this class based upon topics that have arisen in both the readings and in our class discussions. Each is worth 15% of your grade. These papers are designed for you to develop your critical exegetical skills (see objectives 1, 2 and 3). Their length will also allow you to practice concise analytic writing in preparation for your term paper. Please complete these short papers in 12 point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with 1” margins.

### **Beyond the Canon Assignment – 15%**

Each of you will choose one analytic philosopher from the 20<sup>th</sup> century whom we shall not cover in our class to complete this assignment (see objective 4). You will read at least two pieces written by your chosen philosopher, and research their relationship to their contemporaries. You will prepare a 10-minute presentation on your philosopher, and write a short paper (three-four pages) about what you have learned. Please complete this short paper in 12 point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with 1” margins.

### **Take-home Midterm – 15%**

There will be a take-home midterm exam. This will be an opportunity for you to pause and take stock of the successes and failures of analytic philosophy (see objectives 5 and 6). I encourage you to discuss the questions on the exam with each other, but will expect you to carefully cite any ideas that such conversations generate. Please complete the midterm in 12 point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with 1” margins.

### **Participation – 15%**

Merely attending class will not earn you a participation grade. To participate is to arrive at class punctually and to regularly contribute to collegiate discussion. These experiences, in which you will have to clearly explain yourselves to each other, will be invaluable when you come to complete your written assignments. You are also encouraged to use the online discussion board, available through Blackboard, to talk about the readings and classroom discussions with other students. Individual posts will not be graded, but your contribution to the forum will be taken into account when determining this component of your final grade.

### **Term Paper – 25%**

Your term paper should be 14-15 pages, and is an opportunity to explore in detail a problem from the course that has particularly interested you (see objectives 5 and 6). You will be required to complete peer-editing assignments on drafts of the paper. Please complete your research paper in 12 point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with 1” margins.

## **How to do well in this class**

Come to class prepared. Being prepared means that you have completed the assigned reading, thought carefully about it, and have begun to formulate questions concerning the issues it raises. Participate actively in class; ask questions in our discussions, and respond to each other’s questions. I expect a high level of argumentative clarity in your papers, which means that,

in addition to carefully proofreading your work for spelling and grammar mistakes, you should anticipate, articulate and respond to objections that your reader might have to your view. If you have not written a philosophy paper before—or even if you have—I strongly encourage you to review the following guide: <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>.

Although you are always welcome to email me and/or to come by my office hours, consider posting any questions that you have about the course material to our Blackboard discussion board. Your classmates will almost certainly have similar questions, and may be able to help you out. Contributing to the discussion forum will also add points to your participation grade!

### **Plagiarism and Academic Integrity**

I expect you to adhere to the strictest standards of academic integrity. Any student who is academically dishonest (e.g., who cheats on an exam, or who turns in work that is not his/her own) will fail the course. If you are unsure about what constitutes cheating, see me before you turn in any work. You can find the Bridgewater State University policy on academic integrity here: <http://catalog.bridgew.edu/content.php?catoid=7&navoid=486>

### **Disability and Special Needs**

Students who require assistance due to disability or special needs should contact the university's Disability Resources Staff. They are located in the Academic Achievement Center in Maxwell Library. The university's statement of policy can be found at <http://www2.bridgew.edu/disability-resources>. Please do not hesitate to talk to me about accommodating you in any way.

### **Cell Phone and Laptop Policy**

The use of cell phones and laptops during class is strictly prohibited. If you do not comply with this policy, you will be asked to leave the class and be counted absent for the day.

### **Lateness and Attendance**

Attendance is mandatory. I know that there will be times that due to unforeseen circumstances, you cannot attend class (for medical, transportation, family or emergency reasons). Since I expect all of you, as adults, to take responsibility for your own class attendance, the precise reason for a particular absence does not concern me. You can miss three classes without it affecting your overall grade. After that, each unexcused absence lowers your final grade by 2 points. Perfect attendance will earn you a 2-point bonus. It is your responsibility to find out whether any assignments were given in any class that you miss.

Arriving late to class twice will count as one absence.

### **Required Course Materials**

Frege, Gottlob. Foundations of Arithmetic. [FA] Trans. J. L. Austin. 2nd Revised Ed. (Chicago, Northwestern UP), 1980

Martinich, Aloysius and E. David Sosa (Eds.) Analytic Philosophy: An Anthology. [AP] (Oxford, Blackwell), 2001.

Additional readings will be made available online through Blackboard. You are expected to print your own copy of each assigned paper and bring it with you to class.

## Class Reading Schedule

1. Thursday Jan 21 Course Introduction

### Unit 1: Gottlob Frege (1848-1925)

2. Tuesday Jan 26 READ: FA Introduction i-xi; Sections 1-4.

3. Thursday Jan 28 READ: FA Sections 5-17.

4. Tuesday Feb 2 READ: FA Sections 18-39.

5. Thursday Feb 4 READ: FA Sections 40-54.

**FIRST SHORT PAPER ASSIGNED**

6. Tuesday Feb 9 READ: FA Sections 55-69.

7. Thursday Feb 11 READ: FA Sections 70-109.

**FIRST SHORT PAPER DUE**

8. Tuesday Feb 16 READ: On Sense and Reference. AP, chapter 1.

9. Thursday Feb 18 READ: Thought. AP, chapter 2.

### Unit 2: Bertrand Russell (1872-1970)

10. Tuesday Feb 23 READ: On Denoting. AP, chapter 3.

11. Thursday Feb 25 READ: On the Relations of Universals and Particulars. AP, chapter 9.

12. Tuesday Mar 1 READ: Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description. AP, chapter 16.

### Unit 3: G.E. Moore (1873-1958)

13. Thursday Mar 3 READ: Four Forms of Skepticism. AP, chapter 14.

**TAKE-HOME MIDTERM ASSIGNED**

14. Monday Mar 7 – Friday Mar 11 – SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS

15. Tuesday Mar 15 READ: The Subject-matter of Ethics. AP, chapter 33.

16. Thursday Mar 17 READ: C.H. Langford The Notion of Analysis in Moore's Philosophy and G.E. Moore Reply to Langford. AP, chapters 38-39.

**TAKE-HOME MIDTERM DUE**

Unit 4: Rudolf Carnap (1891-1970)

17. Tuesday Mar 22 READ: Empiricism, Semantics, and Ontology. AP, chapter 41.

18. Thursday Mar 24 READ: Excerpt from Meaning and Necessity. Blackboard.

Unit 4: Gilbert Ryle (1900-1976)

19. Tuesday Mar 29 READ: Review of Meaning and Necessity. Blackboard.

20. Thursday Mar 31 READ: Excerpt from The Concept of Mind. Blackboard.

**SECOND SHORT PAPER ASSIGNED**

Unit 5: Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951)

21. Tuesday Apr 5 READ: Excerpt from Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus. AP, chapter 10.

22. Thursday Apr 7 READ: Excerpt from On Certainty. AP, chapter 15.

**SECOND SHORT PAPER DUE**

23. Tuesday Apr 12 READ: Excerpt from The Blue and Brown Books. AP, chapter 46.

Unit 6: Elizabeth Anscombe (1919-2001)

24. Thursday Apr 14 READ: Modern Moral Philosophy. AP, chapter 36.

25. Tuesday Apr 19 READ: Excerpt from Intention. Blackboard.

Unit 7: Final Matters

26. Thursday Apr 21 READ: Wilfrid Sellars Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man. AP, chapter 45.

27. Tuesday Apr 26 Beyond the Canon Student Presentations

**BEYOND THE CANON ASSIGNMENT DUE**

28. Thursday Apr 28 Peer-editing workshop

**Monday May 9 FINAL PAPERS DUE AT NOON**