

Philosophy 229

20th-Century Western Philosophy

Spring 2016
MWF 8:00 – 8:50am
Caldwell Hall 103

Chris Dorst
dorst@live.unc.edu
Caldwell Hall 206C
Office Hours: Tuesday 2:45-3:45pm,
Wednesday 9:00-10:00am

Course Description

This course will be a critical examination of some of the major developments in Western philosophy in the 20th century. In particular, we will focus on the school of “ordinary language philosophy.” Ordinary language philosophers thought that philosophical questions should be addressed by carefully examining the language used to express them. So, for example, take the question, “Is the mind identical to the brain?” An ordinary language philosopher would address this question by looking at how we ordinarily use the words “mind,” “brain,” and “identical.” The hope would be that once we are clear on the ordinary use of these terms, the original question is revealed to be either trivial or confused.

We will read both proponents and opponents of ordinary language philosophy, including Frege, Russell, Ayer, Austin, Ryle, and Wittgenstein. We will consider a variety of philosophical questions, such as “What is meaning?”, “How do we know there is an external world?”, and “Are we justified in believing that other people are conscious?”

Grading

Reading Quizzes (20%)

The majority of the assignments in the course will be reading assignments. Assessments will be done in the form of short quizzes covering the readings. These quizzes should be easy if you have done the readings. They will occur on most Fridays at the beginning of class. If you miss a reading quiz because of an absence, you must take the quiz 10 minutes before class on the following Monday (or whenever the next class occurs).

Midterms (25% each)

There will be two take-home midterms in this course. These will consist of a series of questions about the readings and topics we have discussed in class. You will have to choose a certain number of these questions and write responses to them. The questions will typically be exegetical: they will ask you to explain what a certain author thinks about a certain subject. In other words, you will mainly be tested on how well you *understand* the material we cover.

You will be given the question prompts a week before your responses are due. The due dates for the two midterms are (tentatively):

Midterm 1: Friday, February 19 by 11:59pm

Midterm 2: Friday, April 8 by 11:59pm

The total written work will be about 5 to 6 pages for each midterm. If you turn in your midterm late, your grade will be docked one letter grade for each day past the deadline.

Final Exam (30%)

The Final Exam is scheduled for Tuesday, May 3 at 4:00pm. The format will be similar to that of the midterms, except that it will not be take-home – you will have to do it in the time allotted for the Final Exam. You will be able to reference your notes during the final. If you have three or more exams scheduled within 24 hours, UNC allows you to reschedule one of them. If you would like to reschedule for this reason, you must make arrangements with me by the last day of class (Wednesday, April 27).

Attendance and Participation

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. If you have four or fewer unexcused absences over the course of the semester, I will drop your lowest three reading quiz grades. (Excused absences do not count toward this total. For an absence to be excused, you must provide reasonable documentation.)

If your participation is notably strong, this can help boost your final grade. Coming to office hours, participating in class discussions, and asking questions in or out of class can all help your participation.

Honor Code

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has had a student-led honor system for over 100 years. Academic integrity is at the heart of Carolina and we all are responsible for upholding the ideals of honor and integrity. The student-led Honor System is responsible for adjudicating any suspected violations of the Honor Code. Without trying to scare you, I must tell you that it is my responsibility to report suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the honor system. Your full participation and observance of the Honor Code is expected.

Required Texts

The following two texts are required. Other readings will be provided on Sakai.

Austin, J. L. (1962) *Sense and Sensibilia*. New York: OUP.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. (1965) *The Blue and Brown Books*. New York: Harper Perennial.

Additional Resources

For each author that we read, I will provide a brief Author Information Sheet, which contains some information about the author, advice about how to approach their style of writing, and some guided reading questions to help you stay focused during the readings.

If you are looking for more information about a particular author or topic we cover in class, I highly recommend the Stanford Encyclopedia of

Philosophy (plato.stanford.edu) and the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (<http://www.iep.utm.edu/>). Of course, emailing me and coming to office hours are also good additional resources.

Schedule of Readings

It is difficult to predict how quickly we will move through the course readings, so the following is a *tentative* reading schedule. The items listed next to a given date are to be read before class on that date.

1/11: No readings due

1/13: Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, Chapter 1

1/15: Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, Chapter 2

1/18: MLK Day, No Class

1/20: Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, Chapter 3

1/22: A. J. Ayer, *The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge*, Chapter 1, pp. 1-28

1/25: A. J. Ayer, *The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge*, Chapter 1, pp. 28-57

1/27: J. L. Austin, *Sense and Sensibilia*, pp. 1-19

1/29: J. L. Austin, *Sense and Sensibilia*, pp. 20-43

2/1: J. L. Austin, *Sense and Sensibilia*, pp. 44-61

2/3: J. L. Austin, *Sense and Sensibilia*, pp. 62-83

2/5: J. L. Austin, *Sense and Sensibilia*, pp. 84-103

2/8: J. L. Austin, *Sense and Sensibilia*, pp. 104-131

2/10: Gottlob Frege, "On Sense and Reference"

2/12: Saul Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*, pp. 7-28

2/15: Saul Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*, pp. 29-48

- 2/17:** Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Blue Book*, pp. 1-15
- 2/19:** Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Blue Book*, pp. 16-30
- 2/22:** Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Blue Book*, pp. 31-45
- 2/24:** Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Blue Book*, pp. 46-60
- 2/26:** Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Blue Book*, pp. 61-74
- 2/29:** David Chalmers, “Facing Up to the Problem of Consciousness”, pp. 1-16
- 3/2:** David Chalmers, “Facing Up to the Problem of Consciousness”, pp. 16-28
- 3/4:** Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind*, Chapter 1
- 3/7:** Bertrand Russell, “The Scientific Method in Philosophy”
- 3/9:** Gilbert Ryle, *Dilemmas*, Lecture 1
- 3/11-3/20:** Spring Break, No Class
- 3/21:** Gilbert Ryle, *Dilemmas*, Lecture 2
- 3/23:** Gilbert Ryle, *Dilemmas*, Lecture 4
- 3/25:** Gilbert Ryle, *Dilemmas*, Lecture 5
- 3/28:** University Holiday, No Class
- 3/30:** Gilbert Ryle, *Dilemmas*, Lecture 6
- 4/1:** Gilbert Ryle, *Dilemmas*, Lecture 7
- 4/4:** Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Brown Book*, pp. 77-89
- 4/6:** Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Brown Book*, pp. 89-100
- 4/8:** Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Brown Book*, pp. 100-111
- 4/11:** Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Brown Book*, pp. 111-125
- 4/13:** Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Brown Book*, pp. 127-137
- 4/15:** Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Brown Book*, pp. 137-148

4/18: Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Brown Book*, pp. 148-157

4/20: Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Brown Book*, pp. 158-170

4/22: Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Brown Book*, pp. 170-185

4/25: Make-up day

4/27: Wrap up