

## Philosophy 141 Origins of Analytic Philosophy

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*Note:* Please feel free to call at home. This number listed is for this purpose. You will almost always get an answering machine, but if you leave a message, your call will be returned.

### General Remarks on the Course

We shall be studying the works of two of the major figures in the early history of analytic philosophy, Bertrand Russell and Gottlob Frege, though most of our attention will be focused on Frege. We shall not study the early views of Wittgenstein directly, though we shall touch on them at various points. Russell's *Philosophy of Logical Atomism* is, by his own admission, heavily indebted to Wittgenstein.

Our main goal is, first, to understand the philosophical views of these two writers and, secondly, to understand how their approach to philosophical problems distinguishes them from their predecessors. It is often remarked that analytic, or 'linguistic', philosophy is primarily concerned with language; it is just as often complained that analytic philosophers never talk about anything *but* language, whereas the important problems of philosophy are problems about what we can know, what there is in the world, and the like. But both the remark and the complaint are, in an important sense, confused. Analytic philosophy is *not* especially concerned with language *in its own right*.

It is true that problems about the nature of meaning and linguistic representation loom large in the writings of Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein, Carnap, Quine, Strawson, Putnam, Davidson, Dummett, and just about any other 'post-Fregean' philosopher one might care to name. We hope to understand why this is. But what distinguishes analytic philosophy is not this, but the thought that philosophical problems are best studied *through* language, or if not through *language*, then through a more general study of meaning and representation. Just as Descartes transformed philosophy by making *epistemology* that branch of philosophy upon which all else rests, so Frege began a transformation of philosophy which supplanted epistemology, in this central place, with the study of language (or, again, meaning and representation more generally).

The beginning of this transformation of philosophy in the work of Frege, and its ultimate realization in that of Russell and Wittgenstein, is not our topic, for our project is not really historical. Rather, this is something we hope to understand by immersion. Our study of Frege's and Russell's work will quite consciously be that of philosophers, engaged in the study of certain sorts of problems, who are looking to them for inspiration, for ideas, and for solutions.

## Prerequisites

A great number of the fundamental doctrines of both Frege and Russell were inspired by discoveries in formal logic which Frege made, and they can hardly be stated without reference to concepts of formal logic. For this reason, Philosophy 140 is an *absolutely necessary prerequisite* for the course. Anyone who thinks he or she has had 'equivalent preparation' should speak to the instructor.

## Course Structure and Requirements

The course will meet Mondays and Wednesdays, at 11am, in Emerson 104, for lectures. *Both a graduate and an undergraduate section will be taught by the instructor.* Partly, this is because the projected enrollment does not support the assignment of a teaching fellow to the course. But, even should a teaching fellow be assigned, the instructor will nonetheless co-lead the sections. The reason for *this* is just that lecture courses do not seem to allow much scope for interaction between students and faculty, and this seems a simple way to remedy that problem.

The undergraduate section will meet, for the first time, on 1 October, in Emerson 104 and is open *only* to those undergraduates enrolled for credit in the course. Attendance at the graduate section will be open to all graduate students enrolled in the course. Philosophy graduate students regularly attending may also attend, unless enrollment is so large that this is not feasible. The time for the graduate section will be arranged after class on 27 September, so those interested in attending it should be present that day.

The grade for the course will be based upon two papers and participation in class and sections. The first of these is to be a *short, expository* paper, of 1000-1500 words (that's about 3-5 double-spaced pages, with a reasonable-size fixed-width font and one inch margins), due on 10 November. Topics for the short paper will be announced in class on or about 20 October. 1500 words is a *maximum length*. Do not write ten pages. This is to be short, concise, and not terribly time-consuming to write or grade.

The second, longer paper may be on any topic related to the course. The topic should be cleared with the instructor on or before Friday, 10 December, and the paper itself is due on Monday, 10 January, though the paper will, of course, be accepted any time before that. Many students seem to like having part of reading period to work on the paper, but you are urged to try to finish it--or at least a draft of it--before the Winter Recess. The instructor will happily read and comment on drafts given him sufficiently long before the deadline, viz., by 3 or 4 January.

For undergraduates, this paper should be approximately 5000 words (that's about 17 pages), with a *maximum* length of twenty standard pages. Less than fifteen is unlikely to be enough to discuss anything of substance in sufficient detail, but there is no fixed lower bound. For graduate students, the paper should probably be between twenty and twenty-five pages, with 7500 words here being the upper bound. Conciseness is a wonderful thing. Let's work on it.

Finally, a note on secondary sources. We shall be reading, in class, *one* secondary source and *one* criticism of it. I strongly encourage you *not* to spend a great deal of time, if any, reading the large literature on Frege. Your time would be better spent reading Frege himself.

## Syllabus

Gottlob Frege, *Begriffsschrift*, in Jan van Heijenoort, ed., *From Frege to Gödel*, and *The Foundations of Arithmetic* are available at the Coop. Frege's papers "Function and Concept", "What is a Function?", "On Concept and Object", "On Sense and Reference", and "The Thought" are in *Collected Papers*, and "Logic (1897)" is in *Posthumous Writings*. Both are out of print. Photocopies are available. Some of these are in P. Geach and M. Black, eds., *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege*, which contains the bit of Part III of *Grundgesetze*. The Introduction and Part I of *Grundgesetze* are in M. Furth, tr., *Basic Laws of Arithmetic: Exposition of the System*. This, and the relevant sections of Part II are available as copies.

The Ricketts and Stanley papers are available as photocopies.

Russell's "On Denoting" and "Mathematical Logic" are available as photocopies, and his *Philosophy of Logical Atomism* is at the Coop.

20 September	Introductory meeting, song and dance
	<b>Frege's Logic and Philosophy of Arithmetic</b>
22 September	Frege, <i>Begriffsschrift</i> , Part I
24 September	Frege, <i>Begriffsschrift</i> , Part II
27 September	Frege, <i>Begriffsschrift</i> , Part III
29 September	Frege, <i>Foundations</i> , Parts I and II
4 October	Columbus Day Holiday
6 October	Frege, <i>Foundations</i> , Part III
11 October	Frege, <i>Foundations</i> , sections 55-69
13 October	Frege, <i>Foundations</i> , sections 70-83
18 October	Frege, <i>Grundgesetze</i> , Part II, Iota (d)
20 October	The Significance of <i>Foundations</i>
25 October	The Julius Caesar Problem
27 October	Bertrand Russell, "Mathematical Logic as Based on the Theory of Types"
	<b>Frege's Contributions to the Philosophy of Logic and Language</b>
1 November	Frege, "Function and Concept"
3 November	Frege, "What is a Function?"
8 November	Frege, "On Concept and Object"
10 November	Frege, "On Sense and Reference"
15 November	Frege, "On Sense and Reference"
17 November	Frege, <i>Grundgesetze</i> , Introduction and Part I
22 November	Frege, <i>Grundgesetze</i> , Part III.1, §§86-137
24 November	Frege, "Logic (1897)"
29 November	Frege, "The Thought"
1 December	Thomas Ricketts, "Objectivity and Objecthood" and "Generality, Sense, and Meaning"
6 December	Jason Stanley, "Rickett's Frege: A Critique"
	<b>Russell on Denoting, Acquaintance, and Description</b>
8 December	Russell, "On Denoting"
13 December	Russell, "On Denoting"
15 December	Russell, <i>The Philosophy of Logical Atomism</i>
20 December	Russell, <i>The Philosophy of Logical Atomism</i>