

PHIL 2170: History of Analytic Philosophy

Fall 2023

Instructor: Adam Murray
Russellian metaphysics: the philosophy of logical atomism
Office: 457 University College; Hours: Mondays, 2:30–3:30 p.m., or by appointment
Email: adam.murray@umanitoba.ca
Lectures: MWF: 10:30-11:20 a.m., 206 Tier

1 Course Description

This course will examine some central developments in the analytic philosophical tradition. The analytic tradition originates in the last decades of the 19th Century, and is often associated during that period with the work of the German philosopher and mathematician Gottlob Frege. In the early 20th Century, Frege's distinctive approach, not only to the study of logic and mathematics, but also to the philosophy of language and mind, was taken up and extended by such thinkers as Bertrand Russell, G.E. Moore, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and many others, and applied in such additional fields of philosophy as ethics, epistemology, metaphysics, and the philosophy of science. Our goal in this course will be to study some of the main contributions of the early analytic philosophers, and to gain an appreciation of their influence upon the way in which much of philosophy is practiced today.

2 Course Texts

Some readings will be uploaded on a weekly basis to the course website on UM Learn. We will also be taking a close look at these books:

Russell, Bertrand. *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism*. 1918/2009 (Routledge)

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Oxford: 1922/2023. (transl. Micheal Beaney)

Copies of the above are available in the campus bookstore. But copies in one edition or another are available pretty much everywhere, including online.

3 Overview of Topics

This is a broad overview of some of the topics we will be discussing this term:

1. Gottlob Frege

- Frege's contributions to logic and the philosophy of logic

- The distinction between *sense* and *reference*
 - Frege on thoughts and propositions
 - The significance of Frege's work for subsequent philosophy of language
2. Bertrand Russell
 - The theory of descriptions
 - Russell on the nature of truth and falsity
 - Our knowledge of the external world
 3. Ludwig Wittgenstein
 - The metaphysics of the *Tractatus*
 - Wittgenstein on meaning and truth
 - The implications of Wittgenstein's thinking for some main problems of philosophy
 4. Time permitting: the rise of logical positivism and the historical influence of the *Tractatus*

4 Evaluation

Your grade in the course will be based upon the following criteria.

1. A mid-term test, scheduled for October 30, worth 20% of your final grade
2. Three short writing assignments, each worth 15% (Oct. 6, Nov. 10, Dec. 1)
3. A final paper worth 25% (Dec. 15)
4. Attendance and preparation (10%)

We will discuss the details of the test and written assignments in class. Please note that attendance at all class meetings is a course requirement, and lecture handouts/notes will be made available only for those in attendance (they will not be posted online).

The test will draw exclusively upon material covered in class.

Please note that this is a reading intensive course. It is a course requirement that you have the assigned readings with you in our class meetings (electronic format is fine). We will often be discussing particular passages and arguments in these texts, and understanding these discussions will require that you have the materials with you.

5 Additional Course Information

5.1 Course contact

In addition to the course lectures, I will hold a set of weekly office hours on Wednesdays, from 3–4 p.m., in 457 UC. Please feel free to attend these should you wish to speak with me on matters pertaining to the course, or to ask any questions. Outside of class and office hours, the absolute best way to reach me is by email. However, please note that email is an inappropriate format for asking substantive philosophical questions about the course material. Those sorts of questions are encouraged, but you should bring them to class, or to my office hours, in order that we may discuss the issues properly.

5.2 Deadlines and late work

Your assigned work for this course must be submitted on time. Late penalties on assigned work are set at 1/3 of a letter grade per day, to a maximum of five days, unless accompanied by a documented medical explanation or due to a family emergency (note that this includes weekends and holidays). Any work outstanding beyond this point will receive a grade of 0. If you foresee any difficulty submitting your work on time, speak to me *before*—not *after*!—the deadline. In all likelihood, we will be able to work something out.

5.3 Academic honesty

As you are undoubtedly aware, using someone else’s ideas without explicit acknowledgement is stealing, and constitutes plagiarism. It is your responsibility to understand the nature of plagiarism, and what to do to avoid it in your writing. For more information on academic infractions at the University of Manitoba, and how to avoid them, see [here](#). Note that the common penalty in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences for plagiarism in a written assignment, test, or examination is **F** on the piece of work. For the most serious acts of plagiarism, such as the purchase of an assignment or cheating on a test or examination, the penalty can also include suspension for a period of up to five years from registration in courses taught in a particular department or from all courses taught in this Faculty.

If you are ever in any doubt about plagiarism, and other related academic offenses, it is always best to simply speak to your instructor about whatever issues are causing the problem. I encourage you to speak with me if you have any concerns about academic integrity, either in this course or in other courses you are taking.

5.4 Accessibility accommodations

Should you require any accessibility-related accommodations in this course, please do not hesitate to communicate this fact to me either in person or by email. Click [here](#) to learn more about accessibility-related resources available to students at the U of M.

5.5 University of Manitoba Policies and Resources

The University of Manitoba provides resources and has established policies to assist students during their term of study. The university’s policy is set out in a document called ‘Responsibilities of Academic Staff with Regard to Students’ (‘ROASS’, for short.) You should take some time to review this document.

6 Significant Dates

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| Classes begin | Sept. 6 |
| National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (University Closed) | Oct. 2 |
| Fall reading break (no classes) | Nov. 13–17 |
| Final date to withdraw without academic penalty | Nov. 21 |
| Final class | Dec. 11 |