

## 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY PHILOSOPHY

### **PHRU 3650, Spring 2012**

Mon/Thurs 2:30-3:45, Keating 121

### **Professor: Dr. Stephen Grimm**

Office: Collins 133

Office Hours: Tues 12-3 p.m., and by appointment

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### **Course Description**

This course will survey the origins as well as some of the major achievements of 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophy. Questions will include: Is metaphysics hopeless? What is involved in understanding or grasping concepts? What makes the development of science rational? And do we have privileged access to the contents of our mind?

### **Texts for the Course**

A.J. Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic* (Dover)

Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn. (Wiley-Blackwell)

Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Wittgenstein Reader*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (Wiley-Blackwell)

Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. (Chicago)

Additional readings will be assigned throughout the course, and will be available either via Blackboard or via the web.

### **Requirements for the Course**

#### **Papers**

Two 1,500-1,700 word papers (roughly, 5-6 pages) are required. For both Paper #1 and Paper #2, you can choose either the "Option A" topic or the "Option B" topic.

If you choose the Option A topic for Paper #1, this means that you can write on any topic assigned from the start of the course to the due date of the Option A paper (roughly, topics from the *Tractatus* and Ayer readings). If you choose the Option B topic for Paper #1, this means you can write on any topic assigned after the Option A paper was due, up until the Option B paper is due (roughly, topics from the *Investigations*). The same pattern holds for Paper #2. I will explain this more fully on the first day of class.

For both papers, you should choose a topic that is both manageable and focused. Note that I will not look at rough drafts or outlines before the paper is due, but I warmly encourage you to come by my office to work through your ideas.

### **Final Exam**

The final exam will feature short and long essay questions, and will cover topics and figures from the course. I will send you a set of questions ahead of time, and the exam will be constituted by a subset of these questions.

### **Participation**

Participation will count for 10% of your grade, and grades will range from 10 (highest) to 1 (lowest). This is the easiest place to do well in the class, so I encourage you to participate regularly. Asking questions, raising objections, expressing puzzlement, etc. are all good forms of participation.

### **Classroom Courtesy**

Cellphones should be turned off for the duration of the class, and texting during class is not permitted. If you cannot wait until the end of class to send or receive a text, you should not be in class.

Because they tend to be used for non-class related purposes, laptops will also not be allowed in class. If you have a special reason to use a laptop please see me and I will try to accommodate you.

Also, make it a point to be on time for class: walking into class late is disruptive both to the instructor and to your fellow classmates.

### **Academic Misconduct**

You will be strictly held to the Fordham University code of conduct. At a minimum, you will receive an “F” on any work that involves academic misconduct, and you may very well fail the course, depending on the circumstances.

### **Grading**

Paper #1 = 30%

Paper #2 = 30%

Final = 30%

Participation = 10%

## Tentative Schedule of Readings

### January

19 Welcome and overview

23 Kenny, “The Legacy of Frege and Russell”; Sluga, Wittgenstein biography (both on Blackboard)

26 Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, a ridiculously quick tour

30 Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic*, chs. 1-2

### February

2 Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic*, chs. 3-4

6 Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic*, ch. 6

9 Ayer, wrap-up

- **Paper #1 due, Option A**

13 Wittgenstein, *Investigations* §§ 138-194

16 No class: SRG Conference

22 [Monday Schedule] Wittgenstein, *Investigations* §§ 195-250

23 Wittgenstein, *Investigations* §§ 250-315

27 Wittgenstein, *Investigations* (duck-rabbit and seeing-as?)

### March

1 Wittgenstein, “Scepticism and Certainty” (Kenny collection)

5 Wittgenstein, “Ethics, Life, and Faith” (Kenny collection)

- **Paper #1 due, Option B**

8 Kuhn, *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (chs. 1-3)

Spring Break

- 19 Kuhn, *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (chs. 4-6)
- 22 Kuhn, *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (chs. 8-9)
- 26 Kuhn, *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (ch. 10-11)
- 29 Kuhn, *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (chs. 12-13, plus postscript)
- **Paper #2, Option A**

## April

- 2 Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" (Blackboard)
- 12 No class: SRG at Conference
- 16 Ryle, "Knowing How and Knowing That" (Blackboard)
- 19 Putnam, "Meaning and Reference" (Blackboard)
- 23 Nagel, "What is it Like to be a Bat?" (Blackboard)
- 26 Plantinga, "Rationality and Belief in God"
- **Paper #2, Option B**
- 30 Last class

**FINAL EXAM (tentative):** Thursday, May 10, 1:30 p.m.