PHILOSOPHY 407.3: A NINETEENTH OR TWENTIETH CENTURY PHILOSOPHER
(LOGICAL POSITIVISM)
WINTER 2020

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Ron Wilburn
Office: SS1207
Phone: TBD
Email: TBD
Office hours: TTh 14:00 – 15:00
Meetings: TTh 12:30 - 13:45
Location: TI STUDIO A

Acknowledgement

This course plan is based on that of my friend and colleague Dr. David Boutillier, who presently teaches at Okanagan College. Thanks, Dave.

Description

In this course we will use Alberto Coffa’s classic book *The Semantic Tradition from Kant to Carnap: To the Vienna Station* to provide the narrative for an introductory telling of the story of the historical underpinnings of contemporary analytic philosophy. The course will be punctuated by the study of excerpts of texts and articles from Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell, Rudolph Carnap and other members of the “Vienna Circle.” The questions that we will explore include: What role does Kant play in the development of analytic philosophy? What role does the *a priori* play in the grounding of empirical knowledge and rational inquiry? What accounts for the *a priori* nature of mathematics and logic?

Pre-requisites

Two previous courses in Philosophy, one of which must be Philosophy 301, 303, or 305, 307, 309 or 311

Required Texts

Optional Texts


Schedule: Jan 13-April 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week/Dates</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Requirements and Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 01/14</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Introduction and Coffa, Ch. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/16</td>
<td>Kant, the a priori, and the Doctrine of pure intuition</td>
<td>Coffa, Ch.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/19, 01/21</td>
<td>Kant, Bolzano and the Birth of Semantics</td>
<td>Immanuel Kant, Selection from <em>The Critique of Pure Reason</em>, Transcendental Deduction Coffa, Ch.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/28, 01/30</td>
<td>Kant, the a priori, and the Doctrine of pure intuition</td>
<td>Coffa, Ch. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/04, 02/06</td>
<td>Frege’s Logicism, and the a priori in arithmetic</td>
<td>Coffa, Ch. 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/11, 02/13</td>
<td>Frege’s Logicism, and the a priori in arithmetic</td>
<td>Frege, Excerpts from The Foundations of Arithmetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/18, 02/20</td>
<td>Reading Week</td>
<td>No Lectures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/25, 02/27</td>
<td>Russell’s views on meaning, ontology, and epistemology</td>
<td>Coffa, Chap. 5 Russell On Denoting Take-Home Midterm (02/28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/03, 03/05</td>
<td>Russell’s views on meaning, ontology and epistemology</td>
<td>Coffa, Chap. 6 Bertrand Russell “The Relation of Sense Data to Physics”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/10, 03/12</td>
<td>Russell’s views on meaning, ontology and epistemology</td>
<td>Coffa, Chap. 7 Paper proposal and outline (03/10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/17, 03/19</td>
<td>Russell’s views on meaning, ontology and epistemology</td>
<td>Russell, Selections from “Logical Atomism”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/24</td>
<td>Carnap on pseudo-problems and the language of science</td>
<td>Coffa, Chap. 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/26</td>
<td>Carnap on pseudo-problems and the language of science</td>
<td>Coffa, Chap. 15 Carnap, Selections from The Logical Structure of the World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. 03/31</td>
<td>Carnap on pseudo-problems and the language of science</td>
<td>Coffa, Chap. 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/02</td>
<td></td>
<td>Carnap, “Pseudo-Problems in Philosophy”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Carnap, “The Elimination of Metaphysics Through the Logical Analysis of Language”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*13. 04/07, 04/09</td>
<td>Other Positivists</td>
<td>Readings on Protocol Sentences Term paper due (04/09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*14. 04/14</td>
<td>Other Positivists</td>
<td>Readings on Value Theory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*13 and 14 are subject to change. They are contingent upon whether we’ve been able to complete the preceding material.

**Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes**

Course learning objectives are a required part of the outline. No particular format for the objectives are required. To assist you in creating your course outcomes, here are the program level outcomes for the philosophy major:

- Broad knowledge of diverse philosophical issues, problems, traditions, and views
- Deep knowledge of one central area of philosophical inquiry
- Ability to critically digest, interpret, and analyze complex sources
- Ability to write a convincing argument that takes adequate account of alternative positions
- Ability to engage in constructive, respectful, oral and written argumentation

**1 Course Requirements**

The grade for the course is based on a midterm, a proposal/outline for a term paper, a term paper of approximately 3000, and participation in class discussion. The concern of the course is to help you hone your ability to write an excellent philosophical essay. There are no in class exams and no final exam.

- 40% Take Home Midterm. Due Feb. 28th.
- 10% Term paper proposal and outline. Due March 10th.
- 40% Term paper. Due in class on April 9th.
- 10% Class participation.
The term paper proposal will involve arriving at and articulating a thesis statement for the term paper, the presentation of a correct interpretation of the argument(s) from the primary text(s) to be considered in the term paper, and a bibliography listing the materials that will be referred to in the term paper. The term paper will involve a critical assessment of the argument(s) from the primary text(s) so interpreted.

2 Late work and extensions

Late assignments will be penalized by 10% for each day that the assignment is late, unless written documentation of a medical or otherwise valid excuse can be produced. Late assignments must be presented to me personally or placed in the department drop-box on the 12th floor of the Social Sciences Tower. Note that the drop-box is emptied at 4:00 p.m. weekdays; so if you deliver a paper at 5pm on Friday, it will not count as being received until Monday morning and late penalties will be assessed.

Term Paper Guidelines (Due on Thursday, April 7th)

A fully competent term paper is one that

- Is 8-10 pages long.
- gives a correct account of the argument or view to be discussed,
- defines the technical philosophical terms that are central to the discussion,
- demonstrates a correct understanding of philosophical concepts that are relevant to the discussion,
- provides a critical discussion that is,
- focused and to the point (this involves being able to correctly identify what the point is),
- reflects sound careful thought,
- shows that the student has profited from the class lectures and readings to date.
- is well organized,
- is clearly written,
- shows evidence of grasp of the subject matter,
- shows a reasonable understanding of the issues relevant to the topic, and
- shows evidence of familiarity with the literature.

A fully competent term paper gets a solid B grade. The more of these criteria that are not met, the farther below a B grade the paper gets.

A super-fully-competent paper is one that

- anticipates potential objections to (or difficulties with) assertions made in the essay,
- shows strong evidence of,
- really good organization,
- outstanding clarity of expression,
- original thinking (e.g. in the use of examples),
- a capacity to analyze and synthesize concepts and arguments,
- a superior grasp of the subject matter accompanied by sound critical assessments, and
- an extensive knowledge base.

The more of these criteria that are met, the closer the paper gets to an A+ grade.

The Grading Rubric I will use (Note: Underlining without comment indicates incorrect, unclear, or awkward phraseology. The symbol “LR” means “lacks relevance with regard to the essay’s stated thesis”. The symbol “RFI”
means “room for improvement”. An “×” in the margin indicates an incorrect assertion; a “✓” indicates a particularly well-made point).

- Does the paper include an explicit statement of the thesis question that the student intends to answer? __________
- Does it give a correct account of the argument or view to be discussed? __________
- Does it define the technical terms that are central to the discussion? __________
- Does it demonstrate a correct understanding of concepts relevant to the discussion? __________
- Does it provide a critical discussion that is focused? __________
- Does the critical discussion show that the student has profited from the class lectures and assigned readings? __________
- Is the essay well organized and clearly written? __________
- Does it show evidence of familiarity with the relevant literature? __________
- Does it show sufficient grasp of the subject matter? __________
- Does the student anticipate potential objections which could be raised against the student’s positive claims? __________
- Does the essay demonstrate strong evidence of outstanding organization and clarity of expression? __________
- Does it show strong evidence of original thinking? __________
- Does it demonstrate a capacity to analyze (synthesize) concepts (arguments)? __________
- Does it demonstrate strong evidence of an extensive knowledge base? __________

Comments:

Academic Accommodations

It is the student’s responsibility to request academic accommodations according to the University policies and procedures. The student accommodation policy can be found at ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf.

Students needing an Accommodation because of a disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/procedure-for-accommodations-for-students-with-disabilities.pdf. Students needing an Accommodation in relation to their coursework or to fulfil requirements for a graduate degree, based on a protected ground other than disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to their instructor.

Absence or Missed Course Assessments

Students who are absent from class assessments (tests, participation activities, or other assignments) should inform their instructors as soon as possible. Instructors may request that evidence in the form of documentation be provided. If the reason provided for the absence is acceptable, instructors may decide that any arrangements made can take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test. For information on possible forms of documentation, including statutory declarations, please see ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html
**Student Support and Resources**

Full details and information about the following resources can be found at ucalgary.ca/Registrar/registration/course-outlines

- Wellness and Mental Health Resources
- Student Success Centre
- Student Ombuds Office
- Student Union (SU) Information
- Graduate Students’ Association (GSA) Information
- Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points
- Safewalk

**Academic Advising**

If you are a student in the Faculty of Arts, you can speak to an academic advisor in the Arts Students’ Centre about course planning, course selection, registration, program progression and more. Visit the Faculty of Arts website at arts.ucalgary.ca/advising for contact details and information regarding common academic concerns.

For questions specific to the philosophy program, please visit phil.ucalgary.ca. Further academic guidance is available by contacting David Dick (Undergraduate Program Director dgdick@ucalgary.ca) or Jeremy Fantl (Honours Advisor jfantl@ucalgary.ca). If you have questions regarding registration, please email Rebecca Lesser (Undergraduate Program Administrator phildept@ucalgary.ca).

**Writing Assessment and Support**

The assessment of all written assignments—and, to a lesser extent, written exam responses—is based in part on writing skills. This includes correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.), as well as general clarity and organization. Research papers must include a thorough and accurate citation of sources. Students are also encouraged to use Writing Support Services for assistance (one-on-one appointments, drop-in support and writing workshops). For more information, and other services offered by the Student Success Centre, please visit ucalgary.ca/ssc.

**Online Resources and Electronic Devices**

Important information and communication about this course may be posted on D2L (Desire2Learn), UCalgary’s online learning management system. Visit ucalgary.service-now.com/it for how-to information and technical assistance.

The instructor reserves the right to establish specific course policies regarding the use of electronic devices. If permitted, the use of devices must be exclusively for instructional purposes, and without disruption to the instructor or fellow students. Devices should be set to silent mode during lectures. Audio or video recording of lectures is not permitted without the written permission of the instructor. Students violating this policy are subject to discipline under the University of Calgary’s Non-Academic Misconduct policy.

**Academic Misconduct/Honesty**

Cheating or plagiarism on any assignment or examination is as an extremely serious academic offense, the penalty for which will be an F on the assignment or an F in the course, and possibly a disciplinary sanction such as probation, suspension, or expulsion. For information on academic misconduct and its
consequences, please see the University of Calgary Calendar at ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html.

Intellectual honesty requires that your work include adequate referencing to sources. Plagiarism occurs when you do not acknowledge or correctly reference your sources. If you have questions about referencing, please consult your instructor.

**University Policies**

The Instructor Intellectual Property Policy is available at ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/Intellectual%20Property%20Policy.pdf

The University of Calgary is under the jurisdiction of the provincial Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act, as outlined at ucalgary.ca/legalservices/foip. The instructor (or TA) must return graded assignments directly to the student UNLESS written permission to do otherwise has been provided.

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright.pdf) and requirements of the copyright act (laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html).