The seminar will trace the rise of analytic philosophy in the work of its four great founding giants – Gottlob Frege, G. E. Moore, Bertrand Russell, and Ludwig Wittgenstein. Topics covered will include the rejection of absolute idealism and American pragmatism, the development of a commonsense, anti-skeptical approach to the theory of knowledge, the search for an autonomous, non-metaphysical ethics, the development of modern symbolic logic and its ground-breaking use in the philosophy of mathematics, and finally, the extension of logical techniques first to the analysis of language, then to a general philosophical methodology, and ultimately to a transformation in the conception of philosophy itself. The seminar will close with an attempt to identify the general philosophical methodologies that emerged in this period of the analytic tradition.

The seminar will meet twice a week for five weeks. Each seminar will consist of two 1 hour and 30 minute parts, separated by a 30 minute break.

Books


**Week 1: Frege on Logic, Language, and Mathematics**
Seminar 1 will explain the fundamentals of Frege’s revolution in logic, and its ground breaking applications in the philosophy of language and the philosophy of mathematics, including his strategy for reducing mathematics to logic. Seminar 2 will critically evaluate, and in some cases suggest revisions of, central Fregean doctrines and their applications.

Reading:
Frege, selections from *The Foundations of Arithmetic*
_____,”On Sense and Reference,” in *The Frege Reader*
_____,”The Thought”
Soames, chapters 1 and 2 of *The Analytic Tradition in Philosophy*

**Week 2: Moore against Skepticism, Absolute Idealism, and for Autonomy in Ethics**
Seminar 3 will explain Moore’s revolt against absolute idealism, his defense of common sense and his response to skepticism. Seminar 4 will explain and critically evaluate both his positive ethical theory and his meta-ethical analysis of the content of ethical statements.

Reading:
Moore, “The Refutation of Idealism” in *Philosophical Studies*
_____,”A Defense of Common Sense,” in *Philosophical Papers*
_____,”Proof of an External World,” in *Philosophical Papers*
_____ selections from *Principia Ethica*
Soames, chapters 3 – 6 of *The Analytic Tradition in Philosophy*

**Week 3: The Foundations of Russell’s Philosophy**
Seminar 5 will cover Russell’s initial attraction to, and subsequent rejection of, absolute idealism, his relation to G.E. Moore, the impact of Russell’s paradox on Frege’s logicist project of reducing mathematics to logic, and his criticism of the American Pragmatism of William James. Seminar 6, will discuss his famous theory of descriptions.

Reading:
Russell, “ Seems Madam?” Nay, it Is.” In *Russell’s Ethics*
_____,”The Meaning of Good,” in *Russell’s Ethics*
_____,”William James’s Conception of Truth,” in *Philosophical Essays*
_____,”Pragmatism,” in *Philosophical Essays*
_____,”The Monistic Theory of Truth,” in *Philosophical Essays*
_____,”On Denoting,” in *Logic and Knowledge*

http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/russell-moral/
Soames, *The Analytic Tradition in Philosophy*, chapter 7, section 1, “Russell’s Introduction to Philosophy”
_____,*The Analytic Tradition in Philosophy*, chapter 7, section 2, “Russell, Cantor, and the Paradox in Frege’s System”
_____,*The Analytic Tradition in Philosophy*, chapter 8, “Russell’s Theory of Descriptions”
_____,*The Analytic Tradition in Philosophy*, chapter 9, section 1 – “Comrades in Arms: Russell’s and Moore’s Critiques of Pragmatic and Idealist Conceptions of Truth and Reality”
Week 4: The Use of Logical Analysis as a General Philosophical Method
Seminar 7 will explain and critically evaluate Russell's reduction of arithmetic to logic and explore the lessons he drew from the reduction, Seminar 8 will assess his attempt to use his method of logical analysis to explain of the scope, limits, and contents of empirical knowledge, and to construct a comprehensive theory of knowable reality.

Reading:
Russell, selections from Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy.
____, chapters 3 and 4 of Our Knowledge of the External World.
____, sections from The Philosophy of Logical Atomism.

Soames, The Analytic Tradition in Philosophy, chapter 10, “Russell’s Logicism,” sections 1-3
____, The Analytic Tradition in Philosophy, chapter 11, “Our Knowledge of the External World”
____, The Analytic Tradition in Philosophy, chapter 12, “The Philosophy of Logical Atomism”

Week 5: Wittgenstein’s Linguistic Turn
Seminar 9 will explain and critically asses the metaphysics of the Tractatus, as well as its conception of meaning, truth, and logic. Seminar 10 will explain its theory of intelligibility, its revolutionary conception of philosophy, its distance from Russell’s system, and its impact on the school of logical positivism that was to follow it. The seminar will close with a discussion of the philosophical methodology of this period.

Reading:
Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus.
Soames, “Philosophical Methodology in Late 19th and Early 20th Century Analytic Philosophy,” in Analytic Philosophy in America and Other Historical and Contemporary Essays, 2014.