

Phil 599
Milestones in Analytic Philosophy
Scott Soames

Description

Selected classics in the history of analytic philosophy. The chief philosophers to be discussed are Wittgenstein (early and late), Carnap, Quine, Strawson, and Kripke.

Course Requirements

In addition to the reading, students taking the course for credit are required to do 2 ten to fifteen-minute oral presentations on topics of their choice drawn from the readings. They will also write a term paper on a topic drawn from the seminar. By the end of the 8th week students will be asked to turn in an essay of 2500 -3000 words. This essay may, but need not, be a partial draft of the term paper, which should be approximately 7,500 to 10,000 words. The term paper (plus essay) will account for 50% of the grade, each presentation will count for 20% and participation will count for 10%.

Learning Objectives

1. To attain basic knowledge of foundational texts of the leading analytic philosophers of the past 100 years.
2. To be able to identify and assess the most important advances made and to distinguish them from slips, shortcomings or errors made along the way.
3. To articulate the most important unanswered questions and to explore answers you believe must be addressed if further progress is to be made.
4. To write a substantial essay on one of those questions providing your answer to it.
5. To develop your ability to orally present your take on important philosophical and to lead two discussions on the issues you raise.
6. To participate actively in class discussions both critically and cooperatively in framing both your own ideas and those of others in their most effective forms.

Week 1 Introduction to and Overview of the *Tractatus*

Week 2 Wittgenstein's Linguistic Turn
Wittgenstein Sections from the *Tractatus*.
Soames Chapter 2 of Volume 2 of *The Analytic Tradition in Philosophy*
"Propositions, the *Tractatus* and "The Single Great Problem of Philosophy"

Weeks 3 - 5 Wittgenstein's Philosophical Deflationism
Wittgenstein Selections from *The Philosophical Investigations*:
Kripke Selections from *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*.
Soames pp. 385-402 of "Skepticism about Meaning: Indeterminacy, Normativity & Rule-Following Paradox," in *Philosophical Essays Vol 2*, 385-416.
"Facts, Truth Conditions, and the Skeptical Solution to the Rule-Following Paradox" in *Philosophical Essays Vol 2*, 416-465.

Weeks 6 &7 The Struggle for Modality
Carnap Brief Selections from *Meaning and Necessity*
Soames Chapters 1 - 3 of Vol. 3 of *The Analytic Tradition in Philosophy*
Salmon "On the Logic of What Might Have Been," [which explains the philosophical picture behind Kripke's formal semantics for the modal propositional calculus)

Weeks 8&9 Indeterminacy of Meaning and Inscrutability of Reference?
Quine “Two Dogmas,”
Grice & Strawson “In Defense of a Dogma”
Carnap “Empiricism, Semantics, and Ontology”
Quine,
Soames Selections from *Word and Object* and *Ontological Relativity*
 Chapters 7 and 8 of Vol. 3 of *The Analytic Tradition in Philosophy*

Weeks 10 &11 Kripke’s Anti Descriptive Semantic Externalism

Kripke *Naming and Necessity*
Soames “Kripke on Metaphysical and Epistemic Possibility”
----- “What are Natural Kinds,” in *Philosophical Topics*
Gomez Torrente, *Roads to Reference* (2019), chapters 5 and 6 (which articulates what natural kinds like water are, and how they are related to, but not determinately identical (or determinately non-identical) with, scientifically defined kinds like H₂O)
Soames, *Anti-Descriptivism 2.0.* (which puts the work of Gomez-Torrente in perspective)

Week 12 Kripke on Mind and Body

Kripke Brief Selection from Lecture 3 of *Naming and Necessity*
Soames Kripke on Mind-Body Identity,” in Jacquette, ed., *Philosophy of Consciousness* (2018)

Weeks 13-14 Kripke’s Puzzle and Cognitive Propositions

Kripke “A Puzzle About Belief”
Soames pp, 81-93 of *Rethinking Language, Mind, and Meaning*
_____ “Cognitive Propositions: What’s structure got to do with it?”

Week 15 What is responsibility?

Strawson “Freedom and Resentment”
Frankfurt “The Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person”
Hieronymi *Freedom, Resentment, and the Metaphysics of Morals*