

# Syllabus

## Course Description

This will be an advanced graduate seminar. Students without considerable background in philosophy will soon find themselves lost. The aim of the course will be to consider some of the most influential treatments of skepticism in the post-war analytic philosophical tradition—in relation both to the broader history of philosophy and to current tendencies in contemporary analytic philosophy.

The first part of the course will begin by attempting to distinguish two broad varieties of skepticism—Cartesian and Kantian—and their evolution over the past two centuries (students without some prior familiarity with both Descartes and Kant will be at a significant disadvantage here), and will go on to isolate and explore some of the most significant variants of each of these varieties in recent analytic philosophy.

The second part of the course will involve a close look at Hilary Putnam's recent criticisms of influential analytic treatments of skepticism. It will also involve a close look at various versions of contextualism with regard to epistemological claims—some put forward by Putnam himself and some by other contemporary philosophers.

## Course Requirements

The only requirement for the course will be a seminar-length paper due at the end of the quarter (15-30 pages).

**Class Schedule** – All class meetings are from 1:30 – 4:20pm in Judd 111

Week One

Monday September 24 – Introductory Class Meeting

Tuesday September 25 – Class does **not** meet.

Week Two

Class does not meet.

Week Three

Monday October 8 – Class meets.

Tuesday October 9 – Class meets.

Week Four

Class does not meet.

Week Five

Monday October 22 – Class meets.

Tuesday October 23 – Class meets.

Week Six

Monday October 29 – Class meets.

Tuesday October 30 – Class meets.

Week Seven

Monday November 5 – Class meets.

Tuesday November 6 – Class meets.

Week Eight

Monday November 12 – Class meets.

Tuesday November 13 – Class meets—last meeting of class.

## Reading Assignments

All items marked with an asterisk are in the Course Packet of xeroxed readings. All items marked with a double asterisk will be made available later in the quarter.

### First Unit

For the third week of the quarter (Monday, October 8 and Tuesday, October 9):

Required:

H. H. Price, *Perception*, Chap. One\*  
C. I. Lewis, *Mind and the World Order*, Chaps. 1-3\*  
Hilary Putnam, *The Threefold Cord*, Part One (pp. 3-70)  
John McDowell, *Mind and World*, Lectures 1-6 (pp. 3-126)

Recommended:

John McDowell, *Mind and World*, Introduction (pp. xi-xxiv) and Afterward (pp. 129-187)  
Wilfrid Sellars, *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*, Parts 1-8 (Harvard Edition pp. 13-79)\*  
John McDowell, *Having in the World in View: Sellars, Kant, and Intentionality*\*

### Second Unit

For the fifth week of the quarter (Monday, October 22 and Tuesday, October 23):

Required:

Stanley Cavell, *The Claim of Reason*, Chaps. 3, 4, 6, 8  
Stanley Cavell, "The Argument of the Ordinary"\*  
John McDowell, "Criteria, Defeasibility, and Knowledge"\*

Recommended:

Stanley Cavell, *The Claim of Reason*, Chaps. 1, 2, 5, 7  
Saul Kripke, "Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language: An Elementary Exposition"\*  
J. L. Austin, "Other Minds"\*

### **Third Unit**

For the sixth week of the quarter (Monday, October 29 and Tuesday, October 30):

Required:

Hilary Putnam, "Skepticism"\*  
Hilary Putnam, "Strawson and Skepticism"\*  
P. F. Strawson, *Skepticism and Naturalism: Some Varieties*

Recommended:

P. F. Strawson, "Reply to Putnam"\*

### **Fourth Unit**

For the seventh week of the quarter (Monday, November 5 and Tuesday, November 6):

Required:

Barry Stroud, *The Significance of Philosophical Skepticism*, Chaps. 1, 2, 7  
Thompson Clarke, "The Legacy of Skepticism"\*  
Michael Williams, *Unnatural Doubts*, Chaps. 1, 4  
Hilary Putnam, "Skepticism, Stroud, and the Contextuality of Knowledge"\*

Recommended:

Barry Stroud, *The Significance of Philosophical Skepticism*, Chap. 3  
Michael Williams, *Unnatural Doubts*, Chaps. 2, 3, 5

### **Fifth Unit**

For the eighth week of the quarter (Monday, November 12 and Tuesday November 13):

Required:

Charles Travis, "The Annals of Analysis"\*  
Charles Travis, *Unshadowed Thought*, Chaps. 1, 9, 10  
Martin Gustafsson, "Meaning, Saying, and Truth"\*  
Hilary Putnam, "Review of Charles Travis' *Unshadowed Thought*"\*\*

Recommended:

Cora Diamond, "What Nonsense Might Be"\*  
Lars Hertzberg, "The Sense Is Where You Find It"\*  
Charles Travis, *Unshadowed Thought*, Chaps. 2-8  
Charles Travis, "The Face of Perception"\*  
Charles Travis, "Shadows"\*  
Hilary Putnam, "Rules, Attunement, and Applying Words to the World"\*  
Hilary Putnam, "Rethinking Mathematical Necessity"\*

Books

The following books are for sale at the Seminary Co-op and are required for the course:

Stanley Cavell, *The Claim of Reason*  
John McDowell, *Mind and World*  
Hilary Putnam, *The Threefold Cord*  
P. F. Strawson, *Skepticism and Naturalism: Some Varieties*  
Barry Stroud, *The Significance of Philosophical Skepticism*  
Charles Travis, *Unshadowed Thought*  
Michael Williams, *Unnatural Doubts*

There is also a course packet of readings for sale in the Classics Building Copy Center, containing both required and recommended readings.

## Course Packet Contents

1. J. L. Austin, "Other Minds"
2. Stanley Cavell, "The Argument of the Ordinary"
3. Thompson Clarke, "The Legacy of Skepticism"
4. Cora Diamond, "What Nonsense Might Be"
5. Martin Gustafsson, "Meaning, Saying, and Truth"
6. Lars Hertzberg, "The Sense Is Where You Find It"
7. Saul Kripke, "Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language: An Elementary Exposition"
8. C. I. Lewis, *Mind and the World Order*, Chaps. 1-3.
9. John McDowell, "Criteria, Defeasibility, and Knowledge"
10. John McDowell, *Having in the World in View: Sellars, Kant, and Intentionality*
11. H. H. Price, *Perception*, Chap. One.
12. Hilary Putnam, "Rethinking Mathematical Necessity"
13. Hilary Putnam, "Rules, Attunement, and Applying Words to the World"
14. Hilary Putnam, "Skepticism"
15. Hilary Putnam, "Skepticism, Stroud, and the Contextuality of Knowledge"
16. Hilary Putnam, "Strawson and Skepticism"
17. Wilfrid Sellars, *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*, Parts 1-8 (Harvard Edition pp. 13-79)
18. Peter Strawson, "Reply to Putnam"
19. Charles Travis, "Annals of Analysis"
20. Charles Travis, "The Face of Perception"