Profs. James Conant & Irad Kimhi PHIL 20117/30117

University of Chicago Winter Quarter, 2015

**Tractarian Themes in the**

**History of Philosophy**

\*\*\*Syllabus\*\*\*

Course Description

The course will take up a number of themes that are central to Wittgenstein’s Tractatus as they arise in the history of philosophical thought about logic— themes that arise out of questions such as the following: What is the status of the basic law(s) of logic?; Is it possible to draw a limit to logical thought?, What is the status of the reflecting subject of logical inquiry?; What is the relation between the logical and the psychological?; What, if anything ,is the relation between the following two inquiries into forms of unity: “What is the unity of the judgment (or the proposition)?" and “What is the unity of the judging subject?”; What (if any) sort of distinction between form and matter is relevant to logic?; How should one understand the formality of logic?; How, and how deeply, does language matter to logic?

Topics will include various aspects of Aristotle's logical theory and metaphysics, focusing especially on his treatment of the principles of non-contradiction and excluded middle, as well his discussion of contradictory pairs, as these three topics are treated in *Metaphysics* *Gamma* and *Theta* and in the opening sections of *De Interpretatione*. We will then turn to medieval conceptions of the relation of logical truth to divine creation, and Descartes’s response thereto in his notorious Doctrine of the Creation of Eternal Truths. In the second half of the course, we will turn to the way form and matter comes to be distinguished in Kantian and post-Kantian conceptions of logic, beginning with Kant's own distinction between Pure General and Transcendental Logic. We then move to the threshold of contemporary conceptions of logic, examining Frege on the nature of a proper Begriffsschrift, the difference between the logical and non-logical, and the nature by means of which logically fundamental notions are elucidated. We will conclude with a brief look at early Wittgenstein’s inheritance of and relation to all of the above.

Secondary readings will be from Jan Lukasiewicz, James Conant, Irad Kimhi, Dan Kaufman, John MacFarlane, Sebastian Roedl, Matt Boyle, Cora Diamond, Peter Geach, Matthias Haase, Thomas Ricketts, Barry Stroud, and Peter Sullivan, among others.

**Professors**

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**Graduate Course Assistant**

Amos Browne: sections 01 and 02

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**Required Texts and Readings**

Only one book has been ordered for this course: a useful edition of Descartes’s *Meditations*, which will be for sale as a course book for this course at the Seminary Co-Op Bookstore. All of the rest of the readings for this course will be available through the course’s Chalk website. The readings for each meeting divide into required readings and background readings. Students taking the course for credit are expected to do all of the required reading. The background readings are optional.

**Structure of the Course, Requirements and Related Issues**

Meeting Times: The course will meet all ten weeks of the quarter on Mondays from 1:30 to 4:30pm in Social Sciences 302.

Intended Audience: Some prior exposure to philosophy is a prerequisite for taking this course. It is open only to *advanced* undergraduates and graduate students. It is not recommended as a first course in philosophy.

Undergraduate Sections: There are two sections of the course for undergraduates. These are taught by Amos Browne. Every undergraduate should have been assigned or have signed up for a section. You may only transfer into an alternative section with Amos Browne’s permission. Weekly attendance of sections is mandatory for undergraduates.

Graduate Section: There will be a graduate discussion section for the course. It will be led by both professors. Attendance is optional. It will be scheduled in the second week of the quarter.

Policy on Auditors: Anyone with a serious interest in the topic is welcome to audit in the seminar.

Announcements: There is a Chalk website for this course (chalk.uchicago.edu). Announcements (modifications to the syllabus, etc.) will periodically be posted there. Students are expected to keep abreast of these. Additional readings will also be assigned that are not presently on the syllabus and those readings will be made available through the Chalk site.

Format: The main meetings of the course will have a lecture format. The sections will have a discussion format.

Work for the course: All undergraduates are expected to attend class regularly, to be conversant with the required readings, to attend sections regularly, and to be ready to participate in discussion in section.

Grade for the course: The undergraduate grade will be based 20% on section participation, 20% on the midterm paper, and 60% on the final paper. M.A. and Ph. D. student grades will be based 100% on the final paper. It is the only requirement for graduate students.

Final paper: Students taking the course for credit are expected to write a term paper at the end of the quarter, due on the Friday of 11th week. It may be on any topic of your choice pertaining to themes covered in the course. Undergraduate papers should be between 12 and 15 pages. All graduate student papers should be between 15 and 30 pages. Amos Browne and Professors Conant and Kimhi will make announcements about how and in what form they would like to receive the final papers.

Policy on extensions for the final paper: Undergraduate papers must be handed in on time to their section instructor. M. A. and Ph.D. students may hand in their final papers after the official due date and still receive credit for the course, but only if they have secured permission from the professor to do so. Any student granted an extension should also be aware of the following: such papers will not be graded immediately upon receipt. The later the paper, the less promptly it will be graded.

**Schedule of Meetings, Topics and Reading Assignments**

**First Meeting (**Monday, Jan. 5**): Introductory Meeting**

Topics to be covered in the first meeting:

* Overview of the structure of the course
* Survey of themes to be covered in the course
* Explanation of the approach to be taken to the assigned materials
* Outline of the thematic relationship between the Preface to Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* and the course
* Two themes of the course: the critical turn and the linguistic turn
* Explanation of various aspects of the syllabus
* Relation of the discussion sections to the main meetings of the course
* Introduction to *Metaphysics* *Gamma* & Aristotle on the Principle on Non-Contradiction
* **Note:** No assigned reading for the first meeting.

**Second Meeting** (Monday, Jan. 12)**: Aristotle's *Metaphysics Gamma* & *De Intepretatione*: Non-Contradiction, Excluded Middle, and Contradictory Pairs**

Required readings:

 Aristotle, *Metaphysics Beta*, Second Aporia

 Aristotle, *Metaphysics Gamma*

 Aristotle, ˜*Metaphysics Theta*, excerpt

 Aristotle, *De Interpretatione*, excerpt

 Jan Lukasiewicz, “Aristotle on the Law of Contradiction”

Background readings:

Bertrand Russell, *The Principles of Mathematics*, excerpts

 Irad Kimhi, *Thinking and Being*, excerpt

 Walter Leszl, “Aristotle’s Logical Works and His Conception of Logic

 Michel Crubellier, “*Metaphysics* *Beta*, Aporiai 1 - 2”

 C. A. W. Whitaker: *Aristotle’s De Interpretation: Contradiction and Dialectic*, Introduction

**Third Meeting** (Monday, June 19)**: The Theo-Logical Question and the Doctrine of Creation in Medieval Philosophy**

Required readings:

 Aquinas, “On Being and Essence”

 Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, Q.25, Articles 1 & 3

 Avicenna, *The Cure*, Sixth Treatise, Chapter 1: “The Division of Causes and Their Dispositions"

Background readings:

Irad Kimhi, “Creation and Being”

Charles Kahn, “Why Existence Does Not Emerge as a Distinct Concept in Greek Philosophy"

 Stephen Menn, "Metaphysics: God and Being”

 Frege, Letter to Wittgenstein, June 28, 1919 (in the *Frege-Wittgenstein Correspondence*)

**Fourth Meeting** (Monday, June 26)**: Descartes and the Creation of Eternal Truths**

Required readings:

 Descartes, *Correspondence*, excerpts

 Descartes, *Meditations* I - IV

 Descartes, *Second and Sixth Replies*, excerpts

 Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*, excerpt

 Leibniz, excerpts from *Discourse on Metaphysics, Theodicy, Monadology*

 Conant, "The Search for Logically Alien Thought”, pp. 115-123

 A. W. Moore, “What Descartes Ought to Have Thought about Necessity”

 Background reading:

Curley, “Descartes on the Creation of Eternal Truths”

Frankfurt, “Descartes on the Creation of Eternal Truths”

Bennett, “Descartes’s Theory of Modality"

Geach, "Omnipotence"

 Wilson, *Descartes*, excerpt

 A. W. Moore, *The Evolution of Modern Metaphysics*, Ch. 1

**Fifth Meeting** (Monday, Feb. 2)**: Dan Kaufman on Descartes**

Required readings:

Kaufman, “Descartes’s Creation Doctrine and Modality”

 Kaufman, “God's Immutability and the Necessity of Descartes’s Eternal Truths"

 Kaufman, “Infimus gradus libertatis?”

 Waismann, “Notes on Talks with Wittgenstein"

Background readings:

 Alanen, “Omnipotence, Modality, and Conceivability”

 Richard La Croix, “Descartes on God’s Ability to Do the Logically Impossible"

 Della Rocca, "Judgment and Will"

 Schmid, "Unity of Will and Intellect"

 Spinoza, *Ethics*, excerpt

**Sixth Meeting** (Monday, Feb. 9)**: Kant on Pure General vs. Transcendental Logic**

Required readings:

 Conant, “The Search for Logically Alien Thought,” pp. 123-134

 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A50/B74-A83/B115

 Kant, *Logic*, excerpts

Background readings:

 MacFarlane, “Kant and the Formality of Logic”

 Geach, “The History of Corruptions of Logic"

 Engstrom: “Unity of Apperception"

**Seventh Meeting** (Monday, Feb. 16)**: Boyle on Kant’s Hylomorphic Conception of Logic**

Required readings:

 Boyle, “Kant on Logic and the Laws of the Understanding"

 Boyle, “Kant’s Hylomorphism”

 Kneale & Kneale, *The Development of Logic,* pp. 354 - 358

Background readings:

 MacFarlane, “Kant, Frege, and the Logic in Logicism"

Rödl, “Logical Form as Relation to the Object”

Rödl, *Categories of the Temporal*, excerpt

**Eighth Meeting** (Monday, Feb. 23)**: Frege’s Conception of Logic**

Required readings:

 Conant, “The Search for Logically Alien Thought,” pp. 134-150

 Frege, *Begriffschrift*, Preface

 Frege, *The Foundations of Arithmetic*, Introduction and Sections 1-4

 Ricketts, “Objectivity and Objecthood”

Background reading:

 van Heijenoort, “Logic as Calculus and Logic as Language”

 Carroll, “What the Tortoise Said to Achilles”

 Stroud, “Inference, Belief, and Understanding"

 Ricketts, “Frege, the *Tractatus*, and the Logocentric Predicament”

**Ninth Meeting** (Monday, March 2): **Frege on Elucidation**

Required readings:

 Frege, “On Concept and Object”

 Frege, “The Thought”

 Frege, “Logic” (1897)

 Frege, “My Basic Logical Insights”

 Geach, “Saying and Showing in Frege and Wittgenstein”

Background readings:

Taschek, “Truth, Assertion, and the Horizontal: Frege on ‘The Essence of Logic’”

Weiner, *Frege in Perspective*, ch. 6

 Travis, “When Words Fail”

 Diamond, “What Does a Begriffsschrift Do?”

**Tenth Meeting** (Monday, March 9): **Frege on Logically Alien Thought**

Required readings:

 Frege, *Basic Laws of Arithmetic*, excerpt

 Frege, “Sources of Knowledge of Mathematics and the Mathematical Natural Sciences”, excerpt

 Frege, “A Brief Survey of My Logical Doctrines”

 Stroud, “Logical Aliens and the ‘Ground’ of Logical Necessity”

Background readings:

 Haase, “The Laws of Thought and the Power of Thinking,” pp. 249-264

 Geach, “Assertion"

 Nicholas Smith, “Frege's Judgment Stroke and the Conception of Logic as the Study of Inference"

 Kimhi, *Thinking and Being*, excerpt

**Eleventh Meeting** (Monday, March 16): **Tractarian Coda**

Required readings:

 Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, excerpts

 Conant, “The Search for Logically Alien Thought,” pp. 150-161

 Sullivan, “Varieties of Alien Thought”

Background readings:

 Irad Kimhi, *Thinking and Being*, excerpt

 Bronzo, “Symbols, Signs, and Figures in Frege and Wittgenstein”

 Hylton. “Functions, Operations, and Sense in Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus*”

 Conant, “The Method of the *Tractatus*”

 Conant and Diamond, “On Reading the *Tractatus* Resolutely”