PH 327P: THE PHILOSOPHY OF WITTGENSTEIN
FALL 2009


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Office Hours: T: 3:30-4:30; W: 2:45-3:45; TH: 12:30-1:30; and by appointment

Texts:  
Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus
Notebooks 1914-1916
Philosophical Remarks
Philosophical Occasions
Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology, and Religious Belief
Philosophical Investigations
Packet of Readings

Aims of the Course: 
Ludwig Wittgenstein is often described as the greatest philosopher of the twentieth century; he is almost certainly the most widely referenced. While his work is associated with questions about the nature of language, his concerns extend to logic and mathematics, the mind, ethics, aesthetics, and religion. Above all, however, Wittgenstein’s aim is to explore the nature of philosophy itself. He is indeed quite radical in this regard, insisting on the illusory nature of philosophical problems. Thus in the Philosophical Investigations he famously describes philosophy as “a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language (PI 109).” In the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus he claims that philosophical problems result from a “misunderstanding of the logic of our language” (TLP, p. 27). Although these remarks might seem to suggest that Wittgenstein’s thought is to be understood in connection with the scientism of the Logical Positivists, he explicitly distanced himself from this whole approach. Moreover, we also find in Wittgenstein’s writings a very un-Positivistic concern with ethics and the inexpressible: “The solution of the riddle of life in space and time lies outside space and time” (TLP 6.4312). Given the apparent incompatibility of such claims, as well as the terse, aphoristic style of Wittgenstein’s writing, it is no wonder that his work has been subject to a remarkably wide variety of interpretations.

In this course, we will focus primarily on Wittgenstein’s first work, the Tractatus, and on the Philosophical Investigations, the paradigmatic expression of his later philosophy, but we will also touch on writings from his middle period. Throughout, we will be engaged in very close, careful readings of the texts, as it is only in this way that one can hope to understand the thought of this most profound and enigmatic of philosophers.
Requirements:
Regular attendance is required. Unless there is a genuine issue, you will lose one grade increment for each absence (e.g., with one absence a final grade of “A” will become an “A-”, with two it will become a B+). In addition, there will be two moderately long papers and an ongoing philosophical journal; you may be asked to do a presentation as well. Participation in class discussion is strongly encouraged.

SCHEDULE

September
9  Introduction,
11  Packet reading 1: Frege, Preface to Begriffsschrift, pp. 5-8;
    Reading 2: Frege’s “On Concept and Object,” pp. 182-188
16  “On Concept and Object,” pp. 188-194; Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (TLP) Preface; Notebooks 39 (23/1/15); Notebooks 53 (1/16/15); Packet Reading 3: Carnap’s “Elimination of Metaphysics”
18  TLP Preface; 4-4.0031, 4.1-4.122, 6.53-7; Philosophical Remarks 2; Handout: Diamond’s “Throwing Away the Ladder”
23  TLP 1-2.063; 4.1272
25  TLP 1-2.063; 3.24, Notebooks 59-71
30  TLP 2.06-2.18, Notebooks, pp. 5-30

October
2   TLP 2.1-3; 4.01-4.03; Philosophical Remarks 10-46; Packet Reading 5: Frege’s “On Sense and Meaning”
7   TLP 3-3.3; 4-4.0031; Packet reading 4: “On Denoting”; Notebooks pp. 59-71
9   Tractatus 3.31-3.5; 5.473-5.4733; Reading 6: Russell’s “Mathematical Logic”
14  TLP 4.12-4.1251; 5.55-5.5571; Notebooks, pp. 108-113; Philosophical Occasions, pp. 29-35 (“Some Remarks on Logical Form”)
16  TLP 2.2-2.225; 3.4-3.42; 4.02-4.0641; 5.51-5.5151; 4.46-4.4661; Notebooks 23-29
21  TLP 4.3-5; 6.1-6.2
23  NO CLASS (Study Day)
28  TLP 5.5; 5.54-5.641; Packet Reading 7: Russell’s “On the Nature of Truth and Falsehood”; First Paper Due
30  TLP 6.36311-7; Philosophical Occasions, pp. 37-44 (“Lecture on Ethics”); Notebooks, pp. 72-91

November
4   Lectures and Conversations, pp. 1-11, 53-72; Philosophical Occasions, pp. 161-63; 173-79; 189-95
6   Philosophical Investigations (PI) 109-33; Preface and remarks 1-24; Handout: Goldfarb’s “I Want You To Bring Me a Slab”
11  PI 25-45
13  PI 46-64
18  PI 65-108
25  NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Break)
WORKS BY WITTGENSTEIN


*Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, vol. II. Chicago, 1980.


Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief, Cyril Barrett (ed.). California.

**BIOGRAPHICAL READINGS:**

**SELECTED SECONDARY WORKS:**
Burnyeat, Miles, “Wittgenstein and Augustine’s ‘The Teacher’”, *Arist. Soc. Supp. LXI*
Goldfarb, "I Want You To Bring Me A Slab", *Synthese* 56: 265-282.
Minar, "Feeling at Home in Language (What Makes Reading *Philosophical Investigations* Possible?)", *Synthese* 102, 1995: 413-452.
Stroud, B., “Wittgenstein’s ‘Treatment’ of the Quest for ‘A language which describes my inner experiences and which only I myself can understand’”, in *Epistemology and Philosophy of Science*. Hölder Pichler Tempsky, 1983.