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# Welcome!

Topics in Analytic Philosophy

Phil 2120

# What is this course about?

Current "hot" questions

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Current "hot" questions

skepticism, truth, vagueness, causation

# Who should take this course?

Required: curious mind

Recommended: at least one philosophy course

# Goals of course

Examine central, important issues

Learn about historical roots

Improve reasoning and writing



# Topics in *Analytic* Philosophy

Phil 2120

# What is analytic philosophy?

dominant approach to philosophy in English speaking world



# What is analytic philosophy?

“... analytic philosophy is neither a fixed body of substantive doctrine, a precise methodology, nor a radical break with most traditional philosophy of the past... Instead, it is a discrete historical tradition stemming from Frege, Moore, Russell, Wittgenstein, and the logical positivists, characterized by respect for science and common sense, belief in the relevance of logic and language for philosophy,

# What is analytic philosophy?

emphasis on precision and clarity of argumentation, suspicion of apriori metaphysics, and elevation of the goals of truth and knowledge over inspiration, moral uplift, and spiritual comfort..."

(Soames, "Analytic Philosophy in America", 2006)

# What is analytic philosophy?

Bertrand Russell

*Our Knowledge of the External World*, 1914

Lecture 1:

“Philosophy, from the earliest times, has made greater claims, and achieved fewer results, than any other branch of learning.”

# Russell, Lecture 1

“The problems and the method of philosophy have, I believe, been misconceived by all schools, many of its traditional problems being insoluble with our means of knowledge, while other more neglected problems can, by a more patient and adequate method be solved with all the precision and certainty to which the most advanced sciences have attained.”

# Russell, Lecture 1

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clarity

careful reasoning  
logic

logic  
science

language

# Readings

Old:

Bertrand Russell (1872-1970)

G.E. Moore (1873-1953)

Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951)

New

...

# Requirements

do readings

come to lecture

discuss, question

1 essay

2 writing exercises

no exams



# Assessment

1 essay (65%)

2 writing exercises (25%)



participation (10%)

- # Questions about requirements?

# Lecturers

Patrick Hawley

Joe Lau



Patrick Hawley  
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# Website

<http://philosophy.hku.hk/courses/200607/phil2120/>

# Readings

Website or Philosophy Office

# Reading this week

Stroud, chapter 1

*The Significance of Philosophical Skepticism*

# Academic honesty

No plagiarism.



# Academic honesty

Submit work to [turnitin.com](https://turnitin.com)