PHILOSOPHY 607: Analytic Philosophy

Fall 2019: Course Syllabus

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Office hours: MW 8-10, and by appointment  Tuesday 1000-1250

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“I shall mean by ‘linguistic philosophy’ the view that philosophical problems are problems which may be solved (or dissolved) either by reforming language or by understanding more about the language we presently use.” (Richard Rorty, 1967)

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Course Description: We will begin by examining the motivating values and assumptions that gave rise to the primary focus on language, reference, and truth that characterized early analytic philosophy (e.g., Schlick, Ayer, Frege, Hempel) in the form of logical empiricism. Some of these key assumptions then led to criticisms and to richer and more adequate alternative views by Austin, Wittgenstein, Quine, Putnam, Kuhn, and Anderson. This opened the way for neo-pragmatism (e.g., Rorty) and for more recent extensive work on the cooperative intersection of analytic philosophy of mind and language with research in cognitive science. Although the main focus is on issues concerning mind, meaning, language, and truth, we will consider implications cognitive science for ethics (e.g., MacIntyre, Johnson, Churchland, Flanagan).

Readings: All of the readings are in a course packet available at The Copy Shop on 13th Ave.

Schedule of Topics/Readings

Week 1 (October 1) – Introduction
Moritz Schlick, “The Future of Philosophy” (1932)

Week 2 (October 8)
Gottlob Frege: “Sense and Reference” (1892, pp. 56-65) and “The Thought: A Logical Inquiry” (1918, pp. 517-527; 531-534).

Week 3 (October 15)
John Austin, “Performative Utterances”[from Austin, Philosophical Papers (1961, 2nd ed. 1970)]
John Searle, “What is a Speech Act?” [from Max Black (ed.), Philosophy in America (1965)]
Week 4 (October 22)
Ludwig Wittgenstein, Excerpts from *Philosophical Investigations* (1958)

Week 5 (October 29)
W.V.O. Quine, “Two Dogmas of Empiricism” [from *From a Logical Point of View* (1953)]

Week 6 (November 5)
Hilary Putnam “Two Philosophical Perspectives” [from *Reason, Truth, and History* (1981)]
Elizabeth Anderson, “Feminist Epistemology: An Interpretation and a Defense” [from *Hypatia* (1995)]

Week 7 (November 12)

Week 8 (November 19)
John Searle, “Can Computers Think?” [Ch. 2 of *Minds, Brains, Science* (1986)]

Week 9 (November 26)
Alasdair Maclntyre, “Why the Enlightenment Project had to Fail” [from *After Virtue* (1981)]
Mark Johnson, “Moral Fundamentalism is Immoral” [from *Morality for Humans* (2014)]

Week 10 (December 3)
Paul Churchland, “Toward a Cognitive Neurobiology of the Moral Virtues” [from *Neurophilosophy at Work* (2007)]

**Grading:** Grades will be based on two writing assignments. The first is a short (maximum of 5 double-spaced typewritten pages) on a topic assigned by me, constituting one-third of your grade. The second is a term paper (maximum of 15 double-spaced, typewritten pages) on a topic of your choosing, but subject to approval by me. This term paper, due Tuesday of final exam week, will constitute two-thirds of your grade.