

PHIL 3130 Contemporary British and American Philosophy
Tues. & Thurs. 4:00-5:20, MACK 224

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OVERVIEW

From the late nineteenth through the twentieth century we have witnessed upheavals and innovations in the sciences, including biology, physics, and psychology. Each upheaval, whether it is the refinement of the theory of evolution, quantum physics, or psychoanalysis, has suggested major transformations of our perspective on the world and the place of human beings in the world. In this course, we will focus on responses to developments in psychology in British and American philosophy from the late nineteenth century up to roughly 1960. From Francis Bacon through John Stuart Mill, British and subsequently American philosophy has traditionally been associated with empiricism, and the history that we will read is in large part a matter of attempts to sort the wheat from the chaff of this tradition, and to settle the questions such as: what is the role of introspection in psychology, what is consciousness, what are sensations, what is memory, what is the self? Since behaviourism (a methodology that attempts to spell out all mental terms in terms of overt behaviours) is the major scientific approach to psychology in the twentieth century (at least in the English speaking world) many of our texts will be grappling with questions about whether there is anything going on 'inside,' i.e., what is the status of consciousness given this methodology. Finally, we will often discuss metatheoretical and metaphilosophical issues such as what should a theory of mind look like? How should philosophy be conducted? How does philosophical inquiry differ (if at all) from scientific investigation? The period that we are studying in Anglo-American philosophy represents the rise of so-called analytical philosophy, and we will be studying the motives and implications of that movement primarily as it bears on reflection on psychological issues.

TEXTS

You will need to have access to the follow books at the relevant times during the semester. It will be helpful if you use the editions ordered for this course:

William James, *The Essential Writings*, ed. Bruce Wilshire, SUNY Press.
Bertrand Russell, *An Analysis of Mind* (available as a .pdf file on CourseLink).
Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Wiley-Blackwell.
Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind*, University of Chicago Press.
Peter Geach, *Mental Acts*, St. Augustine's Press.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course aims at:

1. Bringing about a greater understanding of issues in philosophical psychology.
2. Bringing about an appreciation of the value of studying the history of philosophy to the understanding of current philosophical issues.
3. Bringing about a deeper appreciation of the nature and value of the philosophical enterprise.
4. Enhancing the student's ability to read philosophical texts.
5. Enhancing the student's ability to discuss philosophical views and form well-defended views about philosophical issues.
6. Enhancing the student's understanding of and ability to write about and speak about philosophical concerning philosophical psychology.

EVALUATION**Critical Reading Questions (25%)**

At regular intervals (see READING SCHEDULE) each student must submit a one to two page typed response to an assigned reading question. The purpose of this assignment is to prompt a careful and attentive reading and to prepare for an in-depth discussion of that text. Your responses to these questions will be graded out of a ten point scale (10 = a targeted response to the question that reflects careful reading and cogent philosophical thinking).

Take Home Exams (Mid-term: 25%, Final Exam: 30%)

These will consist in a set of two or three questions about the texts to which you will have one week to respond. You will be on your honour to do your own work.

Secondary Literature Assessment (20%)

This will be a short (roughly five to eight page) paper. Your task is to find two scholarly articles written in the last ten years that take different interpretations on the same issue regarding one of the texts on our syllabus. You are to critically evaluate their positions to determine which (if either) is correct, comparing both to the text as you read it. You will be graded for your ability to present the conflicting views and the issue that divides them concisely and sensitively, and then on your ability to assess their positions, and finally on your ability to employ the primary text to some resolution of the issue. Further instruction and guidance will be given closer to the due date (see READING SCHEDULE).

IMPORTANT COURSE POLICIES**E-mail Communication**

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the university and its students.

When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement...

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the undergraduate calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

Drop Date

The last date to drop one-semester Fall 2010 courses, without academic penalty, is **Thursday November 4**. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the Undergraduate Calendar:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

Copies of out-of-class assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Academic Misconduct

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and enjoins all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

Recording of Materials

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded in any electronic media without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer.

Resources

The Undergraduate Calendar is the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate programs. It can be found at:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/>

READING SCHEDULE

KEY

EW = JAMES, ESSENTIAL WRITINGS

AM = RUSSELL, ANALYSIS OF MIND

PI = WITTGENSTEIN, PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS

CM = RYLE, CONCEPT OF MIND

MA = GEACH, MENTAL ACTS

RQ = READING QUESTION DUE

| Week | Topic | Readings/Assignments |
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| <u>Week I</u> | | |
| Sept 9 | Course overview, Intro to William James | |
| <u>Week II</u> | | |
| Sept 14 | Course Overview | “Spencer’s Definition of Mind as Correspondence,” EW 9-24; |
| Sept 16 | William James | “The Sentiment of Rationality” EW 25-38, RQ |
| <u>Week III</u> | | |
| Sept 21 | William James | <i>Principles of Psychology</i> , EW 44-69 |
| Sept 23 | William James | <i>Principles</i> , EW 69-110, RQ |
| <u>Week IV</u> | | |
| Sept 28 | William James | <i>Principles</i> , EW 110-160 |
| Sept 30 | William James | <i>Essays in Radical Empiricism</i> , EW 162-198, RQ |
| <u>Week V</u> | | |
| Oct 5 | Russell | AM, Lectures I & IV, |
| Oct 7 | Russell | AM, Lectures V, VI, VII, RQ |
| <u>Week VI</u> | | |
| Oct 12 | Russell | AM Lectures VIII, IX |
| Oct 14 | Russell | AM Lectures X, XV, RQ |

Week VII

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| Oct 19 | Wittgenstein | PI §1-25, Take Home Midterm Distributed |
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| Oct 21 | Wittgenstein | PI §26-64 |
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Week VIII

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| Oct 26 | Midterm Due | |
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| Oct 28 | Wittgenstein | PI §65-120 |
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Week IX

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| Nov 2 | Wittgenstein | PI §121-170 |
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| Nov 4 | Wittgenstein | PI§171-242 |
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Week X

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| Nov 9 | Wittgenstein | PI §243-332 |
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| Nov 11 | Wittgenstein | PI §333-427 |
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Week XI

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| Nov 16 | Ryle | CM, 7-61 |
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| Nov 19 | Ryle | CM 154-198, RQ |
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Week XII

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| Nov 23 | Ryle | CM 199-234, 319-330 |
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| Nov 25 | Geach | MA, 1-44 |
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Week XIII

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| Nov 30 | Geach | MA 75-79, 101-129, Final distributed |
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| Dec 2 | Following Monday schedule (No classes) | |
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Take Home Final Due Date: Dec. 7

Secondary Literature Assessment Due Date: Dec. 13