PHIL 29200/29300

Winter 2010

Philosophy of Logic:
Propositions, Inference, and Truth

Syllabus

Instructor: Silver Bronzo
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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

We will approach some central areas in the Philosophy of Logic by studying three problems that were intensely discussed by early analytic philosophers: (1) the problem of the unity of the proposition (how is it that a proposition is not a mere list of words but a unity that manages to say something?), (2) the problem of the justification of inference (in virtue of what are propositions related to one another in certain logically determinate ways?), and (3) the problem of the assertoric force of judgment (how is it that in a judgment a mere propositional content comes to make a claim on the world and becomes in this way determinately true or false?). Any attempt to address each of these problems can seem to face an infinite regress. We will emphasize the structural similarity of these three problems, consider some diagnoses of their sources, and compare different strategies for their solution. Since particular attention will be given to the way in which these problems are discussed in Wittgenstein’s Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, the class will also provide an entry into some of the central views of this difficult book. We will also read texts by Frege, Bradley, Carroll, Geach, Russell, Stroud, and Tarski, among others. There are no prerequisites, though some knowledge of elementary logic is recommended.

Course Requirements

a) Position Papers. Every student will be required to write at least one short “position paper” (about 2 pages) for each of the three parts of the course (for a total of at least 3 position papers per student). Position papers should focus on the readings assigned for the upcoming class and show a serious engagement with the texts. The paper should be
posted onto Chalk no less than 24 hours before the class meets. All other students will be required to read the position papers for the upcoming meeting before coming to class. Discussion of the assigned readings in response to the position papers in the forum of the class’s Chalk “Discussion Board” will also be highly encouraged.

b) Final paper (10-12 pages) will also be required for the class and should be turned in by Monday of the 11th week, no later than 4.00 pm.

**Required Texts and Readings**


These texts have been ordered and are now available at the Seminary Coop Bookstore.

All other required and optional readings will be made available on Chalk.

**Schedule of Readings**

(The schedule for Part III is subject to revision; updated versions of the syllabus will be made available as the class goes along)

**PART I: THE UNITY OF THE PROPOSITION**

1st Week

1) Introduction

2) Bradley’s Regress

   - J. Searle, “The Unity of the Proposition”
   - F.H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, Ch. II: “Substantive and Adjective”

2nd Week

3) Russell and Propositional Unity:

   *The Principle of Mathematics* (1903)

   - P. Hylton, “The Nature of the Proposition and the Revolt Against Idealism”
4) Russell and Propositional Unity:
the “Multiple Relation Theory of Judgment” (1910-1913)
- Russell, *Theory of Knowledge*, Part I, Ch IX: “Logical Data” (1913)

3rd Week 5) Frege: Concepts, Objects and Judgeable Contents
- G. Frege, “On Concept and Object” (in *TFR*)
- G. Frege, *Excepts*
- D. Wiggins, “The Sense and Reference of Predicates: A Running Repair to Frege’s Doctrine and a Plea for the Copula” (focus on the criticisms of Frege’s views, and in particular on Wiggins’ “protest” at the bottom of p. 324)

6) Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* on the Unity of Facts/Propositions
- Wittgenstein, *Lectures 1930-32*, pp. 119-120
- L. Linsky, “The Unity of the Proposition”, pp. 262-273

PART II: THE JUSTIFICATION OF INFERENCE

4th Week 7) Carroll’s Paradox, Premises and Rules of Inference
- L. Carroll, “What the Tortoise Said to Achilles”
- L. Carroll, “Letter to the editor of *Mind*”
- B. Russell, *Principles of Mathematics*, § 38

Optional: In case you want to refresh your memory about the nature and use of Rules of Inference, you might want to look at this:

8) Knowing How and Knowing That
- G. Ryle, “Knowing How and Knowing That”
- D. G. Brown, “What the Tortoise Taught Us”
5th Week  9) The Psychological Interpretation and the “Humean Solution”

- B. Stroud, “Inference, Belief and Understanding”

10) Continued

- S. Blackburn, “Practical Tortoise Raising”

6th Week  11) Wittgenstein’s Tractatus on Inference

- Wittgenstein, TLP §§5.101-5.132
- Wittgenstein, Lectures 1930-1932, pp. 56-58
- I. Proops, “The Tractatus on Inference and Entailment”

12) Continued

- M. Kremer, “The Purpose of Tractarian Nonsense”

PART III: TRUTH AND ASSERTORIC FORCE

7th Week  13) Defining Truth

- P. Horwich, “Theories of Truth”
- R. Kirkham, “Theories of Truth”, Ch. V

14) Continued


8th Week  15) Frege and the Content/Force Distinction

- Frege, Begriffsschrift, Preface, §§1-5 (in TFR, pp. 48-58)
- P. Geach, “Assertion”

16) Frege’s Mature Conception of Judgment

- Frege, “On Sinn and Bedeutung” (in TFR, 151-71)
9th Week  17) Frege on the Indefinability of Truth

- Frege, “Thought” (in TFR, pp. 325-345)
- “My Basic Logical Insights” (in TFR, pp. 322-324)
- “1987 Logic” (in TFR), pp. 227-229
- T. Ricketts, “Truth and Logic in Frege”

18) The Tractatus on Assertion and Truth

- TLP, §§ 4-5 (focus especially on 4.063, 4.064, 4.442)
- I. Proops, “Early Wittgenstein on Logical Assertion”
- Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, §§ 22-23

10th Week  19) Continued

- C. Diamond, “Unfolding Truth and Reading Wittgenstein”

Further optional readings that will be available on Chalk

Part I

- F. Bradley, “Reality and Thought”
- R. Gaskin, “Bradley’s Regress, the Copula and the Unity of the Proposition”
- B. Russell, “What is Logic?” (1912)
- B. Russell, Theory of Knowledge, Part II, Ch. I: “The Understanding of Propositions” (1913)
- S. Candlish, “The Unity of the Proposition and Russell’s Theories of Judgment”
- G. Stevens, “‘The truth and nothing but the truth, yet never the whole truth’: Frege, Russell and the Analysis of Unities”
- G. Stevens, “Russell’s Re-psychologizing of the Proposition”
- G. Stevens, “Wittgenstein and Russell on the Unity of the Proposition”
- M. Gibson, From Naming to Saying: The Unity of the Proposition, Part I: “Classical Theories of the Unity of the Proposition” [There is chapter on Frege, one on Russell, and one on the Tractatus]

Part II

- G. Ryle, “‘If’, ‘So”, and ‘Because’”
- M. Black, “The Justification of Logical Axioms”
- Wittgenstein, Philosophical Grammar, Excerpts
- S. Haack, “The Justification of Deduction”
- P. Engel, “Dummett, Achilles and the Tortoise”
- J. Conant & C. Diamond, “On Reading the Tractatus Resolutely”
Part III

- W.W. Taschek, “Truth, Assertion and the Horizontal”
- H. Sluga, “Frege on the Undefinability of Truth”
- C. Diamond, “Truth before Tarski”