

Date updated: 1/8/2025

Syllabus

The University of New Orleans

Dept. of Philosophy

PHIL 3500: The Philosophy of Wittgenstein (3 credits)

SECTION O001: Online

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Sara Bizarro
Office: LA 107
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Required Texts

Grayling, A. C., *Wittgenstein, A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2001 * ISBN: 0192854119
Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Translated by Pears and B.F. McGuinness, Routledge, 1961, 1974 * ISBN 10: 0-415-25408-6; ISBN 13: 978-0-415-25408-3
Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Philosophical Investigations*, Translated by G.E.M. Anscombe, P.M.S. Hacker and Joachim Schulte, Revised 4th Edition, Wiley Blackwell, 2009 * ISBN 978-1-4051-5929-6
Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *The Blue and Brown Books*, Harper Torchbooks; First Paperback Edition (January 1, 1965) ISBN 13 978-0061312113

Course Description

CATALOG DESCRIPTION: A close and critical examination of the works of Ludwig Wittgenstein, widely regarded as the most important philosopher of the 20th Century.

COURSE OVERVIEW: In this course we will address the work of philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein the way he intended, presenting first the *Tractatus* and then followed by his *Philosophical Investigations*. The *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* was the only book Wittgenstein published in his lifetime, but when he died, he left instructions for the *Tractatus* to be published with his *Philosophical Investigations* (which never happened, but we will look at both in this course, as the second book is a departure from the views presented in the first book and is better understood in contrast. Wittgenstein's work is very challenging and there is some background that needs to be addressed in order to understand his earlier work, including Frege and Russell's work on the foundations of logic, as well as the cultural background from which he emerged and the scientific milieu that formed his views. The later work, present in the *Blue and Brown Books* and the *Philosophical Investigations*, is to be understood as contrasting with his earlier views on language. Both of the books had a major impact on philosophy in different ways; his early work was influential in the Vienna Circle and laid the groundwork for the analytic philosophy of the 20th century. His later work led to the "linguistic turn," a term popularized by Richard Rorty, the idea that philosophy mainly focuses on the relationships between language, language users, and the world.

Outcomes

Upon successfully completing this course, students will be able to do the following:

- Have a grasp of the history of philosophy of logic, including Frege and Russells' works.
- Explain what Wittgenstein was trying to do in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*,
- Describe what Truth Tables are and why Wittgenstein thought they were crucial to understanding the nature of logic.
- Use reasoning skills to analyse and evaluation the proposals in the Tractatus. while referring to the theories and ideas learned in class.
- Discuss and contrast the views of the early and the late Wittgenstein and compare the *Philosophical Investigations* with the *Tractatus*.

Grades

Grades will be based on a 100 percent scale distributed as follows:

Requirement		Final grade	
Perusall Reading Assignments	20		
Discussions	20	A	100 – 90
Quizzes	20	B	89 – 80
Midterm and Final Exams	20	C	79 – 70
Final Project	20	D	69 – 60
Total	100	F	59 – 0

*Grades over .5 will be rounded up, so 89.5 will be rounded up to 90.

LATE WORK: Reading assignments and discussions can be submitted up to 10 days. Perusall assignments have a penalty that increases gradually as more days pass, up to a maximum of 10 days. After those 10 days extensions will only be granted in extreme and documented circumstances. In most cases no extensions will be granted. Quizzes must be taken or executed on before the due date. If you have a situation that you believe is an extenuating circumstance, you can only ask for consideration with written documentation. If you encounter any unexpected circumstances make sure to document it, as extensions will not be granted without documentation.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Academic honesty is essential for learning, evaluating academic performance, and the entire educational function of a University. For this reason, academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to, the following: cheating, plagiarism, tampering with academic records and examinations, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. The student code is available on Moodle and online at <http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu>. Each student is required to pledge that all completed work will be submitted according to the principles of academic integrity as defined in the statement on Academic Dishonesty in the UNO Student Code of Conduct.

AI USE: Any and all AI use needs to be explicitly acknowledged and detailed in a note on your work at the end of each assignment where AI was used in any way. AI can be used to research and brainstorm, but it is NOT acceptable to submit anything written by AI, that is **you** need to write all your written submissions yourself, in any written work you submit. Please note that Perusall warns me of any comment that is copy/pasted so you need to type or dictate directly on the program. Please check your work with Chat GPT Zero if you want to make sure your text is not showing up as AI-created. Anything that shows up as AI-created will need to be re-written and an oral presentation of the topic in my office will be required. You can check Chat GPT Zero here: <https://gptzero.me/>

READINGS: Students will be expected to keep up on the weekly readings, reading assignments on Perusall (more information about this on Canvas.) All required readings will be posted on Canvas. The course book is useful for the final project, but all the material is posted and there is no need to purchase any course books for this class. You will need to pay a \$5 fee to use Perusall. Readings need to be completed within 10 days of the due date, and if after the due date they have 20% penalty. After the 10 days the reading/discussion post will no longer be graded.

DISCUSSIONS: Discussions will happen also on Discussion Boards on Canvas. We will also have optional discussions with both an in-person and online component; these will not count for the grade since this is an online asynchronous class, any live events are entirely optional. All the important information will be posted on canvas.

QUIZZES: There are weekly quizzes to make sure you are following along with the material presented. Quizzes are at the end of each folder, they have 5 questions regarding the topics of the week and two attempts. Quizzes need to be taken in the week we are on with a 10 day extension and a 20% late penalty. If quizzes are missed, they will have a zero.

EXAMS: There are two exams that need to be taken with Respondus Lockdown Browser. They are open book and consist of several multiple-choice questions that may or may not have appeared in the previous quizzes and one long-form essay question. Possible essay questions will be shared in advance so the students can prepare.

FINAL PROJECT: The final project can be an essay, a film, a piece of music, or a painting. Any artistic project should be accompanied with an explanation of how the project is inspired by Wittgenstein. There are many artists that were inspired by Wittgenstein to create art, and examples will be posted throughout the course.

CONTENT NOTICE/TRIGGER WARNING: This is a philosophy class, there are topics that may be problematic for some students, for instance, questioning if reality exists, discussing arguments for the existence of God, discussing solipsism (the idea that I alone exist) and questions about life, death, and suicide may be discussed as well. Please be advised that I am not a mental health professional and anything in the class that affects you should be discussed directly with the professionals that support you and I cannot give mental health advice to students.

INCOMPLETES: Incompletes are only granted in extreme and documented extenuating circumstances and must be discussed and arranged well before the last class meeting. If a student asks for an incomplete at the end of the course, it will be denied, unless there are extreme and documented medical or other severe circumstances. If your situation is not documented, you need to find a way to officially confirm the reason why you are asking for an incomplete.

WITHDRAWALS: Check the academic calendar for withdrawal dates. You do not need to tell me anything, you can withdraw within the University rules. I understand that life happens and sometimes it is not the right time to take a class. You can always return to it the following semester.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS: It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services as well as their instructors to discuss their individual needs for accommodation. For more information, please go to <http://www.ods.uno.edu>.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES: Please remember that both the Library and Learning Resource Center are available to assist all students regarding writing and research.

PHIL 3500 – Online - Spring 2025 Timeline

(subject to revision, test dates and Exam dates TBA)

DAY	TOPIC/READING
Week 1	<p>Wittgenstein’s Biography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required Readings: Grayling, A. C., <i>Wittgenstein, A Very Short Introduction</i>, p. 12-25 (On Perusall)
Week 2	<p>Wittgenstein’s Cultural and Scientific Background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was turn of the century Vienna? • Who were Wittgenstein’s main influences? Schopenhauer, Tolstoy, Karl Kraus • Who were Wittgenstein’s main scientific influences? Helmholtz, Mach, Hertz and Boltzmann. • Required Reading:

Week 3	<p>Wittgenstein's Influences: Gottlob Frege</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was Frege's main contribution to logic? • How did the "sense" and "reference" distinction influenced Wittgenstein. • Required Reading: Frege, "On Sense and Reference."
Week 4	<p>Wittgenstein's Influences: Bertrand Russell</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bertrand Russell's <i>Principles of Mathematics</i>. • Russell's theory of Definite Descriptions. • Required Reading: Russell, "On Denoting."
Week 5	<p>Wittgenstein's Tractatus: Frege and Russell and Wittgenstein's <i>Tractatus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frege, Russell and Wittgenstein's <i>Tractatus</i> • Required Reading: <i>Tractatus</i>, Russell's Introduction and Wittgenstein's preface.
Week 6	<p><i>Tractatus</i> 1-3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Picture Theory of Meaning • Required Reading: <i>Tractatus</i> 1-3
Week 7	<p><i>Tractatus</i> 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language as a logical picture of reality. • Philosophical problems as misunderstandings of language. • Required Reading: <i>Tractatus</i> 4 <p>Mid-term Exam</p>
Week 8	<p><i>Tractatus</i> 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Truth Functions and Truth Tables. • Required Reading: <i>Tractatus</i> 5
Week 9	<p><i>Tractatus</i> 6-7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Mystical and what cannot be said. • Required Reading: <i>Tractatus</i> 6-7 • Required Listening: M.A. Numminen, <i>Tractatus Suite</i>

Week 10	<p>Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the Vienna Circle and how did Wittgenstein’s work influence them? • What are the similarities and differences between Wittgenstein’s project and the Vienna Circle’s project? • Required Reading: Carnap, “The Elimination of Metaphysics through the Logical Analysis of Language.
Week 11	<p>Investigations 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaning and use. • What is the difference between the concept of meaning in the <i>Tractatus</i> and in the <i>Philosophical Investigations</i>? • Required Reading: Wittgenstein, <i>Philosophical Investigations</i>.
Week 12	<p>Investigations 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language Games and Family Resemblance. • What is the idea of a Language Game? When does a Language Game create meaning? • Required Reading: Wittgenstein, <i>Philosophical Investigations</i>.
Week 13	<p>Investigations 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private Language Argument • Required Readings: Wittgenstein, <i>Philosophical Investigations</i>.
Week 14	<p>Art Inspired by Wittgenstein</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Films and Music Inspired by Wittgenstein • Required Viewing: Derek Jarman, <i>Wittgenstein</i>
Week 15	<p>Student Projects Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will briefly present their final project and explain how it was inspired by Wittgenstein.
Exam	<p>Final Exam</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes both <i>Tractatus</i> and <i>Investigations</i> and asks to compare and contrast both works.