

Department: Philosophy

Course number: PHIL 225W

Title: Analysis and Ordinary Language

Credits: 3

Contact Person: Donald Baxter

Catalog Copy: - Either semester. Three credits. Prerequisite: At least one of Phil 210, 221, 222, 227; ENGL 105 or 110 or 111 or 250. The reaction, after Russell, against formal theories and the belief in an ideal language, and the turn to familiar common sense "cases" and everyday language in judging philosophical claims. Russell, Moore, Wittgenstein, Ryle, and Strawson. .

W Criteria: -In order to gain an appreciation of what Russell, Moore, and Wittgenstein (for example) were doing, one must write essays about the problems with which they were grappling. It is only by trying to address the problems oneself that one can see just how good these philosophers were. The authors studied in this class are among the clearest and most logically precise of any writers in the English language, and students find studying and writing about these authors and their arguments to be an enormously valuable intellectual activity.

The course has in the past standardly required three papers of 5-8 pages each, one on each of the major philosophers; and such writing has counted for 66% of the final grade. In addition, in the past the course has been run with considerable feedback from student to student. Each student does a class presentation analysing one of the arguments in the reading, and every other student hands in written questions about every such presentation. This has proven to be quite effective at teaching students how to critique one another's arguments, and how to respond to such critiques. The instructor provides written comments on each essay, as well as time as needed in individual conferences before each presentation.

A simple way to accommodate the requirement for structured revision is that henceforth, a second and final draft of each essay will also be required, taking into account the written suggestions, and all the comments and critiques made on the argument presented in class. Class participation and the final exam will probably count less in the final grade than they have in the past, so that the revisions are treated with sufficient seriousness.

Role of Grad Students: - None. The course has been solely the responsibility of the professor.