

Wittgenstein

Fall 2018-Winter 2019

In this seminar, we'll be discussing a generous sample of Wittgenstein's writings in chronological order, from the early *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, through the transitional writings of the late 1920s and 30s, to the middle period of *Philosophical Investigations* and *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, ending with some of his final writings, the late notebook entries collected as *On Certainty*. Wittgenstein touched on many topics in the course of his career, so to keep things manageable, we'll focus on four themes: the philosophy of logic, the philosophy of mathematics, skepticism, and meta-philosophy. One incidental moral will be that we better understand the so-called 'late' Wittgenstein (usually meaning *PI* and *RFM*) when we see the lingering traces of the so-called 'early' Wittgenstein (usually meaning the *Tractatus*), and better understand the 'early' Wittgenstein when we can see within it the seeds of the 'late'. (The rough breakdown we're following is early, transitional, middle, and final.)

The default requirement for first-year LPS students taking the course for a grade (other than S/U, which involves only reading and attending) is three short papers (750-1250 words) due at the beginning of class in the 4th, 7th, and 10th weeks. These papers should isolate one localized philosophical, conceptual or methodological point within one of the readings (without appeal to outside sources) and offer some analysis and/or critique. The thesis and its defense needn't be earth-shattering in any way; this is really just an exercise in finding a topic of the right size and crafting a thesis and defense to match. I encourage writers to email me their topic and thesis for discussion well before the due date.

Other options are open to negotiation.

I assume everyone has access to copies of

Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 4th edition.

Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics.

On Certainty.

The rest of the assigned readings are available from the syllabus on the course web site, including Kevin Klement's three-column version of the *Tractatus* with both the Ogden and the Pear-McGuinness translations alongside the original German. The following guidebooks have been set aside in the Reserve Room at Langston Library:

Black, *A Companion to Wittgenstein's Tractatus.*

Morris, *Wittgenstein and the Tractatus.*

White, *Wittgenstein's Tractatus.*

Fogelin, *Wittgenstein.*

Stern, *Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations.*

McGinn, *Wittgenstein and the Philosophical Investigations.*

Hamilton, *Wittgenstein and On Certainty.*

Please come to the first meeting prepared to discuss the reading in Topic 1.

Topics

We set the stage with a look at some aspects of the philosophical context in which Wittgenstein first found himself. (This also gives us room to find our feet, philosophically, before embarking on the mysteries of the *Tractatus*.)

1. Some figures in the background I

Maddy, *The Logical Must*, pp. 1-36.

Heis, 'The priority principle from Kant to Frege'.

The first selection includes a refresher summary of Kant and an introduction to a particular brand of naturalism that will color some of our discussions. Heis's paper traces how the 'priority principle' -- judgments are prior to concepts -- evolved from Kant to Frege.

Extra reading:

Anderson, 'Neo-Kantianism and the roots of anti-psychologism'.

Frege, 'The thought'.

2. Some figures in the background II

Frege, *Grundgesetze der Arithmetik*, pp. 201-204.

'On concept and object'.

Ricketts, 'Concepts, objects and the context principle', pp. 179-199.

Zalabardo, 'Russell's theories of judgment'.

Extra reading:

Frege 'Comments on Sinn and *Bedeutung*'.

Burge, 'Frege on the extensions of concepts'.

Proops, 'What is Frege's "concept horse problem"?'.

By 1903, Russell's *Principles of Mathematics* and Frege's *Grundgesetze* had peaked Wittgenstein's in logic and the foundations of mathematics. He visited Frege several times, but Frege ultimately advised him to pursue his formal studies with Russell. Wittgenstein arrived in Cambridge in 1911, left to work in Norway in 1913, then fought in World War I. The *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* was completed in 1918 and eventually published in 1921 (in German) and 1922 (in a dual-language edition, the so-called Ogden translation, to which Ramsey contributed).

We'll be reading the *Tractatus* over the next four weeks. There won't be many pages of assigned reading for the first two sessions, but you'll need the extra time to ponder and to dip into some of the standard secondary sources.

Introductions:

Anscombe, *An Introduction to Wittgenstein's Tractatus*.
Black, *A Companion to Wittgenstein's Tractatus*.
Fogelin, *Wittgenstein*.
Morris, *Wittgenstein and the Tractatus*.
Mounce, *Wittgenstein's Tractatus: an Introduction*.
Stenius, *Wittgenstein's Tractatus*.
White, *Wittgenstein's Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*.

Black is essential for his line-by-line readings and the references he provides -- start there. Anscombe, Fogelin, and Stenius are classics. Mounce is the most elementary. Morris and White are recent and accessible.

Another useful resource:

University of Iowa *Tractatus* map:
<http://tractatus.lib.uiowa.edu/tlp/>

A few more advanced treatments:

Hacker, *Insight and Illusion*.
McGinn, *Elucidating the Tractatus*.
Pears, *The False Prison*, volume I.
Stern, *Wittgenstein on Mind and Language*, Part I.
Zalabardo, *Representation and Reality in Wittgenstein's Tractatus*.

3. *Tractatus* I: Ontology and the picture theory

Tractatus, Preface and 1-3.42.

Questions to ponder as you read: what holds objects together into a fact?, why must there be simple objects?, what is the picturing relation?, what ties a name to the simple it names?

4. *Tractatus* II: Propositions and logic

Tractatus, 3.5-5.143.

Questions to ponder as you read: why can't logical form be represented?, how do we know that p follows from q?

5. *Tractatus* III: More logic and math, and some troubles

Tractatus, 5.2-5.5571, 6-6.3751.

Ricketts, 'Frege, the *Tractatus*, and the logocentric predicament'.

Goldfarb, 'Objects, names, and realism in the *Tractatus*', pp. 1-22.

Extra reading

Ricketts, 'Pictures, logic, and the limits of sense'.

Concerns of this sort have led commentators in various directions. One is a kind of linguistic Kantianism (Topic #6 below). Another is the so-called 'New Wittgenstein' (Topic #7 below).

6. *Tractatus* IV: was Wittgenstein a Kantian?

Tractatus, 5.6-5.641, 6.4-6.45.

White, *Wittgenstein's Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, pp. 26-28.

Maddy, *The Logical Must*, pp. 37-61.

White, *Wittgenstein's Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, pp. 98-100.

Moore, 'Was the author of the *Tractatus* a transcendental idealist?'

Sullivan, 'Idealism in Wittgenstein: a further reply to Moore'.

Moore and Sullivan disagree, though neither would see Wittgenstein as a realist. My selection comes back to Kant-inflected but anti-idealist reading with a naturalistic twist. White sets the question nicely and concludes that the contrast in fact dissolves.

Extra reading

Sullivan, 'The "truth" in solipsism and Wittgenstein's rejection of the a priori'.

McGinn, Marie, 'Simples and the idea of analysis in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*'.

7. *Tractatus* V: The new Wittgenstein

Tractatus, 6.53-7.

Goldfarb, 'Das Überwinden: anti-metaphysical readings of the *Tractatus*'.

White, 'Throwing the baby out with the ladder'.

Extra reading

Diamond, 'Throwing away the ladder: the *Tractatus*'.

Goldfarb, 'Metaphysics and nonsense: on Cora Diamond's *The Realistic Spirit*'.

After the war, Wittgenstein gave up philosophy. He worked as a school teacher, gardener, architect during the 1920s before returning to Cambridge in 1929. The first draft of what would become the *Philosophical Investigations* was written in 1936. The 'transitional' or sometimes 'middle' Wittgenstein covers the writings in between. During that period, Wittgenstein filled many notebooks from which passages were extracted, rearranged, revised, and combined to form the works we now know. He prepared the *Philosophical Remarks* in 1930 when Russell needed to write a report on his new work for the university. He prepared the *Big Typescript* (TS 213) from notebooks dated 1932-3 -- a scholarly edition was finally published in 2005. (Rush Rhees prepared a selection known as the *Philosophical Grammar* that appeared

in 1969 in German, and 1974 in English. We'll stick to the more definitive 2005 version.) For information on the sources of these manuscripts, see Stern, *Wittgenstein on Mind and Language*, pp. 91-94.

As we've seen, these writings present one of the strongest objections to the New Wittgenstein: the actual doctrines of the *Tractatus* are persistently criticized and as Stern writes, 'there was no trace of the argumentative strategy Diamond attributes to the *Tractatus* in the *Nachlass* materials from 1929 to the early 1930s' ('Wittgenstein in the 1930s', p. 134).

8. The transitional period I

The color exclusion problem:

Waisman, *Ludwig Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle*, pp. 63-4.

Philosophical Remarks, chapter VIII.

The Big Typescript, chapter 28.

After a period of attempting to replace the truth-functional analysis of the *Tractatus* with a phenomenological analysis (see Stern, 'The middle Wittgenstein', pp. 23-215, *The Big Typescript*, chapter 101), Wittgenstein determined that ordinary language itself is the proper object of study. This brings his characteristic notions of 'grammar' and 'rules' to the fore.

Sense -- grammar and verification:

Philosophical Remarks, chapters I and IV.

The Big Typescript, chapters 18-19, 56-57, 60.

Mathematics, proof:

Philosophical Remarks, §166 and chapter XIII.

Extra reading

Moore, 'Wittgenstein on grammar'.

9. The transitional period II

Mathematics, proof:

The Big Typescript, chapters 110, 119-122.

Mathematics vs. science:

Philosophical Remarks, §§119, 225-230.

Mathematics, set theory, and the infinite:

Philosophical Remarks, §§123-7, 141-7, 170-4.

The Big Typescript, chapters 136-7.

Extra reading

Stern, 'Wittgenstein in the 1930s'.

Stern, *Wittgenstein on Mind and Language*, chapter 4.

Maddy, 'Mathematical alchemy', pp. 284-291.

As mentioned above, the first draft of the *Philosophical Investigations* dates to 1936. It corresponds to §§1-188 of *PI* as we know it. A year or two later, he described this as the first volume of a two-volume work, where the second volume would treat the philosophy of mathematics. The draft of this second volume, completed in 1938, is what we now know as Part I of the *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*. By 1945, in the final version of Part I of the *PI*, Wittgenstein had moved the material on rule-following from the projected second volume to its current position as §§198-242 of *PI* and the material on the philosophy of mathematics had been replaced by the private language argument. The rest of *RFM* is a selection by the editors from various manuscripts up to the early 40s. Part II of the *PI* was also assembled by the editors from manuscripts from 1946-9.

So, Part I of *PI* and Part I of *RFM* have a special status, as carefully revised and arranged by Wittgenstein. It's also significant that he ultimately jettisoned the discussion of mathematics in the draft second volume, preserving only the material on following a rule. This means that we should take Part I of *PI* to be definitive and Part I of *RFM* to be one step down from that. The rest of the material -- Part II of *PI* and the rest of *RFM* -- never underwent Wittgenstein's painstaking process of revising and rearranging, and should be handled with care. (See Stern, *Wittgenstein on Mind and Language*, pp. 91-98, Baker and Hacker [2005], pp. 1-6, Baker and Hacker [2009], 3-7.)

Introductions:

Fogelin, *Wittgenstein*.

Fogelin, *Taking Wittgenstein at his Word*.

McGinn, *Wittgenstein and the Philosophical Investigations*.

Stern, *Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations*.

More advanced:

Baker and Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Understanding and Meaning, Exegesis §§1-184*.

Baker and Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity: Exegesis §§185-242*.

Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Meaning and Mind, Exegesis §§243-427*.

Pears, *The False Prison*, volume 2.

Stern, *Wittgenstein on Mind and Language*, Part II.

Like Black on the *Tractatus*, Baker and Hacker give valuable line-by-line commentaries.

10. PI I: Word-world connections and meta-philosophy

Philosophical Investigations, §§1-142.

Goldfarb, 'I want you to bring me a slab'.

Extra reading

Stern, 'The method of §2'.

11. PI II: Rule-following and private language

Philosophical Investigations, §§143-315.

Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*, pp. 1-20.

12. PI III: Kripkenstein

Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*, pp. 21-54.

Goldfarb, 'Kripke on Wittgenstein on rules'.

Stern, *Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations*, pp. 2-5, 21-28, 146-7, 152-6.

Extra reading

Stroud, 'Wittgenstein's 'treatment' of the quest for "a language which describes my inner experiences and which only I myself can understand"'. .

13. RFM I: Logic

Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics, Part I, §§1-23, 113-156.

Stroud, 'Wittgenstein and logical necessity'.

Maddy, *The Logical Must*, pp. 63-90.

Extra reading

Dummett, 'Wittgenstein's philosophy of mathematics'.

14. Naturalism or scientism?

Maddy, *The Logical Must*, pp. 91-125.

Bangu, 'Later Wittgenstein and the genealogy of mathematical necessity'.

Hertzberg, 'Very general facts of nature'.

Extra reading

Klagge, 'Wittgenstein, science, and the evolution of concepts'.

Smith, 'Wittgenstein, naturalism, and scientism'.

15. RFM II

Proof, concept formation, experiment:

Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics, Part I, §§24-105, 157-170.

Part IV, §§10-12, 21-33.

Part V, §§2-3.

Part VI, §§1-14.

Part VII, §43, 69-74.

Consequences for proofs and logical foundations:

Part III, §§1-28.

Extra reading

Bangu, 'Later Wittgenstein on the logicist definition of number'.

Here Bangu focuses on one of Wittgenstein's *Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics: Cambridge, 1939*, edited by Diamond from the lecture notes of Bosanquet, Malcolm, Rhees, and Smythies, published in 1976. To keep the material to a semi-manageable quantity, we've stuck to Wittgenstein's actual writings in this course, but there are many such volumes -- among them, notably, Stern, Rogers, and Citron [2016], from Moore's notes, co-edited by former LPSer, Brian Rogers -- as well as collections dictated by Wittgenstein himself, like the *Blue and Brown Books* (1933-4 and 1934-4, respectively).

16. RFM III

Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics, Part III, §§29-76.
(38)

Part V, §§24-25.

Part VII, §§9-10, 17-19.

Consequences for set theory:

Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics, Part II, §§1-62.

Part V, §§5-16.

Part VII, §32-33, 41.

Extra reading

Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics, Appendix III.

This appendix includes Wittgenstein's critique of Gödel's theorem. See Floyd and Putnam [2000] and Bays [2004] for a spirited debate on the quality of this passage.

Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics, Part V, §§29-40.

Here Wittgenstein takes on Dedekind cuts.

Maddy, 'Mathematical alchemy', pp. 291-303.

A word of caution: as you'll see, this discussion was written under the sway of Kripkenstein.

'Set-theoretic foundations', §I.

Here I lay out what I take to be the 'foundational' roles that set theory plays.

17. *RFM* IV

Maddy, 'Wittgenstein's anti-philosophy of mathematics', pp. 52-60, 65-72.

Potter, 'Wittgenstein on mathematics'.

Marion, 'Wittgenstein on surveyability of proofs'.

Säätelä, 'From logical method to "messaging about": Wittgenstein on "open problems" in mathematics'.

Extra reading

Floyd, 'Wittgenstein on 2, 2, 2, ... : the opening remarks of *RFM*'.

Gerrard, 'A philosophy of mathematics between two camps'.

Maddy, *Naturalism in Mathematics*, §III.1.

Here I push back against Wittgenstein's dismissal of pure mathematics.

In 1949, Wittgenstein visited his friend Norman Malcolm. One central topic of their discussions was Malcolm's recently published paper on Moore and Moore's reactions to it. Soon after leaving Ithaca, Wittgenstein began writing the remarks that now make up *On Certainty*.

(Other notebook entries from that period now appear in *Remarks on Colour* and *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*, volumes 1 and 2.) Wittgenstein died in the spring of 1951, two days after making his final entry.

One guidebook:

Hamilton, *Wittgenstein and On Certainty*.

More advanced treatments:

Stroll, *Moore and Wittgenstein on Certainty*.

Moyal-Sharrock, *Understanding Wittgenstein's On Certainty*.

Coliva, *Moore and Wittgenstein*.

Stroll and Moyal-Sharrock especially have argued for a 'Third Wittgenstein', claiming the late work renounces the therapeutic stance of *PI* and returns to developing philosophical theories. Rogers [2010], [2011] disputes this, as we'll see in Topic 20.

18. On Certainty I: Moore and Malcolm

Moore, 'A defence of common sense', 32-45.

'Proof of an external world'.

Malcolm, 'Defending common sense'.

Maddy, 'Moore'.

Extra reading

Weatherall, 'On G. E. Moore's "Proof of an external world"'.
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19. On Certainty II

On Certainty.

20. On Certainty III

Pritchard, 'Wittgenstein on scepticism'.

Maddy, 'Wittgenstein on hinges'.

Extra reading

Kober, 'Certainties of a world picture: the epistemological investigations of *On Certainty*'.

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