

Part II Paper 9 “Wittgenstein and His Successors”

Subtopics I teach

A. Wittgenstein

- a. Blue Book
 - i. Rejecting Tractarian atomism
 - ii. The first person: Immunity to error through misidentification
 - iii. Solipsism
- b. PI
 - i. PI 1-137: The Augustinian conception, language games, ostensive definition, family resemblance, the nature of philosophy
 - ii. PI 138-242: Rule-following
 - iii. PI 243-301: Private language
 - iv. PI 302-428: Sensations and their owners
 - v. Intentionality
 - vi. PI: II, xi: Aspect perception

B. Anscombe

- a. Intention
 - i. Intentional action (§§5–19) and expressions of intention for the future (§§2–3, §§50–52)
 - ii. Intention with which (§§20–40), the Concept of Intention (§§42–49)

C. Austin

- i. Meaning and Use
- ii. Speech acts
- iii. Perception
- iv. Philosophical method

Notes

Your essays should be between 2’000 and 3’000 words in length. It must be on one question in one of the subtopics marked **in green** above. Also, as this is the central work here, start with the first question and then choose at least two questions from the *Philosophical Investigations* (from section A.b.). Submit the essay at least 24 hours before our supervision. The secondary literature is my recommendation of a selection of the literature on the faculty reading-list (here). Of course, there’s more there and you’re free to use other sources too. Yet, keep in mind that I’m most familiar with the literature on this syllabus.

More rules and advice adapted from Dr Krishnan (probably you know this already):

Essays need to be typeset in a serif font (e.g. Garamond, Baskerville, Book Antiqua; not Calibri, Arial, Helvetica) – unless you have a particular disability that requires the latter sort of font. See guidance here:

https://macademic.org/2013/11/25/typography_essentials/

The text should be justified (as should the arguments); ideally, you should use wide side margins, left and right, of 3.5 cm or more (in Word, click on Format, then Document). For more advice on attractive presentation, see these documents:
<http://www.matthiasbrinkmann.de/docs/layout.pdf>,
<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~sfop0114/pdf/essaywriting.pdf>

Add your name and the date to the header. The footer should have page numbers. I’d suggest making a template so that you don’t have to do all this every week.

I strongly encourage you to reference fully (with any consistent citation system) and add a bibliography at the end. If you don’t know what these things mean, look them up, or ask me.

Give the full name of any author on first mention (‘John Rawls’); on subsequent mentions, surname only (‘Rawls’).

Do not use the word ‘therefore’ unless you mean to say there’s a logical connection between what comes before the therefore and what comes after. Distinguish,

consciously, between an argument that proves a thesis and one that merely supports it; similarly, distinguish between an argument that refutes a thesis and one that merely calls it into question. ‘Knockdown’ arguments for and against any interesting thesis are exceedingly rare in philosophy and if you think you have one, you’re likelier than not to be wrong. You don’t have to overstate what you’ve achieved in an essay; being honest about what you have and haven’t shown is a sign of strength, not of weakness. Don’t be afraid of pointing out the flaws in your own argument; if you don’t, I probably will.

It’s often a good idea to state your argument in a premise-premise-conclusion form. But if you do this, think carefully about whether the argument is actually valid.

There are many good ways of structuring an essay. But there are three things that are essential: begin your essay with analysis of the question, *i.e.*, a very brief summary of any basic background necessary to understand the question and a restatement of what the question is asking you to do. It’s often good to address the question of what’s at stake in the question: why does it matter how one answers it? Then very briefly give some indication of where the essay is going (don’t overdo this – ask yourself what information the reader actually needs to help him understand the direction of your essay). In your conclusion, go briefly over your argument, but also add a line or two explaining the significance of your answer. The only person who reads your essay may well be me, but you shouldn’t write with me in mind. Instead, imagine a clever reader who knows a little bit about philosophy and has read the relevant set text a long time ago, but needs to be reminded about what the text says. That’s a good way to test how much basic exposition you need to do before you dive into the substance of the essay. It’s also a good test of whether you can take knowledge of some technical term for granted or whether you need to say how you’re defining it. But don’t worry too much about all this – you’ll get better at it as you go along.

If you haven’t done so already, I also strongly encourage you to have a look at [this](#) essay writing guide and [those](#) guidelines from Dr Borchherding.

*Essay Questions***A.a.i. Wittgenstein: The Blue Book #1**

Question: What were Wittgenstein’s reasons for first defending and later abandoning logical atomism? Which of them are more compelling?

1. Start with William Child, *Wittgenstein*, 2011: Chs. 1-4.
2. Have a look at the relevant passages in the *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*.
3. Read “Some Remarks on Logical Form”.
4. Read the *Blue Book*.
5. Read *Philosophical Investigations* §§1–137 (you will have to read them anyways at some point, see A.b. below).

Other things that might be helpful:

- Potter 2019: Chs. 48.3-48.4, 50-50.3, 61-61.7 is short and very useful.
- Ramsey’s review of the *Tractatus*, 1923 in *Mind*.
- Pears 1981 in Block, Irving *Perspectives on the Philosophy of Wittgenstein*:
- Baker & Hacker 2005 “The Augustinian Conception of Language” in *Wittgenstein: Meaning and Understanding*.
- Hacker 1981 in Block, Irving *Perspectives on the Philosophy of Wittgenstein*.

A.a.ii. Wittgenstein: The Blue Book #2

Question: ‘I can be wrong about which person has the bump on the head, even if I am the one with the bump on the head. But I can’t be wrong about who has the headache, if I am the one with the headache.’ What is the philosophical significance of this contrast?

1. Start with Wittgenstein, *The Blue Book*.
2. Read William Child, “Two Kinds of the Use of ‘I’”, 2018
3. Read G.E.M. Anscombe, “The First Person”, 1975
4. If you need help with the very difficult Anscombe text, see Roger Teichmann, *The Philosophy of Elizabeth Anscombe*, 2009, Ch. 4.2.
5. If time, O’Brian, “Action and immunity to error through misidentification”, 2012.
6. If time, Sydney Shoemaker, “Self-Reference and Self-Awareness”, 1968.

A.b.i. Wittgenstein: The Philosophical Investigations #1

Question: Describe and assess two of Wittgenstein’s criticisms of the Augustinian picture of language.

1. Read PI 1-137
If you have questions about the primary text consult the Exegesis of Baker and Hacker Vol. 1 or Andrew Lugg 2004 (and/or bring them to the supervision!).
2. Read Baker & Hacker Vol 1 Essays : Ch 1, 8, 13, 14
3. If time, Forster in Ahmed 2010.
4. If time, Diamond 1991: Introduction I & II, Ch 1.

A.b.ii. Wittgenstein: The Philosophical Investigations #2

Question: What is Wittgenstein’s solution to the rule-following paradox? Is it correct?

1. Read PI §§138-242
If you have questions consult the Exegesis in Baker & Hacker **Vol 2**.
2. Introductory reading if needed: Child 2011: Chs. 5 & 6 *or* Baker & Hacker Vol 2: Chs. 2-4.
3. Kripke 1982. Ch. 1 & 2.
4. McDowell 1984. they took the mcdowell out!
5. If time, Heal 1989: Ch. 9.
6. If time & interest: Diamond 1991: Introduction I & II, Ch 1.

A.b.iii. Wittgenstein: The Philosophical Investigations #3

Question: EITHER Explain and evaluate Wittgenstein's considerations concerning the possibility of a Private Language.

OR Does inner ostensive definition raise any problems that do not arise for outer ostensive definition?

1. Read PI §§243-301
Again, if questions consult the Exegesis in Baker & Hacker Vol 2.
2. If more introductory reading is needed, read Meredith Williams 1999: Ch. 1 and/or Read Baker & Hacker Vol. 2: Ch.. 5, 6, 7 and/or Hacker Vol 3. Chs.: 1, 2, 3, 4, 8.
3. Ayer and Rhees 1954 (skip Rhees if pressed for time).
4. Read Crispin Wright 1986: §§1-4, 6, 10 (skip the other technical bits of this paper). Reprinted as chapter 9 in *Rails to Infinity* (2001, HUP: pp. 223–279).
5. If time & interest, Kripke 1982: Ch 3.
6. If time & interest, Mulhall 2007, Ahmed 2017

A.b.iv. Wittgenstein: The Philosophical Investigations #4

Question: EITHER What connection, if any, does Wittgenstein allow there to be between my inner mental life and the shared meanings of words? OR 'Wittgenstein was really a behaviourist in disguise.' Discuss.

1. Read PI §§302-428. If you have questions consult the Exegesis in Hacker Vol 3.
2. Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology. Vol. 1: 563-86, 903-22 and 927-39.
3. Read *Blue Book* pages 60-74 (in the 1998 Electronic Collected Works Edition)
4. Read Child 2011: Ch. 6 and/or Child 2017 in Hyman and Glock and/or Hacker Vol 3. Ch: 5, 6, 7, 8, 15.
5. If time & interest, Kripke 1982: Postscript.
6. If time & interest, McDowell 2009: Ch. 5.

B.a.i. Anscombe: Intention #1: (§§5–19) Intentional action and expressions of intention for the future (§§2–3, §§50–52)

Question: Does Anscombe offer a satisfactory account of how to distinguish an expression of intention from a prediction?

1. Start with Stoutland's Introduction in Stoutland et al. 2011. If you want to know more about Davidson's view read Davidson 1963.
2. Read Anscombe 1957, I recommend to read it all. If pressed for time, read only the relevant paragraphs *but read them carefully!*
3. Read Wiseman 2016: Ch. 4, 5 & 7 and/or Schwenkler Ch. 1 & 7 (all chapters in these books are highly recommended, especially the earlier ones).
4. Read Moran and Stone in Ford et al. 2011 (difficult but rewarding, look out for FN 25).
5. If time and interest: Teichmann 2015

B.a.ii. Anscombe: Intention #2: Intention with which (§§20–40), the Concept of Intention (§§42–49)

Question: EITHER (A) ‘It can be quite natural to think that events which are characterisable as intentional are a certain natural class, “intentional” being an extra property which a philosopher must try to describe’ (ANSCOMBE). Does Anscombe have a plausible alternative to this view. OR (B) ‘Anscombe’s account of practical knowledge is i) unnecessary for her theory of intentional action and ii) commits her to the absurd view that some kinds of knowledge are non-factive’. Are these criticisms fair?

If (A)

1. Read Stoutland’s Introduction in Stoutland et al. 2011.
2. Read Anscombe 1957, I recommend to read it all. If pressed for time, read only the relevant paragraphs (but do also read §19) *but read them carefully!*
3. Start with Wiseman 2016: Ch. 5, 6 and Schwenkler 2019: Ch. 3. (all chapters in these books are highly recommended especially the earlier ones).
4. Read Teichmann 2015
5. If time, read Moran and Stone in Ford et al. 2011 (difficult but rewarding, look out for p. 49).

If (B)

1. Read Anscombe 1957, I recommend to read it all. If pressed for time, read only the relevant paragraphs (but do also read §19) *but read them carefully!*
2. Start with Wiseman 2016: Ch. 5, 6 and/or Schwenkler 2019: Ch. 4-6. (all chapters in these books are highly recommended especially the earlier ones).
3. Read Setiya 2008.
4. Read Haddock in Ford et al. 2011.
5. If time and interest: Velleman 1985.

C.i. Austin: Meaning and Use

Question: Does Austin think that the literal meaning of expressions varies from occasion to occasion?

1. Read Austin 1953 (Background: Longworth 2011)
2. Read Austin 1961: The Meaning of A Word.
3. Read Crary 2002
4. Read Hansen 2012.

C.ii. Austin: Speech Acts

Question: EITHER: (A) Are there special illocutionary conventions? OR: (B) What role does ‘uptake’ play in determining the success of an illocutionary act?

If (A)

1. Read Austin 1953 (Background: Longworth 2011)
2. Read Bird 1988
3. Read Sbisà 2007
4. Read MacDonald 2021a “Reimagining Illocutionary Force”
5. If time and interest, read Strawson 1964

If (B)

1. Read Austin 1953 (Background: Longworth 2011)
2. Read Strawson 1964
3. Read Langton 1993 “Speech Acts and Unspeakable Acts”
4. Read MacDonald 2021b “Your Word Against Mine”

C.ii. Austin: Philosophical Method

Question. ‘Austin’s “linguistic” methods involve a conflation of the semantic and pragmatic dimensions of language. Once they are distinguished, his method can be seen to be worthless.’ Discuss.

1. Start with Austin 1961: A Pleas for Excuses.
2. Read Cavell 1969: ch. 4.
3. Read the counter-position Grice 1991: Prolegomena.
4. Read Baz 2012: Introduction and Ch. 1. If more time, look at Baz 2012.