

Proseminar

Hartry Field, Ted Sider, Fall 2009
http://tedsider.org/teaching/proseminar/prosem_09.html

DESCRIPTION

Philosophy proseminar, restricted to first-year Ph.D. students in philosophy at NYU. We will study some highlights of twentieth century work on the interrelated topics of epistemology and meaning. There are two goals: to become familiar with these classics, and to develop the ability to *do* philosophy, in writing and in public.

REQUIREMENTS

Three short class presentations, four short writing assignments, participation in classroom discussion (we expect this of everyone!) The writing assignments should be 5–7 pages each; due dates and topics:

Due 10/2, on anything through Goodman

Due 10/25, on Frege and/or Kripke

Due 11/20, on anything from the 10/20–11/17 weeks

Due 12/11, on anything from the last four weeks of the syllabus

We will usually distribute a week beforehand some questions that the class might find useful to think about, but the presenter needn't slavishly follow them: there may be many more than can usefully be discussed, and the presenter may well wish to add his or her own. Feel free to talk to us about your presentation the week before. We are not expecting profound discoveries here. Your job is rather to present the issues clearly, in order to prepare the group for a fruitful discussion. To that end, we recommend some sort of visual aid: a handout or powerpoint presentation, say.

No late papers; no incompletes. We mean it! The course will be graded pass/fail. Everyone who attends and turns in all the papers on time will pass.

SCHEDULE

Epistemology

- 9/8: (No presentations.) Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy* chapters 1–2; Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic* chapters 1–3
- 9/15: (Jeremy) Van Fraassen, *The Scientific Image* chapter 2
- 9/22: (Max) Reichenbach, *Experience and Prediction* sections 1–17, 42
- 9/29: (Zach) Goodman, *Fact, Fiction, and Forecast*, chapter 3; Rosenkrantz, “Does the Philosophy of Induction Rest on a Mistake?”

Meaning

- 10/6: (Emilio) Frege, “On *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*”
- 10/13: (Mark) Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* lectures 1 and 2
- 10/20: Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic* pp. 87–90; Quine, *Philosophy of Logic* chapter 1; Ramsey, “Facts and Propositions”; Leeds, “Theories of Reference and Truth”
- 10/27: Quine, “The Problem of Meaning in Linguistics” (especially sections 1, 4, and 5); Quine, *Word and Object* chapter 2
- 11/3: **No class**
- 11/10: Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Private Language* chapter 2, chapter 3 pp. 70–78 and 86–93; Shogenji, “Modest Skepticism about Rule Following”
- 11/17 Putnam, “Realism and Reason”; Lewis, “Putnam’s Paradox”

Epistemology through meaning

- 11/24: Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic* chapter 4; Hahn, “Logic, Mathematics, and Knowledge of Nature”; Frege, *Foundations of Arithmetic* sections 3–4, 12–17, 90
- 12/1: Quine, “Truth by Convention”; Prior: “Runabout Inference Ticket”; Belnap, “Tonk and Plonk”
- 12/8: Quine, “Two Dogmas of Empiricism”; Putnam, “The Analytic and the Synthetic”, “Is logic empirical?” sections 1, 2
- 12/15 (Make-up meeting.) Putnam, “Analyticity and Apriority: Beyond Wittgenstein and Quine”; Dummett, “Wittgenstein’s Philosophy of Mathematics”