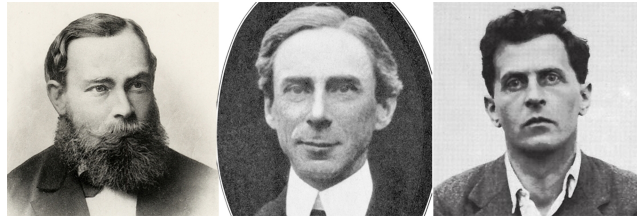


Themes from Frege, Russell, and Wittgenstein

Spring 2022, Syracuse University
Michael Rieppel



Course Description

Early analytic philosophy featured groundbreaking work in the philosophy of language and logic, led by Frege, Russell, and Wittgenstein among others. In this seminar we will work our way through some of the important ideas to emerge from this period, beginning with Frege's seminal *The Foundations of Arithmetic*, then turning to some of the revolutionary papers by Frege and Russell in the philosophy of language and logic, leading to Wittgenstein's obscure but fascinating *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*. Along the way we will also make forays into contemporary work that engages with issues raised by these philosophers (such as: Frege's treatment of number words, Frege's object/property distinction and sense/reference distinction, Russellian propositions, Russell's theory of descriptions, Russell's multiple relation theory of judgment, and Wittgenstein's picture theory of meaning).

Contact Information

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Course Requirements

The following is required of all seminar participants:

- Attendance, preparation, and participation in class discussions
- A question or critical comment posted to the discussion forum one day before the seminar.

Those enrolled for credit are also required to write a term paper of around 20 pages, due on the morning of May 12 (with an outline due one month prior to that). Get in touch with me if you would prefer to instead write two shorter papers (10 pages each) over the course of the semester.

Topics

The following is a list of topics in historical sequence. Under some of the primary readings I list some contemporary works could we read in connection with the primary reading. What exactly we read when will depend on seminar participants' interests.

Frege

- Frege, G. (1884). *The Foundations of Arithmetic*. Northwestern University Press, 1980
 - Contemporary offshoots:
 - Hofweber, T. (2005). Number Determiners, Numbers, and Arithmetic. *Philosophical Review*, 114(2):179–225
 - Moltmann, F. (2013). Reference to Numbers in Natural Language. *Philosophical Studies*, 162(3):499–536
 - Felka, K. (2014). Number Words and Reference to Numbers. *Philosophical Studies*, (168):261–282

- Frege, G. (1879). Begriffsschrift. In Geach, P. and Black, M., editors, *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege*, pages 1–20. Basil Blackwell, 1960
- Frege, G. (1891). Function and Concept. In Geach, P. and Black, M., editors, *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege*, pages 21–41. Basil Blackwell, 1960
- Frege, G. (1892b). On Concept and Object. In Geach, P. and Black, M., editors, *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege*, pages 42–55. Basil Blackwell, 1960
- Frege, G. (1892c). On Sense and Reference. In Geach, P. and Black, M., editors, *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege*, pages 56–78. Basil Blackwell, 1960
- Frege, G. (1892a). Comments on *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*. In Beaney, M., editor, *The Frege Reader*, pages 172–180. Blackwell, 1997
 - Contemporary offshoots:
 - Trueman, R. (2021). *Properties and Propositions*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK
 - Yalcin, S. (2015). Quantifying In From a Fregean Perspective. *Philosophical Review*, 124(2):207–253
 - Lederman, H. (forthcoming). Fregeanism, Sententialism, and Scope. *Linguistics and Philosophy*

Russell

- Russell, B. (1903). *The Principles of Mathematics*. Cambridge University Press (Ch. IV, V)
Contemporary offshoots:
 - King, J. C. (2007). *The Nature and Structure of Content*. Oxford University Press
- Russell, B. (1905). On Denoting. *Mind*, 14(56):479–493
- Russell, B. (1919). Descriptions. In *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*. Routledge
 - Contemporary offshoots:
 - Salmon, N. (2005). On Designating. *Mind*, 114(456):1069–1133
 - Elbourne, P. (2010). The Existence Entailments of Definite Descriptions. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 33(1):1–10
 - Elbourne, P. (2018). Definite Descriptions and Negative Existential Quantifiers. *Philosophical Studies*, 175:1597–1612
- Russell, B. (1910). On the Nature of Truth and Falsehood. In *Philosophical Essays*. Routledge, 2009
- Russell, B. (1911). Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description. *Proceedings of the Aristotelean Society, New Series*, 11:108–128
- Russell, B. (1912). *The Problems of Philosophy*. Oxford University Press, 1997 (Ch. V, XII)
- Russell, B. (1918). The Philosophy of Logical Atomism. In Marsh, R., editor, *Logic and Knowledge*. Allen & Unwin, 1956 (Ch. IV)
 - Contemporary offshoots
 - Moltmann, F. (2003). Propositional Attitudes Without Propositions. *Synthese*, (135):77–118
 - King, J. C., Soames, S., and Speaks, J. (2014). *New Thinking About Propositions*. Oxford University Press
 - Hawthorne, J. and Manley, D. (2012). *The Reference Book*. Oxford University Press
 - Goodman, R. (2017). Do Acquaintance Theorists Have an Attitude Problem? *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*

Wittgenstein

- Wittgenstein, L. (1922). *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Routledge
 - Cool offshoot, if not quite contemporary:
 - Sellars, W. (1962). Naming and Saying. *Philosophy of Science*, 29(1):7–26

Schedule

Week 1: 1.27: Frege's logicist project; "Introduction" to *The Foundations of Arithmetic*

Week 2: 2.3: Frege (1884) *The Foundations of Arithmetic* §1–45

Week 3: 2.10: Frege (1884) *The Foundations of Arithmetic* §46–72

Week 4: 2.17: Frege (1884) *The Foundations of Arithmetic* §73–91

Week 5: 2.24: Hofweber (2005), 'Number Determiners, Numbers, and Arithmetic'

Week 6: 3.3: Frege (1891), 'Function and Concept'; Frege (1892), 'On Concept and Object'

Week 7: 3.10: Frege (1892), 'On Sense and Reference'; Frege, 'Comments on *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*'

Week 8: 3.17: *Spring break!*

Week 9: 3.24: Trueman (2021), *Properties and Propositions* (Ch. 1, 2, 4, 6)

Week 10: 3.31: Russell (1903), *The Principles of Mathematics* (§46, 47, 48, 54, 56, 64); Russell (1905) 'On Denoting'

Week 11: 4.7: Russell (1911) 'Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description' (excerpt); Russell (1912), *The Problems of Philosophy* (Ch. XII); Russell (1910), 'On the Nature of Truth and Falsehood' (excerpt)

Week 12: 4.14: King (2007), *The Nature and Structure of Content* (Ch. 1, 2)

Week 13: 4.21: Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* (1–3.144)

Week 14: 4.28: Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* (3.2–5.12)