

Phil 592W – Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*
Fall 2009 – Prof. Kevin C. Klement (Please call me “Kevin.”)
Mondays 3:35–6:05pm in 374 Bartlett

Course description: An in-depth examination of Ludwig Wittgenstein’s (1921) *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, its historical background, and philosophical influence. Topics include logical atomism, the picture theory of meaning, saying and showing, truth functionality, and mysticism. *Prerequisite:* Three courses in philosophy, including at least one in formal logic (Phil 110 or higher), or Graduate student standing, or consent of instructor.

Contact info: My office is 353 Bartlett Hall. My office phone is 545-5784. My office hours are Mondays 2–3pm, Thursdays 1–2pm and by appt. You may also e-mail me at klement@philos.umass.edu.

Webpages: We have a homepage at <http://courses.umass.edu/phil592w-klement/> but most content is on our SPARK page: <https://spark.oit.umass.edu>.

Texts: Electronic copies of all course readings are available through our SPARK page. You may wish to consider purchasing copies of Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* (either widespread translation is fine, but the Pears & McGuinness translation is better) and Russell’s *Philosophy of Logical Atomism*; you may do so online or at the book vendor of your choice. I am also working on typesetting my own version of the *Tractatus* with both translations and the German side-by-side-by-side; it will be available in installments on our SPARK page.

Course requirements: Your final grade will be based on the following requirements: (1) in-class participation (15%), (2) one in-class presentation (20%), (3) weekly reading assignments (20%), and (4) final term paper or book reviews (45%).

Presentation: You will sign-up for one class session in which you will lead discussion by first summarizing and clarifying the reading for that session (taking approximately 20 minutes to do so), and then raise a number of points for discussion for the group.

Weekly reading assignments: You are expected to carefully read the selected texts for each session before the seminar meeting and come prepared to discuss them. To help facilitate this, each week you are expected to write a 1–3 page essay in which you (1) summarize the reading, (2) identify any criticisms or points of discussion (including points in need of clarification). These essays are due at the start of class on the day on which we will be discussing the relevant readings. You will be graded on 1–5 scale, with 1 representing a barely acceptable essay, 2 representing a deeply problematic essay, that misrepresents the views of the philosopher or philosophers in question or commits other abuses of philosophical method, 3 representing an essay that is slightly lacking in some area, but generally acceptable, 4 representing a good essay that performs the desired tasks as expected, and 5 representing an essay with substantial and original insight. (You should never expect to receive anything above 4. A student receiving a 4 on every assignment should still expect a good grade for this portion. I will only award a 5 to an essay that *surpasses* my expectations.) In determining your grade, I will take into account only your 9 highest scores of 11 possible essays. This means you may either drop your two lowest scores, or simply not write two essays (or combine the two options). You need not prepare an assignment for the week you will be presenting.

Lastly, you must choose between the following two options:

Term paper (12–20 pages): The paper should constitute critical and original discussion either of the interpretation of Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* and/or the philosophical issues it raises. The amount of outside research done for the paper is left to your discretion, but a careful search of the relevant secondary material is strongly recommended.

—OR—

Book reviews: Read TWO books written on or about Wittgenstein’s early philosophy and prepare lengthy academic-style book reviews (6–10 pages each) in which you first summarize the book, and evaluate it in terms of both the accuracy of its interpretation of Wittgenstein, and its other philosophical merits. If you need a list of acceptable choices, let me know.

A note on incompletes: Graduate students in the philosophy PhD program taking incompletes must complete all course requirements by the first day of classes for Spring semester, or the course will not count towards your degree, per Departmental policy.

Reading Schedule

Note: This schedule is *subject to change*.

Date	Material Covered
Sept 14	Course introduction
Sept 21	Frege, “Function and Concept” and “On Concept and Object” (found in either <i>The Frege Reader</i> or his <i>Collected Papers</i>)
Sept 28	Russell, <i>The Philosophy of Logical Atomism</i> , lectures I–IV
Oct 5	Russell, <i>The Philosophy of Logical Atomism</i> , lectures V–VIII
Oct 12	Columbus day. Class moved to Tuesday.
(Tu) Oct 13	Russell, “Mathematics and Logic” (chap. XVIII of <i>Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy</i>), and Introduction to the <i>Tractatus</i> ; Ramsey, Critical Notice (review) of the <i>Tractatus</i> (from <i>Mind</i> 32 (1923): 465–78)
Oct 19	<i>Tractatus</i> , preface and §§1–3.263
Oct 26	<i>Tractatus</i> §§3.3–4.128
Nov 2	<i>Tractatus</i> §§4.2–5.156
Nov 9	<i>Tractatus</i> §§5.2–5.5352
Nov 16	<i>Tractatus</i> §§5.54–6.13
Nov 23	<i>Tractatus</i> §§6.2–7
Nov 30	Peter Geach, “Saying and Showing in Frege and Wittgenstein” (from <i>Acta Philosophica Fennica</i> 28 (1976): 54–70); Cora Diamond, “Throwing Away the Ladder: How to Read the <i>Tractatus</i> ” (from her <i>The Realistic Spirit</i>)
Dec 7	James Conant, “The Method of the <i>Tractatus</i> ” (from <i>From Frege to Wittgenstein</i> , ed. Erich H. Reck); P. M. S. Hacker, “Was He Trying to Whistle It?” (from <i>The New Wittgenstein</i> , eds. Crary and Read)