

## Phil 370: Topics in Analytic Philosophy – Wittgenstein

The subject of the course is Ludwig Wittgenstein's influential work, and the main topics which arise in it. It will be conducted by a close reading of primary sources (i.e., Wittgenstein's writings) supplemented by commentaries as needed.

The first part of the course, approximately the first 4 weeks, will be devoted to the 'early' Wittgenstein, i.e., his short book *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. This includes such topics as the ontology of the world as 'the sum of facts', the 'picture theory' of meaning and representation, the nature of the proposition, the distinction between *sinnig*, *unsinnig* and *sinnlos*, saying and showing, the ineffability of ethics and metaphysics, and 'throwing away the ladder', for which the two main interpretations will be presented. This part will conclude with examining Wittgenstein's reasons for dissatisfaction with the Tractarian picture and the transition to his later work.

The second part of the course, taking up 6-7 weeks, will be devoted to Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*. Topics to be discussed in this part include: critique of the 'Augustinian' picture of concepts and reference; the idea of language-games and language 'as a motley'; 'family resemblance' vs. essentialism; the view that philosophy has no theses, 'leaves everything as it is'; rule-following and interpretation; the 'private language argument'; conscious experience and the 'beetle in a box' thought experiment.

The third part of the course takes up Wittgenstein's posthumously published work on knowledge, *On Certainty*. Topics to be discussed here include the nature of knowledge and scepticism, the analogy of the river and river-bed, knowledge as part of our 'forms of life', and the traditional conception of the a priori vs. Wittgensteinian 'hinge propositions'.

Course requirements are: reading the assigned material before each class; three papers, comprising two papers (500, 1500 words respectively) during the term and a final paper (up to 3000 words).