

Tuesdays and Thursdays: 4:05pm–5:25pm

DIRK SCHLIMM

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**Summary.** Gottlob Frege (1848–1925) is generally considered to be the inventor of modern predicate logic, the originator of the ‘logician’ project of reducing mathematics to logic, a pioneer of philosophy of language, and highly influential for the development of analytic philosophy.

In contrast to Kant’s view that mathematics is synthetic, Frege sought to show that it is analytic, by which he meant that it can be derived from logic alone. To support this claim, he first developed a logic that is rich enough to express all mathematical reasoning and then tried to show how to develop mathematics from it. On the way, this led him to a careful analysis of the nature of language and concepts. As is well known, Frege’s project was shattered by Russell’s Paradox, but many of his insights and contributions remained central for later developments in philosophy.

This course is intended to provide an introduction to Frege’s work in its historical and philosophical context. This includes his books *Begriffsschrift* (1879), *Grundlagen der Arithmetik* (1884), and *Grundgesetze der Arithmetik* (vol. 1: 1893 and vol. 2: 1903), a series of articles, as well as posthumously published material.

Particular topics that will be addressed include:

- The conceptual and notational development of logic by Frege.
- Frege’s criticisms of contemporary accounts of the nature of numbers.
- Frege’s views on axioms and definitions, in particular contrast to Hilbert’s.
- Frege’s conception of truth.
- Frege’s analysis of the meanings of linguistic items.

**Prerequisites.** It is highly recommended that students have taken Intro to Deductive Logic (Phil 210) and one intermediate course in philosophy.

**Textbook.** The following book, which is available at *The Word Bookstore*, 469 Milton Street (5 mins. from the University Street Gates), is required for this course:

- Michael Beaney, *The Frege Reader*, Blackwell Publishers, 1997.

You also can order it online at: <https://www.wordbookstore.ca/phil-450>

Additional texts will be made available on myCourses.

**Course format.** Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this course will be offered in an online-only format. It will consist mainly of synchronous meetings on Zoom during the scheduled times. These meetings will be recorded for the most part and made available on myCourses.

**Requirements & grading.** Students are expected to do the assigned readings, answer weekly reading questions, attend the Zoom meetings (if possible), write a critical summary of a research article on Frege, and write a final paper. The final grade depends on reflections and reading questions to be submitted before each class (15%), class

participation (2× managing the chat) (5%), class presentation (two short summaries of the main points of the readings) (10%), one critical summary of a research article (25%), and a term paper (45%). For the summary and term paper, milestones will have to be met for announcing the topic, having an outline and abstract, submitting a draft for peer review, and peer-reviewing at least two papers. Detailed guidelines will be made available in the course of the semester.

Late submissions of papers will be downgraded at a rate of 1/3 of a grade per day (e.g. from A- to B+, C to C-), including weekend days/holidays. For the reading questions, no late submissions will be accepted. Extensions require a documented medical or other compelling reason; if possible, documentation should be submitted *before* the due date.

### **University regulations.**

- *Academic Integrity.* McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offenses under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see <http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest> for more information).
- *Copyright and Intellectual Property.* Instructor generated course materials (e. g., hand-outs, notes, summaries, exam questions, etc.) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.
- *Inclusivity and Accessibility.* As the instructor of this course I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the Office for Students with Disabilities, 514-398-6009.
- In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. This does not apply to courses in which acquiring proficiency in a language is one of the objectives.
- In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.
- McGill University is on land which is the traditional and unceded territory of the Kanien'keha:ka (Mohawk), a place which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst nations.