Wittgenstein

Philosophy 190G
Spring 2013
TTh 2:00 – 3:45pm
Cowell Acad, Room 223

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Office Hours: 2:00-3:30pm, Wednesdays & by appointment
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Course Description

A study of Ludwig Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations* (1953). A major aim of this course is to cultivate the ability to carry out Wittgensteinian conceptual investigations. We will examine how Wittgenstein himself conducts his “grammatical investigations” of the concepts employed in multifarious language-games. We will begin with a brief overview of Wittgenstein’s conception of the relation between language and the world in his early work, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921). This sketch will serve as the background to understanding Wittgenstein’s criticisms of a “particular picture of the essence of human language”, a picture he glean from Augustine’s *Confessions* in the opening remarks of *Philosophical Investigations*. Some of the issues we will explore include: What is the meaning of a word? What is understanding? In what sense, if any, are sensations private? Is there a fundamental asymmetry between what one knows about one’s own mental life and what one can know about the mental lives of others? What is one missing if one cannot see something as something (aspect-blind) or cannot experience the meaning of a word (meaning-blind)?

Evaluation:

Optional Presentation
In-class participation & weekly eCommons blogging
Paper Proposal
Term Paper

**Required Texts:**
*Philosophical Investigations (PI)* by Ludwig Wittgenstein (4th revised edition);
*How to Read Wittgenstein* by Ray Monk;
*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (TLP)* by Ludwig Wittgenstein

The first two texts can be purchased at The Literary Guillotine.
A free pdf version of *TLP* is available on our eCommons site, under Resources.

Tentative Schedule

**Week 1**

Course intro
Required reading: Monk, chapters 1-6 and corresponding *TLP* passages

**Week 2**

Augustinian conception of language
Required reading: *PI* §§1-89; Monk, chapters 1-6 and corresponding *TLP* passages

**Week 3:** No class April 18th (I will be in Seattle for a conference); we will schedule a make-up session

Augustinian conception of language cont’d
Required reading: *PI* §§1-89; Monk, chapter 8
*Recommended additional reading:* “The Availability of Wittgenstein’s Later Philosophy” by Stanley Cavell
**Week 4**

Philosophy and the philosopher
Required reading: *PI* §§89-133; Monk, chapter 7
*Recommended additional reading: “Philosophy” (selections from *PO*)

**Week 5**

Seeing an aspect
Required reading: *PPF* §§ 111-260

**Week 6:** Midterm check-in

Understanding
Rule-following
Required reading: *PI* §§143-201

**Week 7:** Peer review of proposals (bring two copies of your proposal to class)

Rule-following cont’d
Privacy
Required reading: *PI* §§ 202-242; 246-315; Monk, chapters 9-11

**Week 8**

Privacy cont’d
Self and Self-reference

Required reading: *PI* §§ 246-315; 398-412; Monk, chapters 9-11

**Week 9**

Experiencing the meaning of a word
Ethics
Required reading: *PPF* §§ 261-97; *TLP* 5.55-6.522; “Lecture on Ethics”

**Week 10**

Ethics cont’d
film and discussion

TERM PAPER due in seminar