

PHIL 222: *Analytic Philosophy (Paradoxes)*

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Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30–10:52AM | 251 Coleman Hall

Course Moodle: <http://moodle.bucknell.edu/course/view.php?id=9729>

Description of Subject Matter & Methods of Instruction

Analytic Philosophy is a rich and diverse philosophical tradition that grew up around developments in the philosophy of logic and the philosophy of language in the early 20th century. It continues to grow and develop today. One can get to know this tradition in a variety of ways: for example, by studying its history or by surveying the topics on which analytic philosophers have focused. We are going to do something a little different: we are going to develop an understanding of Analytic Philosophy by focusing on a particular phenomenon that occurs *throughout* the history of philosophy (from the very get-go, in fact): *the paradox*. Roughly speaking, a paradox occurs when apparently good reasoning from innocent starting points leads us into an obvious falsehood. Paradoxes played a particularly important and constructive role in Analytic Philosophy. They are complicit in two of the most significant developments in logic and mathematics in the twentieth century; they are a common thread binding Analytic Philosophy to the larger corpus of philosophical thought; many of them remain unsolved; they are at once fascinating and infuriating!

Class meetings will be a blend of lecture and discussion. I will not ask you to read *many* pages, but I will ask you to read them *carefully* (as Alastair McIntyre put it, “You haven’t read a philosophy paper until you’ve read it twice” — he’s right). I will also give you questions/assignments that will guide your reading and analysis. Your course grade will be based on your contribution to the discussion, your performance on regular short writing assignments, and the quality of longer essays (which we will workshop). The prerequisite for the course is PHIL 100; I may also let students in who’ve had Logic or Philosophy of Science. All students need to be prepared to twist their minds into M.C. Escher-esque pretzels.

Learning Goals — In completing this course, you should:

- Gain a general understanding of the history, methods, and significance of Analytic Philosophy;
- Gain a deep knowledge of the importance, resolution, and occasional intractability of philosophical paradoxes;
- Become familiar with several important topics and fields in philosophy (including ethics, metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of language, and philosophy of logic);
- Continue to develop your critical/analytical thinking, reading, and writing skills.

Instructional Materials and Sources

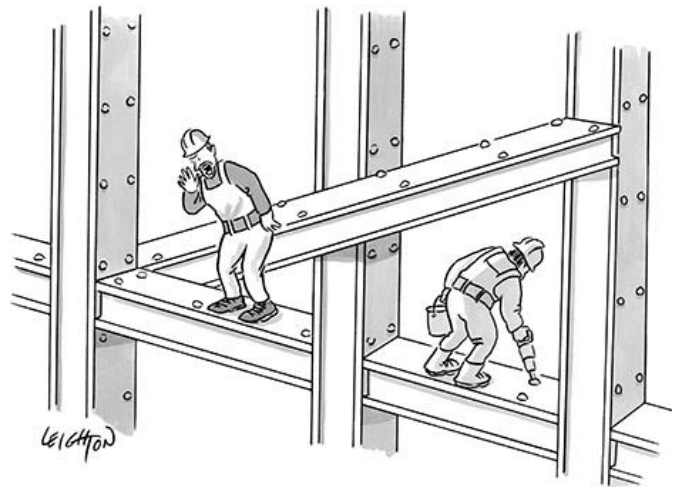
R.M. Sainsbury, *Paradoxes* (3rd Ed.) and supplementary readings distributed in PDF from the course moodle.

Methods of Evaluation

Your final grade will be based on the several components. Note that half of your grade will be determined by your regular, everyday effort. At Bucknell, one credit courses have a minimum expectation of twelve hours per week of student academic engagement. Our time together represents only three hours. You should thus plan to spend at least nine hours outside of class each week reading, writing, visiting me in my office hours, or doing other course related activities. Note as well what the different letter grades represent. According to the Course Catalog (<http://www.bucknell.edu/catalog.xml>), an ‘A’ means ‘Superior achievement’, a ‘B’ means ‘High pass’, a ‘C’ means ‘Pass’, a ‘D’ means ‘Low pass’, and an ‘F’, of course, stands for ‘Failing work’. Unless you’re some kind of savant, it’s highly unlikely that you can produce ‘superior work’ (or even B-level, *good*, but uninspired work) without putting time and effort into your studies.

Participation & Preparation (25%). Since much of our time in class will be spent discussing rather difficult problems and concepts, it will be crucial that you come *prepared*. What does “coming prepared” mean? It means not only passing your eyes over the reading assigned for that day, but making a serious attempt to *critically engage with it* and coming to class ready to share the fruits of your labors (questions, reactions, remaining confusions, &c.). The short writing assignments (see below) are designed to help stimulate this preparation. During class, I expect you to be a willing participant. Break the ice. Ask questions. Respond to your peers. Offer your considered opinions. In short: *be ready to do some philosophy!*

Short Writing Assignments (25%). For nearly each meeting, I will post some sort of short writing assignment. These will often be tightly connected with the reading for that class and will typically be submitted via the online journal feature in Moodle. Unless otherwise stipulated, these will be due by 1PM before the relevant class. Grades will be assigned on a simple 0, ✓-, ✓, ✓+ basis. At the end of the term, I will drop your lowest four marks and scale this component of final grade so that an average of ✓s corresponds to a B+.



“Escher! Get your ass up here.”

Quality of Failure (5%). It's an underappreciated fact that one of the most powerful forms of learning stems from failing and reflecting on our failure. You will be rewarded in this course for "failing well". What this means (and how it will be rewarded) will be discussed in class.

Surprise Quiz (5%). There will be at least one surprise quiz during the term.

Longer Essays (40%). Your grade for this portion of the course will be based on the success of one or more essays totaling 6,000 words. You may choose how to divide these words into separate essays, down to minimum chunks of 1,500 words and so long as at least one of these essays has an at least modest research component (i.e., draws on some scholarly texts that have not been assigned and which are not reprinted in our text). If you want to write one 6,000 word essay or four 1,500 word essays, that's fine. Or you could write two 3,000 word essays, or one 1,500 word, and one 4,500 word essay, and so on. . . . And you may decide to write more than this: I will count only your best 6,000 words.

I will not assign specific topics or deadlines during the term, with two exceptions: >1,500 words must be in and committed by the end of Week 8 and the rest must be done by the final day of class. Instead, I will ask you to consult with me in office hours or during/after class about what you would like to write on. I'll also make some regular suggestions for potential essay projects. When you have completed a draft, we will schedule some of a class meeting to "workshop" it: you will email it around, we will read it, and then discuss it constructively. I will also complete a rubric for it (including a tentative grade). On the basis of this discussion, you will have the opportunity to revise your essay.

At the end of the term, I will take your best 6,000 or so words worth of essays and produce a weighted average that will be your grade for this component of the course. So, for example, if you write an 1,824 word essay which gets an 82% and a 4,432 word essay that gets 94% (i.e., 6,256 words in total), I will ask my spreadsheet to compute $1824/6256 \times 0.82 + 4432/6256 \times 0.94 = 90.5\%$.

Other Course Policies & Information ☞ **READ THIS, PLEASE!**

Office Hours. You are invited and encouraged to supplement your in-class learning by visiting me in my office hours (see my website for the latest) or at some other time that suits us both. You do not need to have any specific mission to accomplish. Feel free to drop by during posted office hours or make an appointment. You may also catch me via Skype or on my cell phone (address/number can be found in my email signature) during reasonable hours. I'd prefer not to receive text messages, however.

Attendance. Your attendance is required and expected. Failure to attend will significantly drop your participation grade. If you believe that you have a legitimate reason to not be in class, please consult with me well before the class in question. If you fall ill, contact me as soon as you can and arrange to get notes from a classmate. Don't email me asking if you "missed anything important"!

Civility. We have a limited time to spend with one other; class time is *special* time. Please be there on time with the relevant books and materials in hand. Don't sally forth out of class to use the bathroom (and check your texts) unless you really need to. Do not distract yourself — or others, or *me* — with electronic marvels such as smartphones, laptops, beepers, ham radios, &c. Don't fall asleep right in front of me (do I really have to say all this?). Failing to keep your impulses in check will have consequences for your participation grade (moreover, I reserve the right to summarily *fail* seriously delinquent students from the course).

Sources and Academic Honesty. I expect you to abide by Bucknell's Honor Code (www.bucknell.edu/x1324.xml). In particular, unless otherwise instructed, your formal written work must correctly and completely cite all materials used (including primary sources, textbooks, and other materials from the internet). I will not hesitate to refer students who commit any form of academic dishonesty to the University Board of Review (www.bucknell.edu/x1337.xml).

Accommodations for the Disabled. If you have a disability that may affect your work in this course, please talk to me (either by email or in person) at your earliest convenience and I will make every effort to accommodate your needs. If you have not yet spoken with the appropriate dean about your disability (www.bucknell.edu/x7759.xml), please do so as soon as possible. Accommodations will need to be sanctioned by their office.

Schedule Sketch — *The following is merely a sketch; please stay current with the course website for specific assignments and updates.*

Weeks 1–2 (August 29th–September 5th)

- Introductory: What are Paradoxes?
- Logical Background
- Zeno's Paradoxes of Space and Time

Weeks 3–4 (September 10th–19th)

- Moral Paradoxes, Prisoners' Dilemma
- Newcomb's Problem

Weeks 5–7 (September 24th–October 10th)

- Paradoxes of Scientific Confirmation (Ravens, Tacking, Grue)
- Cartesian and Pyrrhonian Skepticism
- The Lottery and Preface Paradoxes
- The Pop-Quiz Paradox

Fall Recess

Weeks 8–11 (October 17th–November 7th)

- Leibniz's Law & Puzzles of Opacity
- Paradoxes of Vagueness
- The Ship of Theseus
- Identity Through Time
- Antinomies of Ordinary Objects

Weeks 12–14 (November 12th–26th)

- Russell's Paradox
- The Liar Paradox
- Gödel's Incompleteness Theorems
- Paraconsistent Logic

Thanksgiving Break

Weeks 15–16 (December 3rd–10th)

- The Paradoxes of Time Travel
- The Grandfather Paradox
- Puzzles of Closed Causal Loops