

**PHILOSOPHY 4D03/6D03: 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Analytic Philosophy**  
*Varieties of Analysis*

Prof. Erich Reck, McMaster University, Winter 2017

Class Time: Monday, 11:30-2:20pm

Class Room: BSB 105

Office Hours: Tu, 10am-noon

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**GENERAL COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

As its name suggests, “analytic philosophy” seems to be characterized by analysis as its characteristic method. However, the use of analysis goes back much further in the history of philosophy and other disciplines, including mathematics, chemistry, etc. Moreover, methods close to it have been employed in other philosophical traditions too, e.g., under the rubric of “definition”. In this class, we will attempt to get clearer about what is, or could be, meant by “analysis” in philosophy. We will approach this topic by considering some classic cases from early analytic philosophy, concerning the notions of number (Frege, Russell), definite description (Russell, Strawson), logical consequence (Frege, Tarski), computability (Turing), explanation (Hempel & Oppenheim, Scriven), and knowledge (Gettier etc.). Reflecting on them, we will distinguish several conceptions of analysis, including: the search for “necessary and sufficient conditions”; the exhibition of “logical form”; “explication” in Carnap’s more pragmatic sense; what Strawson calls “connective analysis”; and “model building” in philosophy. We also will isolate several aspects or moments of analysis: a “regressive” moment, a “resolutive” moment, and an “interpretive/transformative” moment (Beaney). And we will address the “paradox of analysis” (Moore), together with some other criticisms of analysis in its simpler forms (Wittgenstein, Quine, and “experimental philosophy”). The upshot will be that, if studied (analyzed!?) carefully, analysis turns out to be more subtle, varied, and multi-faceted than often assumed. Overall, the class also serves as an introduction to 20-century analytic philosophy, with special emphasis on its meta-philosophical side.

**TEXTS:**

A series of articles or excerpts from books, all made available online (texts by Frege, Russell, Strawson, Tarski, Turing, Hempel, Scriven, Carnap, Beaney, Reck, Williamson, etc.; see the bibliography below).

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

- (a) Doing the reading and, on that basis, active participation in class discussions (at least to some degree) – 10%
- (b) A shorter (ca. 5 pages) midterm paper (topics to be provided by the instructor) – 40% for undergraduates, 20% for graduate students
- (c) For grad. students only: a 15-minute “poster presentation” in class – 20%
- (d) A longer term paper (undergr.: ca. 10p.; grad. students: ca. 15 p.) – 50%

## S Y L L A B U S

Week (1) General introduction to our topic, including: analyzing the concept of knowledge, from Plato to Gettier, as a first example; Moore's "paradox of analysis"; some other general challenges, by Wittgenstein, Quine, and recent experimental philosophy.

### PART I: PARADIGMS FROM EARLY ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY

Week (2) Frege and Russell on the natural numbers

Week (3) Russell and Strawson on definite description

Week (4) Frege (plus Hamilton) and Tarski on logical consequence

Week (5) Turing (plus Copeland) on computability and decidability

Week (6) Hempel & Oppenheim and Scriven on scientific explanation

### PART II: VARIANTS AND MOMENTS OF ANALYSIS

Week (7) Carnap (plus Reck) on explication and its pragmatic desiderata

Week (8) Strawson on connective versus reductive analysis

Week (9) Beaney's historical survey and systematic discussion

Week (10) Reck and Williamson on model building in philosophy

### PART III: PRESENTATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Week (11) Poster presentations

Week (12) Concluding reflections, including further responses to Moore, Wittgenstein, Quine, and the experimental philosophers

**Bibliography for the Class**

(some voluntary background reading may be added later on)

- Beaney, Michael: "Decompositions and Transformations: Conceptions of Analysis in the Early Analytic and Phenomenological Traditions", 2002  
\_\_\_\_\_: Excerpts (survey and general discussion) from the entry "Analysis" in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2014
- Copeland, Jack: Excerpts from "Computable Numbers: A Guide", 2015
- Carnap, Rudolf: Chapter 1 (on explication) of *Logical Foundations of Probability*, 1950
- Frege, Gottlob: Excerpts (on his deductive system for propositional logic) from *Begriffsschrift*, 1879  
\_\_\_\_\_: Excerpts (on number) from *The Foundations of Arithmetic*, 1884
- Hamilton, A.G.: Chapter 2 (on deduction in propositional logic, parallel to Frege) from *Logic for Mathematicians*, 1988
- Hempel, C. & Oppenheim, P.: "Studies in the Logic of Explanation", 1948
- Reck, Erich: "Carnapian Explication: A Case Study and Critique", 2012  
\_\_\_\_\_: "Hempel, Carnap, and the Covering Law Model", 2013
- Russell, Bertrand: Excerpts (on numbers and on descriptions) from *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*, 1918  
\_\_\_\_\_: "On Denoting", 1905
- Scriven, Michael: "Explanation, Predictions, and Laws", 1962
- Strawson, Peter: "On Referring", 1950  
\_\_\_\_\_: "Construction and Analysis", 1956  
\_\_\_\_\_: Excerpts (on reductive and connective analysis) from *Analysis and Metaphysics*, 1992
- Tarski, Alfred: "On the Concept of Logical Consequence", 1936
- Turing, Alan: "On Computable Numbers", 1936
- Williamson, Timothy: "Model-Building in Philosophy", forthcoming