

# WITTGENSTEIN

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course website: [danielwharris.com/teaching/38080/](http://danielwharris.com/teaching/38080/)

username: hunter

password: language

## ABOUT THIS COURSE

Wittgenstein is widely seen as the most influential philosopher of the 20th Century. But he is also a divisive figure, and plenty of philosophers think that his influence on philosophy was negative. In this course, we'll try to understand Wittgenstein's work and his place in the history of philosophy. Most of the semester will be taken up by a close reading of *Philosophical Investigations*. But we'll start with several weeks of important background, including an excerpt from Wittgenstein's earlier work, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. And we'll end the semester by tracing out some of Wittgenstein's influence into subsequent work.

## WEBSITE AND READINGS

I would suggest getting yourself a copy of All of the required readings will be available on the course website:

[danielwharris.com/teaching/38080](http://danielwharris.com/teaching/38080)

username: hunter

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We won't be using Blackboard for this course.

## SOME SECONDARY TEXTS

I won't have any of these secondary texts among the required readings, but they might be helpful for making sense of or contextualizing some of what we read. Keep in mind that almost nothing that anyone has written about Wittgenstein's ideas is uncontroversial.

- Monk, Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius  
(A really great biography of Wittgenstein)
- Doxiadis et al, *Logicomix*  
(A graphic novel about early analytic philosophy, including Wittgenstein)
- McGinn, *Wittgenstein and the Philosophical Investigations*  
(One of several decent guides to the book)
- Hacker, *Wittgenstein's Place in Twentieth Century Philosophy*  
(A good, advanced book about how W fits into the story)

## OUR DISCORD SERVER

I have created a Discord server for our class, which you can get to by clicking on this link:

<https://discord.gg/7VmJ9Gckpf>

I recommend installing the Discord app on your computer and turning on notifications for our server.

Discord is a free tool for group communication. We will use it as a place where you will submit assignments and communicate with me and other members of the class. You must have access to Discord in order to participate in the course.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation: 20%

Critical-feedback assignments: 40%

First paper: 15%

Second Paper: 25%

## CRITICAL-FEEDBACK ASSIGNMENTS

You will be expected to submit a critical-feedback assignment by 11:59pm on the night before each class. You will submit it via Discord, in the appropriate channel for that day. For example, for the class on September 4th, you should post it by 11:59pm on September 3rd in the #sept3 channel in our Discord server.

Your critical feedback should take the form of a paragraph in which you engage critically with the required reading. This could mean several things: You could pose a detailed question about something that confused you or that you found intellectually unsatisfying in the reading. You could propose a reading of what the author means by something, or a series of things, that they say in the text (this is a very good option when we're reading Wittgenstein, who is often cryptic). You could raise an objection to something that you read. Or you could find and link to a piece of research that undermines, adds a further source of support for, or helps us to make sense of something in the reading, and explain how what you're linking to could improve our understanding of the day's text. In general, I will evaluate these assignments by looking for evidence that you have carefully read and thought about the

required readings, including what is confusing or unconvincing about them.

If you have submitted a critical-feedback assignment on time and it meets the required standards, you should assume that you have gotten full credit for it. (If your assignment is below the standard to receive credit, I will let you know why, privately.) I will sometimes respond with written comments, but the main venue in which you should seek responses to your critical feedback is during class discussion.

Part of the purpose of the critical-feedback assignments is to encourage you to read in a critical way, continually asking yourself whether you understand and are convinced by what you are reading, and to articulate whatever skepticism and criticisms you might have of it. It would be a good idea to take notes as you read. A second purpose of the assignment is to encourage you to show up to class prepared to raise questions about and criticisms of the reading. I will often show portions of your critical-feedback assignments on the projector screen and might ask you to elaborate on what you said.

There will be approximately 24 of these assignments in total. However, I will drop your lowest three grades, so you can miss three before this will affect your grade in the course. In total, these critical-feedback assignments will make up 40% of your grade in the course, so each one is worth around 2% of your final grade.

## **PARTICIPATION**

This is a discussion class. Most of each meeting will be taken up by a conversation about that day's required reading. You are expected to arrive to each class having read the text, and prepared to summarize, ask questions about, and critique it during class.

Some of the main readings are very difficult and confusing, and you should expect them to take a long time to read per page. But struggling through the readings is your most important duty in this course. Please do not take it lightly.

## **PAPERS**

40% of your grade will be based on two papers that you write during the semester, one due about halfway through the semester and the other due at the end. Your goal in these assignments will be to critically engage in a deeper way with the material that we cover in class, and also with some of the other literature on the topic that you choose.

## **LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY**

Assignments will lose 10% of their value for every day that they are late. If you think that you might not be able to complete an assignment on time, please contact me about it!

## **HOW TO CONTACT ME**

Always check the website for information about what to do before each class. Also please turn on notifications for Dis-

cord, and ask questions in the #general channel there that I or the other members of the class might answer. If you have an urgent question or concern, it's best to email me.

## **UPDATE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS**

It is important that you can regularly receive emails from me. When I email you, I will use whichever email address is listed for you in CUNYfirst. So it is very important that the email listed there is one that you regularly check. If you would like to change the email listed for you in CUNYfirst, it is easy to do so. Just click this link and follow the steps described there:

<http://www.bcc.cuny.edu/campus-resources/bursar/update-your-information/>

This is your responsibility. If you are late with an assignment because an email from me went to the wrong address, you will not receive credit for the assignment.

## **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures.

## **ADA STATEMENT**

In compliance with the ADA and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Hunter College is committed to ensuring educational access and accommodations for all its registered students. Hunter College's students with disabilities and medical conditions are encouraged to register with the Office of AccessABILITY for assistance and accommodation. For information and appointment contact the Office of AccessABILITY located in Room E1214 or call (212) 772-4857 /or VRS (646) 755-3129.

## **POLICY ON SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

In compliance with the CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Hunter College reaffirms the prohibition of any sexual misconduct, which includes sexual violence, sexual harassment, and gender-based harassment retaliation against students, employees, or visitors, as well as certain intimate relationships. Students who have experienced any form of sexual violence on or off campus (including CUNY-sponsored trips and events) are entitled to the rights outlined in the Bill of Rights for Hunter College.

- a. Sexual Violence: Students are strongly encouraged to immediately report the incident by calling 911, contacting NYPD Special Victims Division Hotline (646-610-7272) or their local police precinct, or contacting the College's Public Safety Office (212-772-4444).
- b. All Other Forms of Sexual Misconduct: Students are also encouraged to contact the College's Title IX Campus Coordinator, Dean John Rose (jtrose@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-650-3262) or Colleen Barry (colleen.barry@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-772-4534) and seek complimentary services through the Counseling and Wellness Services Office, Hunter East 1123.

CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct Link: <http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/la/Policy-on-Sexual-Misconduct-12-1-14-with-links.pdf>

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

This schedule will definitely change! Always check what to read on the course website, and don't rely on this.

Mondays	Thursdays
	<b>August 28 Introduction</b>
<b>September 1 No Class</b>	<b>September 4 A look into the deep end</b> <i>Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus</i> , pp.3–22 (§§1–3)
<b>September 8 Russell on Empirical Knowledge</b> Russell, <i>The Problems of Philosophy</i> , chs. 1–3, ch.5	<b>September 11 Russell on Logical Analysis</b> Russell, <i>The Relation of Sense Data to Physics</i> (excerpt) Russell, <i>The Philosophy of Logical Atomism</i> (excerpt)
<b>September 15 Logicism</b> Joan Weiner: Frege (excerpt) Frege: <i>The Foundations of Arithmetic</i> (excerpts)	<b>September 18 Back to the Tractatus</b> <i>Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus</i> , pp.3–22 (§§1–3)
<b>September 22 No Class</b>	<b>September 25 More Tractatus</b> <i>Tractatus</i> , pp.22–31 (§§4–4.1212) and 80–89 (§§6.3–7)
<b>September 29 Logical Empiricism</b> Carnap, “The elimination of metaphysics through the logical analysis of language”	<b>October 2 No Class</b>
<b>October 6 Meaning and Use</b> Wittgenstein, <i>The Blue Book</i> (excerpt)	<b>October 9 Language</b> <i>Philosophical Investigations</i> , §§1–21
<b>October 13 No Class</b> <b>October 14 (Tuesday) Language</b> <i>Philosophical Investigations</i> , §§22–64	<b>October 16 The Nature of Philosophy</b> <i>Philosophical Investigations</i> , §§65–88
<b>October 20 No Class</b>	<b>October 23 The Nature of Philosophy</b> <i>Philosophical Investigations</i> , §§89–137
	<b>October 24 No Class</b> (Classes follow a Monday schedule this day, but we won't meet)
<b>October 27 Rule Following</b> <i>Philosophical Investigations</i> , §§138–170	<b>October 30 Rule Following</b> <i>Philosophical Investigations</i> , §§171–242
<b>November 3 Private Language</b> <i>Philosophical Investigations</i> , §§243–280	<b>November 6 No Class (Professor Away)</b>
<b>November 10 Inner and Outer</b> <i>Philosophical Investigations</i> , §§281–397	<b>November 13 Seeing-As, etc.</b> <i>Philosophical Investigations</i> , §§398–546
<b>November 17 Final Passages</b> <i>Philosophical Investigations</i> , §§547–693	<b>November 20 Wittgenstein and the Psychology of Concepts</b> Eleanor Rosch: Wittgenstein and Categorization research in Cognitive Psychology
<b>November 24 TBD</b>	<b>November 27 No Class (Thanksgiving)</b>
<b>December 1 Kripkenstein</b> Kripke: “Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language”	<b>December 4 Millikan contra Kripkenstein</b> Millikan: “Truth Rules, Hoverflies, and the Kripke-Wittgenstein Paradox”
<b>December 8 Private Language</b> Fodor, <i>The Language of Thought</i> (excerpt)	<b>December 11 Language Games as Rule-Governed Phenomena</b> David Lewis: Scorekeeping in a Language Game
<b>December 15 TBD</b>	