

# Philosophy 31414

MAPH Core Course: Contemporary Analytic Philosophy

Autumn 2021

TR 9:30-10:50

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Office hours: R 1:30 – 3:15 [via Zoom]  
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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to provide MAPH students — especially those interested in pursuing a Ph.D. in Philosophy — with an introduction to some recent debates between philosophers working in the analytic tradition. The course is, however, neither a history of analytic philosophy nor an overview of the discipline as it currently stands. The point of the course is primarily to introduce the distinctive style and method — or styles and methods — of philosophizing in the analytic tradition, through brief explorations of some currently hotly debated topics in the field.

The first unit of the course will focus on the nature of analytic philosophy and the idea of analysis. This will be followed by units on the analysis of knowledge, metaphysical questions about ontology and grounding, and the analysis of conditionals (a topic of great interest to philosophers of language).

## READINGS AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS

All course readings will be available through the course's Canvas website. You are required to write three short paper assignments (6-8 pages each) on pre-assigned topics.

First paper	due October 19	worth 25%
Second paper	due November 16	worth 35%
Final Paper	due December 7	worth 40%

Paper topics will be uploaded to the Canvas site in advance of the due dates. Students may rewrite and resubmit their first paper in light of comments received. Students may, if they wish, design their own paper topics after consultation with the instructor. Late papers will be docked a grade per day (e.g., B+ to B) unless you have received approval ahead of time. There will be no final exam.

Attendance of classes is expected. Class participation will play a decisive role in determining the final grade of borderline cases.

## ROADMAP

The following schedule provides an overview over the topics that we will address during this semester as well as the assigned readings. All readings should be done before the Tuesday of the week for which they are assigned (except for Week 1). The literature on all of the topics discussed here is massive and we can only scratch the surface. Readings marked “optional” deepen one's understanding of the topics to be discussed in class but are optional. Additional recommended readings will be announced in class. Readings may change as the semester goes on. Updated versions of this syllabus will be posted as changes are made.

Date	Topic	Readings
<b>Introduction: Styles of Analytic Philosophy</b>		
Week 1 [9/28]	Reductive and Connective Analyses	Strawson, "Analytical Philosophy," "Reduction or Connection"
<b>Epistemology: The Analysis of Knowledge</b>		
Week 1 [9/30]	The Gettier Problem	C.I. Lewis, <i>Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation</i> , Ch. 1, Section 3 Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" Feldman, "An Alleged Defect in Gettier Counter-Examples" [optional]
Week 2	Responses to the Gettier Problem	Goldman, "A Causal Theory of Knowing" Lehrer and Paxson, "Knowledge: Undefeated Justified True Belief" Dretske, "Conclusive Reasons"
Week 3	Solving the Gettier Problem?	Zagzebski, "The Inescapability of Gettier Problems" Williamson, <i>Knowledge and Its Limits</i> , Introduction [optional], Ch. 1
<b>Metaphysics: Quinean Ontology and Beyond</b>		
Week 4	Ontological Commitments	Quine, "On What There Is" Quine, "Variables Explained Away" [optional] Quine, "Ontological Reduction and the World of Numbers" [optional] Carnap, "Empiricism, Semantics, and Ontology"
Week 5	Neo-Aristotelian Metaontology	Fine, "The Question of Ontology" Schaffer, "On What Grounds What" Koslicki, "Questions of Ontology"
Week 6	Grounding	Fine, "Guide to Ground" Rosen, "Metaphysical Dependence: Grounding and Reduction" Wilson, "No Work for a Theory of Grounding"
<b>Philosophy of Language: The Analysis of Conditionals</b>		
Week 7	Material Conditional Analyses	Bennett, <i>A Philosophical Guide to Conditionals</i> , Chs. 1–3 Grice, "Logic and Conversation" [optional] Grice, "Indicative Conditionals" Jackson, "On Assertion and Indicative Conditionals"
Week 8	Lewis vs. Stalnaker	Lewis, <i>Counterfactuals</i> , Chs. 1–2 Stalnaker, "A Theory of Conditionals" Stalnaker, "Indicative Conditionals" [optional] Stalnaker, "A Defense of Conditional Excluded Middle" [optional]
Week 9	Probabilistic Analyses	Edgington, "On Conditionals" Edgington, "Counterfactuals and the Benefit of Hindsight" [optional]