



PHIL 491: Majors Seminar

Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*

Tuesdays, 14:00-17:00, ANSO 203

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Course Description: This seminar is an in-depth study of one of the most important, influential, and least understood works in 20th century philosophy: Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*. Among other difficulties, the *Investigations* challenges our normal procedure of confronting philosophical texts. Due to such difficulties, our meetings will consist of close readings and open discussion. It is particularly important to stay on top of the readings, prepare questions about them in advance of our weekly sessions, and attend regularly. Attendance is mandatory. During each meeting one of you will present on the week's reading. If you have any inkling now of a future absence due to some foreseen conflict, please let me know as soon as possible.

Text: Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 4th Edition (Blackwell, 2009). The book should be available for purchase at the UBC Bookstore.

Requirements: Regular attendance and participation, in-class presentation, a term paper outline due on November 21 (~2 pages), and a term paper due on December 8 (~12 pages).

A Note on Plagiarism: (from the UBC Calendar:) Plagiarism, which is intellectual theft, occurs where an individual submits or presents the oral or written work of another person as his or her own. Scholarship quite properly rests upon examining and referring to the thoughts and writings of others. However, when another person's words (i.e. phrases, sentences, or paragraphs), ideas, or entire works are used, the author must be acknowledged in the text, in footnotes, in endnotes, or in another accepted form of academic citation. Where direct quotations are made, they must be clearly delineated (for example, within quotation marks or separately indented). Failure to provide proper attribution is plagiarism because it represents someone else's work as one's own. Plagiarism should not occur in submitted drafts or final works. A student who seeks assistance from a tutor or other scholastic aids must ensure that the work submitted is the student's own. Students are responsible for ensuring that any work submitted does not constitute plagiarism. Students who are in any doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism should consult their instructor before handing in any assignments. A link about Academic misconduct is below:

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,959>

Course Schedule: It's hard to anticipate exactly how much we will cover from one week to the next. My hope is that we can get through about 15-20 pages of text each week, but we may decide that certain sections are worth skipping or (more likely) linger on particularly challenging passages. The book is divided up into numbered paragraphs, ranging from page-long meditations on a particular topic to sentence-long aphorisms of striking originality and power. How the paragraphs should be grouped together thematically is itself highly contested. I will be following my former teacher Warren Goldfarb's rough division:

- §§1-43: Meaning and reference
- §§44-64: Logical analysis
- §§65-91: Universals and the fixity of meaning
- §§92-137: Philosophical theories
- §§138-184: Understanding
- §§185-240: Rule following
- §§243-309: Privacy of mental states
- §§310-430: Mental states and episodes – thought, imagination, consciousness
- §§431-693: Mental states and future orientation

Please note: We will **not** be meeting on the first day of term, September 5. For our first meeting on September 12, please be sure to read up to §43 (pp. 3e-25e).

Final remark: At the moment I do not anticipate delving into the vast secondary literature surrounding the *Investigations*. Should it become necessary later on to consider some commentary, I will put relevant material on reserve.