

# Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*

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## Course description:

Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* is one of the most influential texts in 20th century analytic philosophy; it has shaped discourse about language and meaning, thought and perception, and the concept of philosophical form. It is also one of the most enigmatic. One aim of this course is to do a close reading of the first half of the *Investigations*. We will also explore the reception of many of Wittgenstein's ideas about, e.g., language and rule-following, family resemblances, the concept of philosophical nonsense, forms of life, sensation and perception, and possibility of private language. During the last two weeks, we will discuss Wittgenstein's reception in the literature on ethics and animals.

## Prerequisites:

This is an upper level course, appropriate for advanced undergraduates and graduate students. Undergraduates should seek permission of the instructor before enrolling.

## Requirements:

### Graduate students

- One presentation.
- One paper of 25 pages.

### Undergraduates

- Two 10-page papers.

## Readings:

### Week 1: *The Augustinian picture of language*

- PI preface, §§1-2
- Baker and Hacker, "The Augustinian Picture"
- Cavell, "Notes and Afterthoughts on the Opening of Wittgenstein's *Investigations*"

### Week 2: *Critiquing the Augustinian picture of language*

- PI, §§3-43
- Goldfarb, "I Want You to Bring Me a Slab"
- Kuusela, "Do the Concepts of Grammar and Use in Wittgenstein Articulate a Theory of Language or Meaning?"

### Week 3: *Family resemblance*

- PI, §§44-88
- Bambrough, "Universals and Family Resemblances"
- Sluga, "Families and Resemblance" (ch. 5 of *Wittgenstein*)

### Week 4: *Wittgenstein and contextualism*

- Dobler, "Two Conceptions of Wittgenstein's Contextualism"
- Bridges, "Wittgenstein vs. Contextualism"
- Conant, "Wittgenstein on Meaning and Use"

### Week 5: *Metaphilosophy, part one*

- PI, §§89-107
- Diamond, "Criss-Cross Philosophy"
- McGinn, "Grammar in the *Philosophical Investigations*"

Week 6: *Metaphilosophy, part two*

- PI, §§108-133
- Diamond, “What Nonsense Might Be”
- Conant, “Wittgenstein’s Methods”

Week 7: *Reading*

- PI, §§134-184
- McDowell, “Are Meaning, Understanding, etc. Definite States?”
- Crary, “Wittgenstein’s Commonsense Realism About the Mind”

Week 8: *Rule-following, part one*

- PI, §§185-201
- Floyd, “Wittgenstein on 2, 2, 2...”
- Stroud, “Wittgenstein and Logical Necessity”

Week 9: *Rule-following, part two*

- Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*
- Ginsborg, “Going on as One Ought: Kripke and Wittgenstein on the Normativity of Meaning”
- Sultanesco, “Meaning Scepticism and Primitive Normativity”

Week 10: *Forms of life*

- PI, §§202-242
- Baz, “The Sound of Bedrock”
- Floyd, “Chains of Life: Turing, Lebensform, and the Emergence of Wittgenstein’s Later Style”

Week 11: *Sensation*

- PI, §§243-281
- Ahmed, “Wittgenstein on Seeing Aspects”
- Stroud, “Private Objects, Physical Objects, and Ostention”

Week 11: *Wittgenstein and perception*

- Anscombe, “The Intentionality of Sensation: A Grammatical Feature”
- McGinn, “Two Senses of ‘See’”
- Travis, “Intentionally Suffering?”

Week 13: *Private language*

- PI, §§282-309
- Stern, “The Uses of Wittgenstein’s Beetle”
- Diamond, “Does Bismarck Have a Beetle in His Box?”

Week 14: *Wittgenstein and ethics*

- Diamond, “Eating Meat and Eating People”
- Crary, “Wittgenstein and Ethical Naturalism”
- Floyd, “Wittgenstein on Ethics: Working Through *Lebensformen*”

Week 15: *Wittgenstein and animals*

- DeGrazia, “Wittgenstein and the Mental Life of Animals”
- Cash, “Wittgenstein and the Animal Origins of Linguistic Communication”
- Glock, “Animals, Thoughts and Concepts”