SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
Spring 2007  

WITTGENSTEIN  
PHIL 770  
Tu 3:35-6:20, BH 251  

Instructor: Dr. Mohammad Azadpur  
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DESCRIPTION:  
This course examines alternatives to the standard interpretations of Wittgenstein’s philosophy. The alternative interpretations illuminate against the backdrop of Wittgenstein’s own writings and representatives of the standard readings of Wittgenstein. This alternative illumination is, of course, of a different sort than the one available in the standard approach to the works of this philosophical giant.

The first part of the course tackles Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus. We examine Wittgenstein’s ontological atomism, picture theory of language, views on sense and nonsense (especially philosophical nonsense), as well as his account of the ethical purpose of philosophy. The non-standard readings of the early Wittgenstein draw our attention away from the content of his writings and place it on the form of his work. It is their contention that focusing on the form as well as Wittgenstein’s metaphilosophical commitments throws light on the relation between his thought and different philosophical traditions and areas of intellectual concern. For this part of the course, we will work on essays by Robert Fogelin, Cora Diamond, James Conant, and Meredith Williams.

The second part develops the following themes in Wittgenstein’s Philosophical Investigations: critique of Tractatus, scepticism concerning understanding, the private language argument, the method of Investigations, and meta-ethics. The works of a whole range of fascinating contemporary philosophers (who are also readers of later Wittgenstein) will be explored in this part of the course, including Saul Kripke, Stanley Cavell, Hilary Putnam, John McDowell, and Simon Blackburn. The non-standard reading that I emphasize in this part of the course is the brand of realism championed by McDowell and Putnam.

REQUIREMENTS  
Class attendance and participation are required and count for 20% of the grade. The remainder of the grade will be determined by a term paper (40%) and class presentations (40%). Each class presentation requires a 3-5 page paper, due at my office by noon of the Monday preceding the presentation.

TEXTS  
• Crary, Alice. The New Wittgenstein.  
• Fogelin, Robert. Wittgenstein.  
• Kripke, Saul. Wittgenstein on Rules & Private Language.  
• Wittgenstein. Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus.

The rest of the material for the course is available on electronic reserves (http://eres.sfsu.edu/courseindex.asp). You will be asked to photocopy these passages and articles at your own expense.
CALENDAR

Jan. 30: Introduction: Derek Jarman’s *Wittgenstein.*

Feb. 6: The Two Readings of *Tractatus.*
Readings: *Tractatus* (1-3), Fogelin’s *Wittgenstein,* Chapters 1-3, and Conant’s “The Method of the *Tractatus.*”

Readings: *Tractatus* (3.3-3.32; 4-4.0031; 5.473-5.4733) and Conant’s “Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein, and Nonsense.”

Feb. 20: Throwing Away the Ladder.
Readings: *Tractatus* (Preface and 6.44-7), Conant’s “Throwing Away the Top of the Ladder,” and Diamond’s “Throwing Away the Ladder: How to Read the *Tractatus.*”

Feb. 27: Ethics in the *Tractatus.*

Mar. 6: Critique.

Mar. 13: Later Wittgenstein on Early Wittgenstein?
*Investigations* (1-137), Fogelin Chapter 9, and Cavell’s “Excursus on Wittgenstein’s vision of Language.”

Mar. 20: Rule Following 1: Understanding
*Investigations* (137-183), Fogelin Chapter 10, and Taylor’s “Understanding and Explanation in the Geisteswissenschaften.”

Mar. 27: Rule Following 2: The Skeptical Paradox and the Skeptical Solution.
Fogelin Chapters 11-12, and Kripke’s *Wittgenstein on Rules & Private Language.*

Apr. 3: Rule following 3: More skepticism
Cavell’s “The Argument of the Ordinary.”

Apr. 10: SPRING BREAK

Apr. 17: Rule Following 4: The Straight Solution.
*Investigations* (183-242), McDowell’s “Wittgenstein on Following a Rule,” and Brandom’s “Freedom and Constraint by Norms.”

Apr. 24-May 1: Rule-Following and Meta-ethics
McDowell’s “Non-Cognitivism and Rule-Following,” Blackburn’s reply: “Rule Following and Moral Realism,” and Diamond’s “Wittgenstein, Mathematics and Ethics: Resisting the Attractions of Realism.”

May 8: More Remarks on Later Wittgenstein
Cavell’s “The Availability of Wittgenstein’s Later Philosophy” and Putnam’s “Was Wittgenstein a Pragmatist?”

May 15: Review