

Professor Elisabeth Camp

Office: 106 Somerset, Room 514

Office Hours: Thursdays 10:30-11:30 and 1-2, and by appointment

Email: elisabeth.camp@rutgers.edu

Course meeting: Th 11:30-12:50, Scott Hall 204

Texts

Required: *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. Pears & McGuinness
(ISBN 978-0415254083)

Philosophical Investigations, 4th ed., trans. Anscombe, Hacker & Shulte
(ISBN 978-1405159289)

Recommended: Monk: *Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius* (ISBN 978-0140159950)
Doxiadis & Papadimitriou: *Logicomix* (ISBN 978-1596914520)

Course Description and Goals

In this class, we will engage in a close reading of Wittgenstein's two major writings: the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and the *Philosophical Investigations*. Some of the main topics to be discussed include: what reality is; how language connects to the world; the relation between language and logic; what understanding is; pain (and other feelings); the source of norms and values; what philosophy is and what it can (and cannot!) accomplish.

A distinctive feature of Wittgenstein's overall approach to philosophy is his commitment to philosophy as an activity rather than a set of doctrines. In keeping with this, the main goal of this class is for you to become more skilled at *doing* philosophy: to learn to read closely, charitably, and critically; to grapple with complex, foundational questions; to write clearly and concisely; and to talk respectfully with others. There will be no lectures. There will also be no secondary texts: our job is to make sense of *these* texts, *together*.

Because of a highly unfortunate administrative scheduling error, we will **ONLY** be meeting on Thursdays, for 80 minutes. To compensate for the missed class time, and to make our in-person discussions as effective as possible, we will be doing significant on-line collaborative work every week. The class as a whole will not function unless each of you do this work!!

Course Requirements

- Class attendance & participation, and bi-weekly out-of-class meetings (10% of grade).
- Study questions (10% of grade).
- Weekly blog posts (25% of course grade).
- Two short papers, 2-3 pages (15% each).
- A final paper, 5-7 pages (25% of course grade).
- There is NO final exam.

Attendance & participation: Given our limited class time, it is especially imperative that you come to class, armed with the readings and ready to talk. If you must miss a class, please use the University absence reporting website (sims.rutgers.edu/ssra) to indicate the date and reason for your absence; an email is automatically sent to me.

You must also meet with me (briefly!) every other week, either in office hours or by Skype (my Skype name is 'lizdmritri'). I am hoping that many of you will come to office hours, so that it functions as an extension of in-class discussion.

Study questions: **1-paragraph** response to an exegetical question, submitted individually through Sakai; due **Sunday night**. (3 points each: 1 pt: basic comprehension; 2 pts: solid comprehension; 3 points: insightful comprehension).

Blog posts: **2-paragraph** posts to the Sakai forum, rotating through roles on an assigned basis.

Question: pose your own question – something you genuinely want an answer to! Select a specific passage (1-2 sentences). In paragraph 1, ‘translate’ the passage into your own words, and explain how it relates to the surrounding text. In paragraph 2, ask a question, explaining what puzzles you about the passage: e.g. what it means more precisely, how it seems to conflict with something else that Wittgenstein says, why it seems false.

Due **Sunday night** (NO CREDIT for late posts).

Grade: 0-5 points for translation and context-setting; 0-5 points for posing a specific, well-motivated, textually-grounded, relatively tractable question.

Response: choose 1 question (each question gets 1 answer, on a first-come-first-served basis. ‘Ping’ a question to pick it, then submit your answer within 1 hour. If there aren’t enough questions to go around, expand on and respond to a study question.) Depending on the question, EITHER offer two alternative interpretations of the text that would answer the question in different ways, OR offer one interpretive answer and then pose a further question that this response opens up.

Due **Monday night** (NO CREDIT for late posts).

Grade: 0-5 points for engaging with the question; 0-5 points for engaging with the text.

Commentary: choose 1 Q&A thread (each thread gets 1 comment, on a first-come-first-served basis. ‘Ping’ a thread, then submit your comment within 1 hour. If there are not enough threads to go around, double up on another thread, but make sure to offer a distinct comment.) Depending on the thread, EITHER adjudicate between the proposed interpretations, explaining which you prefer and why, OR address the new question (in light of the thread as a whole). ALSO cite a new passage that you think bears on that interpretation or question; re-state it in your own terms and articulate its relevance.

Due **Tuesday night** (NO CREDIT for late posts).

Grade: 0-5 points for responding to and developing the thread; 0-5 points for engaging insightfully with the text.

(I will post a comment on each thread on Wednesday morning.)

Vote: using webclicker.org, vote for the thread you most want to discuss in class. ALSO write a short (**1-paragraph**) comment on that thread. Due **Wednesday night**.

Class discussion will focus on the top 3 threads.

Papers should be blinded and submitted as .pdfs through Sakai. Except in extreme conditions, extensions must be granted well before the due date; late papers will be downgraded 1/3 grade per day.

You are expected to be familiar with and to abide by RU’s policy on academic and intellectual integrity: academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy

If you need special accommodations because of a learning disability or for another reason, please have the Office of Disability Services (ods.rutgers.edu) get in touch with me.

If you are struggling with mental health, or just need some extra assistance dealing with life, get in touch with CAPS (rhscaps.rutgers.edu) or Scarlet Listeners (scarletlisteners.com), or some other source of support. One of my main mottos: being a person is hard! Sometimes it takes real work! (Other mottos: don’t count unhatched chickens; don’t let the perfect be the enemy of the good.)

A few philosophical resources

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (plato.stanford.edu) should be your go-to source for general philosophical consultation.

Scott Soames' *Philosophical Analysis in the 20th Century* Volume 1, does an excellent job of surveying the relevant history of analytic philosophy in a comprehensible way (albeit sometimes perhaps *too* comprehensible).

Both *Logicomix* and the Monk biography do an excellent job of setting the stage in a way that brings together philosophy and (the really fascinating!) personal developments.

People get *very intense* about each of these texts, and about the relation between them. I mostly encourage you to stay away from secondary sources, at least until you've grappled intensely with the texts for yourselves.

That said, here are some on-line resources for the *Tractatus* that may be helpful.

- Side-by-side presentation of the *Tractatus*' original, German text and the Ogden and the Pears & McGuinness translations: people.umass.edu/klement/tlp/
(this can be *very* useful, even if you don't read German)
- Hypertext of Ogden and Pears & McGuinness translations:
tractatus-online.appspot.com/Tractatus_en.html
- Expandable version (P&McG translation): tractatuslogico-philosophicus.com
- The *Tractatus* visualized as tree structure: pbellon.github.io/tractatus-tree/

Finally, this semester some faculty are trying out 'Rationale' (rationaleonline.com): an argument-mapping software program that allows people to work individually or collaboratively. It's available for a limited time only for the low-low price of (I think) \$5. It is not required, but you may find it useful. I will encourage you to submit your short papers using it; and I strongly encourage you as a group to collaborate informally on constructing maps of parts of both texts.

To register, "First make a free account here: <https://www.rationaleonline.com/accounts/register>. Next upgrade your account here: https://www.rationaleonline.com/accounts/license_code_enter using this code: e3r9gwsf , making sure to *type* rather than *copy/paste* the code."

Schedule of Readings

(a rough, somewhat optimistic guide; updates on Sakai)

Th 1/21 Introduction; *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* §1

Th 1/28 *Tractatus* §2

Th 2/4 *Tractatus* §3

Th 2/11 *Tractatus* §4

First Paper Topics Handed Out

Th 2/18 *Tractatus* §5

Th 2/25 *Tractatus* §§6-7

FIRST PAPER DUE

Th 3/3 *Philosophical Investigations* §§1-21

Th 3/10 *Investigations* §§22-64

3/17 SPRING BREAK

Th 3/24 *Investigations* §§65-122

Second Paper Topics Handed Out

Th 3/31 *Investigations* §§123-171

M 4/4 *Investigations* §§172-242

Th 4/7 *Investigations* §§243-298

SECOND PAPER DUE

Th 4/14 *Investigations* §§299-485

Th 4/21 *Investigations* §§486-693

Th 4/28 Review and Conclusion

Final Paper Topics Handed Out

F 5/6 FINAL PAPERS DUE