Philosophical Logic

Lecture 1: Necessary truths

1. Necessity in everyday language 'Must', 'has to', 'couldn't be otherwise', 'ought'. Necessity goes beyond matter of fact.

2. Two varieties of necessity: *de re* and *de dicto* Necessity attributed to things in the world. Necessity attributed to expressions in a language.

3. Can we define necessity? Necessity as possibility: Something is necessary if and only if it is not possible for it not to be the case. Necessary truths are true in every *possible world*.

4. What explains necessity of truths? Laws of nature? ('Nothing can travel faster than light.') But do those laws obtain in all possible worlds? And what about 'If there are three ants then there must be more than two ants.'?

5. Necessary truth as analytic Analytic truth vs synthetic truth: expressions made true by their meaning alone vs expressions made true by the (extra-linguistic) world. Necessity explained: Truth are necessary if they are analytic.

6. Knowledge of necessary truths If a truth is analytic, then we can know its truth just by grasping its meaning—no need for investigation (a priori). Contrast with observational knowledge (a posteriori). So if necessary truths are analytic truths, then we can have a priori knowledge of necessary truths.

7. A package deal? Some philosophers have thought that analytic truths are the only necessary ones, and that we can only know such truths a priori.

8. Ayer's support *Language, Truth and Logic*: There is no a priori knowledge of reality (no a priori synthetic truths), and all necessary truths are analytic (no necessary synthetic truths).