PHIL10014: The Philosophy of Wittgenstein 2016/17 Course Guide

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Office Location: Dugald Stewart Building, room 5.10
Office Hour: Tuesday 4-5

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1. Course Aims and Objectives

We will consider the philosophical work of Ludwig Wittgenstein in this course, focusing especially on the period from his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* to his *Philosophical Investigations*. Apart from the details of Wittgenstein’s philosophical positions in these two works, we will consider the continuity of his philosophy and his views on ethics.

We will not be discussing any of Wittgenstein’s works after the *Philosophical Investigations*, including *On Certainty* nor his several remarks and writings on the philosophy of psychology.

2. Intended Learning Outcomes

- to grasp and analyze central themes in Wittgenstein's philosophy
- to identify and articulate problems in the interpretation of Wittgenstein’s work
- to assess Wittgenstein's reasons for the views he advocates
- to grasp the nature of Wittgenstein's methodology in his work
- to relate Wittgenstein's philosophy to that of historical and contemporary philosophers

3. Seminar Times and Locations

Semester 1, Tuesdays 2.10pm – 4pm, Dugald Stewart Building room 1.20

4. Seminar Content

*Requirements*

You will need to have ready access to the following two texts to participate in the seminars for this option. Each will be abbreviated TLP and PI, respectively.

☞ *You should bring a copy to each seminar.*

Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (London: Routledge, various editions). N.B. Two translations are available from Routledge, one by Ogden and one by Pears & McGuinness; either will suffice though I prefer Ogden.


The schedule for the seminars follows and includes questions for essays and discussion. Seminar-specific reading and supplemental reading for essays are in the Readings section below. The format for the meetings of this option is a seminar format and it will not be possible for you to succeed in your studies without reading the materials suggested for each seminar.
You should come to each seminar having read at least the materials listed as ‘Sources’ for each week.

A list of general Wittgenstein reading is given at the end of the Readings section.

Regrettably, the behaviour of some obliges me to make the following requests.

- Please do not text or send instant messages during class. It is disrespectful. Turn off the ringer of your phone and put the phone away.

- Please do not use your laptop computers in class for anything besides making notes or related activity. If I notice that you are using your laptop for something potentially distracting to your neighbours such as Facebook or YouTube, I will ask you to close your laptop. Tweeting is not a related activity no matter how interesting the seminar material.

1. Introduction
   Sources: No advance reading required.

   Discussion:
   Wittgenstein’s life and work; Wittgenstein’s conception of philosophy; logic in the Tractatus; Frege; the Augustinian picture of language; the project of the Tractatus, the picture theory in the Tractatus.

   Useful reading: TLP 2.1 - 3.3, 4 - 4.121, 6.53 - 7; PI §§ 1 - 7.

2. Tractatus
   Sources: TLP 2-4.

   Discussion:
   For this seminar, I would like everyone to make notes on the two top levels of comments in TLP from sections 2, 3 and 4, viz. §§ 2, 2.1, 2.2…3, 3.1, 3.2, etc. We are going to read and discuss these central sections in class.

   Questions:
   To what extent, if any, are the pictures of the picture-theory like pictures from a camera? According to Wittgenstein, do we learn the meanings of words? Is his account adequate?
   What is the result of incorrectly combining signs? Is the result intelligible?
   What is the difference between a sign and a symbol? Is the distinction clear?
   What is the role of the proposition in the Tractatus?

3. Ethics and Nonsense
   Sources: TLP Preface, 5.5ff & 6.4-7; “A Lecture on Ethics” (sources in Reading below)
   Secondary: Notebooks 1914-16, entries from June 1916 to January 1917.

   Questions:
Does Wittgenstein believe there is anything of value? [Do not use as essay question.]
Why is ethics nonsense according to Wittgenstein? Is he right?
To what extent, if any, are logic and value related?
Is the whole of the Tractatus really nonsense by Wittgenstein's lights?
Is there a difference between senseless and nonsensical statement? If so, what is it?
Was Wittgenstein a solipsist?

4. Analysis and Philosophical Method
Sources: TLP 3.2-4.0311, 4.111-4.121, PI 46-64, 89-91, 109-133.

Questions:
Why does Wittgenstein think that sense must be determinate?
Is it an objection to TLP that no examples of simple objects are given?
Does it make sense to talk about the analysis of a proposition?
Is it true that what is known and understood is complex?
Is there such a thing as philosophical method?
What contrasts are there between psychology and philosophy?
Does every method of analysis have an endpoint when the analysis is complete?
Must there be an overarching method of analysis applicable to anything?

5. Language-games, Ostensive Definition, Meaning as Use
Sources: PI §§ 1-88
Secondary: The Brown Book, §1 p. 77 and following to §2.

Questions:
What is a language-game? What roles do language-games play? [Do not use for essays.]
How do language-games differ from pictures? Are language-games games?
To what extent, if any, is language a multiplicity of language-games?
Could the builders' language-game be a complete language?
Does ostensive definition connect language with the world?
Is meaning identical with use?
What are family resemblance concepts?

6. Rule-following I

During this seminar we will make a close reading of the sections above and consider their meaning. I would like each of you to read the above sections and make a commentary on each.

7. Rule-following II
Sources: PI §§ 138-242.

Does Wittgenstein establish that language is rule-governed?
Does a rule show me what I should do next? If so, how?
In what sense is following a rule a practice?
Can Wittgenstein's account of rules explain logical necessity?
Can there be socially isolated rule-following?
Can there be private rule-following?

8. Private Language I
Sources: PI §§ 202, 237, 243-244, 246, 248, 253, 258-9, 265, 270, 272, 291, 293, 296-299, 304.

During this seminar we will make a close reading of the sections above and consider their meaning. I would like each of you to read the above sections and make a commentary on each.

9. Private Language II
Sources: PI §§ 237-293

What is a private language supposed to be? Are there any?
In what sense are my sensations private?
What is the purpose of Wittgenstein's discussion of a private language?
How does the discussion of private language relate to the discussion of rule-following?
What role does scepticism about memory play in the discussion of private language?
Does Wittgenstein's discussion depend on verificationist principles?
Is Wittgenstein's private language argument about language or sensations?

10. Psychology: Inner and Outer
Secondary: PI 244-315

What is misleading about the idea we have of the relation between mind and body that leads into philosophical difficulties?
Can an argument from criteria refute skepticism about other minds?
In what sense, if any, do we have epistemic privacy?
Does Wittgenstein deny the existence of 'inner processes'?
Is Wittgenstein a behaviourist or a dualist?
What is it to describe, rather than avow, a state of mind?

11. Naturalism, Necessity and the Grammar of Forms of Life
Sources: PI 490-570 esp. 491-497, Part II.xii (4th ed. PPF §§365-367)
What does Wittgenstein think determines the bounds of sense?
What is the difference, if any, between ordinary grammar and logical grammar?
What contrasts are there between psychology and philosophy? How do these relate to forms of life?
Does language have a goal in the same way as cookery?
To what extent, if any, must language track the world?

5. PPLS Undergraduate Student Handbook
The PPLS Undergraduate Student Handbook has more information on Student Support and academic guidance; late coursework and plagiarism; illness and disability adjustments, and useful sources of advice.

The Handbook can be found here:

http://www.ppls.ed.ac.uk/students/undergraduate/manage_your_courses.php

6. Readings

1. Introduction
Background to Logic and Language
Morris, Michael, An Introduction to the Philosophy of Language, (Cambridge University Press 2006), esp. chapter 15
Textor, Mark, Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Frege on Sense and Reference, (Routledge 2009).

Biographical and Philosophical Introductions
Janik, A. & Toulmin, S., Wittgenstein's Vienna, various publishers 1973 and 1996
Hacker, P. M. S. Wittgenstein's Place in Twentieth-Century Analytic Philosophy (Oxford; Blackwell, 1996)
Kenny, Anthony. Wittgenstein (Harmondsworth; Penguin, 1973); chap. 1
Guidebooks for TLP
Any of these below is good. Anscombe’s is dated but goes into the Russell/Frege background very well. Mounce’s is my favorite, but it can be terse. White’s is tricky but unusually insightful. Nordmann’ and Morris’ are the most recent and reflect recent scholarship. Schroeder’s is helpful in that it is useful for both the Tractatus and the Investigations—but it is somewhat dense. Child’s also covers both well, and the treatment of the Investigations is close to the spirit of my discussion in the course.

Anscombe, G.E.M., An Introduction to Wittgenstein’s Tractatus, (St. Augustine’s Press, 2001) and several earlier editions

Further into TLP
Black, Max. A Companion to Wittgenstein’s “Tractatus.” Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1964 [This is useful for any close reader of the Tractatus as it goes section by section.]

Guidebooks for PI
2. Tractatus
According to the previous seminar #1, especially the two subsections on TLP. Essays in this area will need to use resources from ‘Further into TLP’ above and probably at least one guidebook that covers TLP.

3. Ethics and Nonsense

Wittgenstein’s Writing on or about ethics


Commentary on the application of Wittgenstein to ethics


*Articles about nonsense in TLP*


4. Analysis and Philosophical Method


Anscombe, G.E.M., *An Introduction to Wittgenstein’s Tractatus*, (St. Augustine’s
Press, 2001) and several earlier editions.


McGinn, Marie, chapter 1 in Wittgenstein and the Philosophical Investigations (Routledge, 1997).


5. Language-games, Ostensive Definition, Meaning as Use

Introductions to these topics


Brenner, William H. Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations (SUNY, 1999), pp. 9-32


Hanfling, Oswald. Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy (London; MacMillan, 1989), chaps, 3 & 6

Lugg, A. Wittgenstein's Investigations 1-133 (Routledge, 2000), pp. 8-90


Luntley, Michael. Wittgenstein: Meaning and Judgement (Blackwell, 2003), chap. 3

McGinn, Marie. Wittgenstein and the Philosophical Investigations (Routledge, 1997), Chap. 2

Schulte, Joachim. Wittgenstein: An Introduction (SUNY, 1992) chap. 4


Articles

Goldfarb, W. 'I Want You To Bring Me a Slab...' Synthese, 1983.


Williams, M. 'The Philosophical Significance of Learning in the Later Wittgenstein',


6. **Rule-following I**

7. **Rule-following II**

**Wright**, C. and A. Miller (eds.), *Rule-Following and Meaning*, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002. [This has many articles on the topic that were published elsewhere.]


**Williams**, M. 'Rules, Community and Individual,' in *Wittgenstein, Meaning and Mind* (Routledge, 1999), Chap. 6; originally in Klaus Puhl, ed., *Meaning-Scepticism*


**Pettit**, P. "The Reality of Rule-Following," in *Rules, Reasons, and Norms*, Oxford:
8. Private Language I

9. Private Language II
Budd, Malcolm. 'Wittgenstein on Sensuous Experiences,' Philosophical Quarterly, 1986; see also Budd, Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Psychology (London; Routledge, 1989), Chap. 3.
Williams, M. 'Wittgenstein on Representations, Privileged Objects and Private Languages,' in Wittgenstein, Meaning and Mind (Routledge, 1999), Chap. 1; originally, Canadian Journal of Philosophy, 1983.
Wright, C. 'Does PI 258-60 suggest a cogent argument against private language?' in P. Petit and J. McDowell , eds., Subject, Thought and Context (Oxford; OUP, 1986). Reprinted in Wright, C., Rails to Infinity, Harvard University Press, 2001 along with 'Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy of Mind.'
Most guidebooks have a chapter on the private language argument.

10. Psychology: Inner and Outer
Descartes, Meditations V [for contrast]
Wittgenstein, L., Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology: The Inner and the Outer, 1949 - 1951, volume 2, Blackwell, 1993. [This was published much later and, while very rich, it is rough and much ignored in secondary commentary.]

Malcolm, N. Nothing is Hidden, Chap 8.
Williams, M. 'Wittgenstein's Rejection of Scientific Psychology,' in Wittgenstein, Meaning and Mind (Routledge, 1999), Chap. 9.


11. Naturalism, Necessity and the Grammar of Forms of Life

**Schroeder**, pp. 151-168.

**Stern** and **Sluga**, chapters 6, 11 and 12.

**Glock** (Reader), chapter 14.

**Hacker**, P. *An Analytical Commentary on the Philosophical Investigations*, vol 4. part I, chapter 3 and part II.


Secondary Reading List

The following items are additional resources on which you can draw in your studies. This reading list is by no means exhaustive of philosophical literature on Wittgenstein.

*General Commentaries on Wittgenstein’s Philosophy*


*Collections of Essays*


**Sluga, Hans & Stern, David** (eds). *The Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein*
7. Assessment Information

Exam
This course will be assessed solely on the basis of an exam given in the December diet of examinations. Students who qualify (usually fourth year single honours philosophy students) may be obliged to submit a coursework dissertation instead of sitting the exam. Coursework dissertations are submitted on **Tuesday 20th December 2016, by 12pm**. The title of your coursework dissertation must be approved in advance by submitting it to me in person or by email. After your title is approved you will complete a form confirming this title and submit it to the departmental office on **Monday 24th October 2016, by 12pm**. Generally, any question listed for discussion in a seminar is a suitable short dissertation title.

Formative Essay
In addition, anyone can submit an essay of 2000 words to me for assessment and comment. This “formative essay” will not count toward determining your mark for this class or the class of degree you are ultimately awarded, unless special circumstances prevent you from completing the prescribed assessment above. However the essay is an excellent opportunity to improve your philosophical writing and try arguments you may ultimately use in the exam or short dissertation. I strongly urge you to submit this essay. If you submit the essay by the end of teaching week 9, I will return it to you in class in teaching week 11. If you submit the essay by the end of teaching week 11, I will return the essay to you via the philosophy office in week 1 of the second term. Essays must be submitted, with a cover sheet, in the manner prescribed by the departmental office. Generally, any question listed for discussion in a seminar is a suitable formative essay question.

MSc Assessment
MSc students are assessed by a single essay of 2500 words that must be submitted to the postgraduate teaching office in December at the same time as other MSc Essays. Please check with the postgraduate teaching office for precise details. Generally, any question listed for discussion in a seminar is a suitable essay question.

Feedback will be provided within 3 weeks, unless otherwise notified by email.

Word Count Penalties
Essays must not exceed the word limit, which includes footnotes but excludes bibliography. The precise word count must be written on the coversheet. Overlong essays will be penalised according to the following rule: 5% will be deducted for every 100 words, or part thereof, over the word limit. So, 1-100 words over lose 5%; 101-200 words over lose 10%; 201-300 words over lose 15%; and so on.

Penalties for Late Submission of Essays
Unless an extension has been granted, essays must be submitted by the dates shown in...
the table of Submission Dates below. Essays submitted late without an extension may not be marked, but, if marked, will incur a penalty (in accordance with section 3.8 of the University Undergraduate Assessment Regulations at:

http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Regulations/TaughtAssessmentRegulations2013-14.PDF

For each working day that the work is late there will be a reduction of the mark by 5% of the maximum obtainable mark (e.g. a mark of 65% on the common marking scale would be reduced to 60% up to 24 hours later). This penalty applies for up to five working days, after which a mark of zero will be given.

Please note - Regulation 14 Assessment deadlines: Student responsibilities
It is a student’s responsibility to ascertain and meet his or her assessment deadlines, including examination times and locations.

8. Learn

This year the majority of courses will use electronic submissions for Honours coursework. For essay submission instructions please see the instructions on LEARN. Please note you should not include your name or matriculation number on coursework, only your exam number.

9. Autonomous Learning Groups

One of the best ways to learn, and get feedback, is from talking to each other. In order to facilitate this, each of your Honours courses now has dedicated Autonomous Learning Groups. In week 2, you will receive an email from our Student Support Officer (Tamsin Welch, tamsin.welch@ed.ac.uk) asking if you would like to be part of an Autonomous Learning Group (ALG) for each of your Honours courses. If you agree, Tamsin will form the ALGs for you and email you with details of which group you are in, and the email addresses of the other members of the group.

It is up to you, the members of the ALG, to organise the meetings. You decide how often to meet and what to do in your ALG. ALGs are designed to help you learn and get to know your classmates; they are not a formal requirement of the course. It is important to note that assessment in your courses is non-competitive: you are not competing against your classmates, only against the general grade criteria. It is in your interests to help each other.

As a rough guide, we suggest your ALG meets every 2-3 weeks. You could use the meetings to:

- Read and discuss the papers together
- Discuss essay-writing and time-management techniques
- Constructively critique each other's draft essays or plans
- Read some of the further readings or related papers
• Work on presentations or discussion posts that the class may involve
• Share tips on career advice

Tamsin will be able to help you with room booking (you can also do this yourself through MyEd). Please email the CO of the course if you feel that it would be useful for the group if she or he joined one of your sessions.

Please contact Tamsin if you find it necessary during the semester to transfer into a different group.

ALGs are a new initiative by Philosophy and we appreciate your thoughts. If you feedback on how to make ALGs even better, please email Tamsin Welch (tamsin.welch@ed.ac.uk) or the Director of Undergraduate Teaching, Dr. Mark Sprevak (mark.sprevak@ed.ac.uk).

10. Feedback

You will get many feedback or feedforward opportunities in your courses. Feedback could be in the form of an essay, a draft write-up, self-generated or peer feedback, small group discussions or quizzes within lectures etc. Feedforward might include a discussion of how to write an essay, or prepare for an exam.

Feedback is essential to learning and it takes many forms. We strongly encourage you to use all forms of feedback, including:

• Asking and answering questions in lectures or classes
• Asking questions of your Course Organiser or lecturer in their office hours
• Discussing your work with lecturers and examiners on Philosophy's dedicated Feedback Days (Honours students)
• Actively participating in your tutorials (pre-Honours students)
• Actively participating in Autonomous Learning Groups (Honours students)
• Talking about your ideas outside class with fellow Philosophy students
• Taking your essay to PhilSoc essay surgeries
• Participating in PhilSoc discussion groups and study-skills events
• Participating in PhilSoc debates and talks: http://euphilsoc.weebly.com/
• Participating in the British Undergraduate Philosophy Society, including undergraduate conferences: http://www.bups.org

If you have any suggestions on how to improve feedback further, please contact either:

• Your Tutor (pre-Honours students)
• Your Course Organiser
• Your Personal Tutor
• Tamsin Welch, PPLS Student Support Officer (tamsin.welch@ed.ac.uk)
• Dr Mark Sprevak, Director of Undergraduate Teaching (mark.sprevak@ed.ac.uk)
11. Useful Information

Contacts
You may contact me by email at david.levy@ed.ac.uk. My office is in room 5.10 of the Dugald Stewart Building. I am available Tuesday of each week from 4 until 5 to discuss more or less any philosophical topic, related to this course or not. To ensure that I can see you, I ask that you send me an email confirming that you intend to visit and advising me of the topic for discussion. Unfortunately, I am not often available at other times, though you can seek a special arrangement to meet if it proves necessary.

Feedback
You will receive feedback on your work in this class in the following ways. First, you can see me during my office hour to talk about class material, your own contributions to class discussions or essays in progress. Second, I will mark your formative essay and provide comments on how you can improve your essay—in technique and content—in advance of the exam. Third, you will get some feedback on your exam essays if you are not a final year student. Fourth, you can email me with specific questions about your work in progress or our discussions during the seminars.

WEEK 6 INNOVATIVE LEARNING WEEK  Normal teaching slots will be suspended and in their place will be a range of other activities such as master classes, a research day, a science fair, and guest lectures. More information will follow nearer the time so please check the School website where details will be available on the PPLS Events page.

12. Common Marking Scheme

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/registry/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Mark Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
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| A1    | 90-100     | Excellent  
Outstanding in every respect, the work is well beyond the level expected of a competent student at their level of study. |
| A2    | 80-89      | Excellent  
Outstanding in some respects, the work is often beyond what is expected of a competent student at their level of study. |
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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>Excellent&lt;br&gt;Very good or excellent in most respects, the work is what might be expected of a very competent student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>Very Good&lt;br&gt;Good or very good in most respects, the work displays thorough mastery of the relevant learning outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>Good&lt;br&gt;The work clearly meets requirements for demonstrating the relevant learning outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>Pass&lt;br&gt;The work meets minimum requirements for demonstrating the relevant learning outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>Marginal fail&lt;br&gt;The work fails to meet minimum requirements for demonstrating the relevant learning outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>Clear fail&lt;br&gt;The work is very weak or shows a decided lack of effort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>10-19</td>
<td>Bad fail&lt;br&gt;The work is extremely weak.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>0-9</td>
<td>Bad fail&lt;br&gt;The work is of very little consequence, if any, to the area in question.</td>
</tr>
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**Grade-related Marking Guidelines**

**Explaining the function of these guidelines:**

1. These are only guidelines; marking still requires discretion and judgment.

2. The guidelines are “bottom up” — each band presupposes that the student has at least satisfied the criteria laid down under the lower bands. So to get a first, it is assumed that you at least satisfy all the criteria for a 2-1, etc.

3. Each set of guidelines should be understood not as providing necessary and sufficient conditions for a mark in the band specified. Rather, the guidelines under each band provide a kind of “cluster” which defines a paradigm of a piece of work falling within the band in question. A piece of work might deviate from the paradigm in certain respects but still fall within the band. It might help to explain the idea of a paradigm being invoked here. By way of comparison, an ornamental chair (as one might find in a museum, and that is not fit for sitting on)
is a less paradigmatic instance of a piece of furniture than an ordinary sofa, but plausibly an ornamental chair still counts as a piece of furniture all the same. This is because it satisfies enough of the criteria in the cluster of concepts associated with being a piece of furniture, though it satisfies fewer of those criteria than an ordinary sofa. Similarly, a piece of work might be a less than fully paradigmatic instance of a 2-1 but still count as a 2-1 all the same.

(4) Although they are written in a way that might naturally suggest a binary reading, the guidelines are generally scalar – satisfying each of them comes in degrees, and is not all or nothing. This is important, and relevant to the “paradigm” point above, in that doing better with respect to one criteria under a given band could offset doing slightly less well with regards to another. Also, precisely where within the band a piece of work is assessed will typically reflect how well the work does in terms of each of these criteria.

(5) The guidelines apply most clearly for essays. In the case of exam questions, part of the exercise will be for the student to work out the extent to which the question calls for something going beyond pure exegesis.

(6) For history of philosophy classes, where the instructor explicitly indicates this is the case, the contrast between exegesis and original argument may be less clear. In these cases, the original argumentation may be an original argument for an interpretation or reading of a text, for example. Individual instructors have some discretion in explaining how the specific details of their course mean these guidelines should be interpreted. As mere guidelines, they provide only a sort of “default setting” rather than a one size fits all set of prescriptions, amenable to only one canonical interpretation.

General Guidelines

- Clarity:
  - Is the writing clear?
  - Is the grammar and spelling correct?
  - Is the language used appropriate?

- Structure:
  - Is a clear thesis or position stated?
  - Is an argument, or arguments, offered in support of the thesis?
  - Does each part of the essay/exam have a clearly indicated purpose?

- Understanding:
  - Is a sound understanding of relevant issues demonstrated?
  - Is the exposition of others’ views accurate?
  - Are technical terms adequately defined?

- Originality:
  - Is there evidence of independent thought?
  - Is there critical engagement with the material?

- Argument:
  - Is the argument convincing?
  - Are the inferences valid?
  - Are obvious objections anticipated?
Grade Bands

Fail (less than 40)

Third Class (40–49):

- Writing is generally unclear. Frequent spelling or grammar mistakes, incorrect language, and/or excessively convoluted sentence structure.
- Neglects clearly to state a thesis or position and/or fails to support this with arguments. Contains irrelevant material, or material whose relevance is not adequately explained.
- Demonstrates a barely adequate understanding of central issues. Contains several errors in exposition or in explanation of concepts.
- No evidence of independent thought or critical engagement. Merely rehashes arguments from readings or lectures.
- Where arguments are given, these are weak, depend on invalid inferences or implausible premises. Fails to anticipate obvious objections.

Lower Second Class (50–59):

- Writing is generally clear, but there are occasional spelling/grammar infelicities and/or poorly constructed sentences.
- A thesis/position is indicated but not clearly defined. Some arguments given, but their structure often unclear.
- Demonstrates a basic grasp of key concepts, but occasional inaccuracies in exposition/explanation.
- Little evidence of independent thought. Some suggestion of original ideas, but these are under-developed and/or expressed unclearly.
- Arguments generally weak or unconvincing.

Upper Second Class (60–69):

- Writing is generally clear, marred only by the rare spelling/grammar infelicity or poorly constructed sentence.
- A thesis/position is indicated and clearly defined. Arguments are given with relatively clear structure. It is generally clear what is going on in each section, why one section follows on from the previous one, and how the essay as a whole hangs together.
- Demonstrates a solid understanding of the key concepts, and the exposition is generally accurate and thorough.
- Substantial evidence of original thought – either an original argument of some kind for a familiar position or an original argument for a novel position. In either case, the argument should be reasonably well developed.
- The author’s original arguments are interesting and promising, but fairly central or glaring problems with the argument are not discussed or addressed in any way, or are given only a highly cursory treatment.
Low First Class (70–79):

- Writing is very clear and engaging throughout. Where examples are used they are both relevant and memorable. The writing will also be concise.
- The essay’s structure is not only clear and well defined; it also provides a satisfying narrative arc.
- Demonstrates a deep understanding of the key concepts. Explains other philosopher’s ideas in the author’s own terms, clearly presenting those ideas in a way that indicates that the author has “made them his/her own.” Where technical terms are used they are always carefully defined.
- Highly original thought, with well developed arguments. The exegesis will generally be sufficiently concise as to allow the author to develop his or her own arguments in considerable detail.
- The author very carefully considers the most central and obvious problems with his/her original argument(s) and has interesting things to say about them.

Mid-First Class (80–89):

- Writing is crystal clear and highly engaging throughout. Memorable examples are used to underscore key points. The writing is concise without coming across as terse or stilted.
- The essay’s structure is clear and well defined, with a highly satisfying narrative arc.
- Demonstrates a deep understanding of key concepts. Not only explains the ideas of other philosophers in a way that shows he/she has “made them his/her own,” but that actually casts new light on how we might charitably understand the ideas of those philosophers.
- Very original thought, above and beyond what we would normally expect from an undergraduate. These original ideas will be developed in great detail.
- The author very carefully considers the most central and obvious problems with his/her original argument(s) and has prima facie convincing rejoinders. Author may also consider more subtle objections to his/her argument(s)/view(s).

High First Class (90–100):

- Writing is extremely clear, concise, and engaging — of a publishable quality.
- The essay’s structure is extremely clear and well-defined, with a highly satisfying narrative arc.
- Demonstrates a deep understanding of key concepts. Not only explains the ideas of other philosophers in a way that shows he/she has “made them his/her own,” but that actually casts new light on how we might charitably understand the ideas of those philosophers.
- A highly original and well developed line of argument and/or novel view, such that the essay is publishable, at least in an undergraduate or postgraduate journal, perhaps bordering on being publishable in a mainstream professional journal.
- The author considers the most important objections to his/her arguments/views. The replies are generally convincing and subtle. If space allows, less obvious
objections may also be discussed in interesting ways.