

FIL217 / FIL317
Wittgenstein studies

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1st lecture 19.08.2024

- Introduction to the course
- Background of the *Tractatus (TLP)*
 - What is Wittgenstein trying to do in the TLP?
 - Wittgenstein and analytic philosophy
 - Backdrop and influences (Frege and Russell)

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Wittgenstein studies

- The course provides an introduction to the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951): its **development, concepts, views** and **methods**.
- The course also gives an overview of standard **interpretations** of Wittgenstein and key positions, arguments and approaches in Wittgenstein research.
- Intended learning outcomes include the capacity to apply key concepts, viewpoints and methods from Wittgenstein's philosophy and Wittgenstein research for understanding and assessing issues and problems **outside** of Wittgenstein research
- The teaching language is English, but assignment papers can be submitted in English, German, or Norwegian (or Swedish or Danish).

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- The course pages at [Mitt UiB](#) contain all the practical information needed

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Requirements

- 1) *Mid-term / end-of-course test* (week 41)
- 2) Submission of a *proposal* for theme of paper (as soon as you are ready, but mid-October at the very latest)
- 3) Submission of *draft* of semester assignment paper and individual *supervision* session (30 min) on draft (317 mandatory, 217 optional)
- 4) *Semester assignment paper* of 3000-5000 words (FIL217) / 4000-6000 words (FIL317), not including table of contents, list of references etc., deadline for submission **November 15, 13:00**

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Other practicalities

Syllabus: list of literature on Mitt UiB

- Primary sources
 - Wittgenstein: *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*
 - Wittgenstein: *Philosophical Investigations* (4th rev. ed. recommended)
- Coursebooks
 - G.E.M. Anscombe: An introduction to Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* (1965)
 - Marie McGinn: *The Routledge guidebook to Wittgenstein's philosophical investigations*, 2nd ed. (2013)
- Recommended reference work:
 - Hans-Johann Glock: *A Wittgenstein Dictionary*. (1995)

List of further articles will be made available soon

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Wittgenstein's works

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Only two works?

- *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* (1921/1922)
- *Philosophical Investigations* (1953)

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«Nachlass»

- At his death in 1951, Wittgenstein left behind a philosophical Nachlass of ca 20 000 pages
 - Manuscripts and typescripts, notebooks and fair copies, first drafts and elaborated versions, single sheets and bound volumes ...
- “Works” are, except for the Tractatus, edited *after Wittgenstein’s death* from the Nachlass
 - See https://wab.uib.no/wab_nachlass-table.page

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The Wittgenstein archives at the University of Bergen (WAB)

WAB was funded in 1990 and is a research infrastructure and projects platform bringing together philosophy, editorial philology and text technology.

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The Wittgenstein archives at the University of Bergen (WAB)

- WAB is probably best known for the publication of Wittgenstein's Nachlass.
- A new digital facsimile of the Wittgenstein Nachlass is available open access on the [Wittgenstein Source](#) site.
- WAB also gives interactive open access to all its transcriptions of the Wittgenstein Nachlass on the [interactive dynamic presentation](#) (IDP) site.

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Logisch-philosophische Abhandlung *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*

- Written mainly during the time LW served in the Austrian army during WW I
- Published in 1921 (German) - 1922 (bilingual German/English edition)
- Background:
 - studies in engineering (Berlin)
 - research in aeronautics (Manchester), contact with G. Frege on the foundations of mathematics and logic
 - work on logic with B. Russell 1911-1914 (Cambridge)

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What is the TLP about?

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Background

- *syntactic* analysis has priority
- Frege and Russel tried to develop a perspicuous logical notation, a means of representing the logical structure (syntax) of language
 - Modern logic as *the* tool for analyzing and understanding language.

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How to read the Tractatus?

Tree structure or linear structure, tree structure, ladder?

The author's own note about the Tractatus' decimal numbering does not help us very far

The decimal figures as numbers of the separate propositions indicate the logical importance of the propositions, the emphasis laid upon them in my exposition. The propositions $n.1$, $n.2$, $n.3$, etc., are comments on proposition No. n ; the propositions $n.m1$, $n.m2$, etc., are comments on the proposition No. $n.m$; and so on.

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Die «Hauptsätze» des TLP

1. Die Welt ist alles, was der Fall ist.
2. Was der Fall ist, die Tatsache, ist das Bestehen von Sachverhalten.
3. Das logische Bild der Tatsachen ist der Gedanke.
4. Der Gedanke ist der sinnvolle Satz.
5. Der Satz ist die Wahrheitsfunktion der Elementarsätze.
6. Die allgemeine Form der Wahrheitsfunktion ist: $[p-, \xi-, N(\xi-)]$.
7. Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muss man schweigen.

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The «main propositions» of the TLP (Ogden/Ramsey trans.)

1. The world is everything that is the case.
2. What is the case, the fact, is the existence of atomic facts.
3. The logical picture of the facts is the thought.
4. The thought is the significant proposition.
5. Propositions are truth-functions of elementary propositions. (An elementary proposition is a truth function of itself.)
6. The general form of a truth-function is: $[p-, \xi-, N(\xi-)]$. This is the general form of a proposition.
7. Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.

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How to read Wittgenstein?

- Wittgenstein was concerned not only with the content, but also the *specific form* of his works. Some claim that it is important for understanding his philosophy that we pay attention to the specific form he gave each of his philosophical works.
- But it is not at all clear how for example the *Tractatus* is supposed to be read. What is, for example, the role of the numbering system?
- Does it indicate a linear structure, tree structure, ladder,...?
- Alois will talk more about this later.

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Overview of the TLP (tree structure)

- <http://tractatus.lib.uiowa.edu/map/>
- Tree structure text edition:
<https://www.nordicwittgensteinreview.com/article/view/3677/25>
- **Assignment for next time:** start reading the TLP as a «tree structure». I.e.; start with the «main propositions»; then read the propositions on «first level» : 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, etc. and pay attention to the relation between the remarks.

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Background of the *Tractatus*

What is Wittgenstein trying to do in the TLP?

Wittgenstein and analytic philosophy
Background and influences (Frege and Russell)

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What is analytic philosophy?

- "That all sound philosophy should begin with an analysis of propositions is a truth too evident, perhaps, to demand a proof." (Russell, *The Philosophy of Leibniz*, 1900, p. 8)
- "Ever since I abandoned the philosophy of Kant and Hegel, I have sought solutions to philosophical problems by means of analysis; and I remain firmly persuaded... that only by analysing is progress possible." (Russell, *My Philosophical Development*, 1959, p. 14)

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Background

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- Frege and Russell tried to develop a perspicuous logical notation, a means of representing the logical structure (syntax) of language
 - Modern logic as *the* tool for analyzing and understanding concepts and propositions.

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Where and when is analytic philosophy born?

- Jena 1884
 - § 62 in Frege's *Grundlagen der Arithmetik: eine logisch mathematische Untersuchung über den Begriff der Zahl*
 „Nur im Zusammenhang eines Satzes bedeuten Wörter etwas.“ (it is only in the context of a proposition that words have any meaning)
 (Dummett)
- Cambridge c:a 1903
 - G.E. Moore's "Refutation of Idealism" and Russell's *Principles of Mathematics*
 (von Wright, Hacker)

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Central features of analytic philosophy

1. A basically *empiricist* attitude, coupled with an enmity against metaphysical system construction.
2. The conception that traditional philosophical problems can be resolved by clarifying the meaning of the expressions included in the problem formulation, by means of philosophical (logical) *analysis*.
3. The view that philosophy is not systematic (beyond its method); philosophy is *problem solving*, and the philosophical issues can be treated one by one, which enables philosophy to progress.
4. (After Wittgenstein) *Philosophy of language* is understood as the basis for all other philosophy ("the linguistic turn").

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