

Division of Humanities
Course Syllabus

Course Code: HUMA1922
Course Title: Introduction to Analytic Philosophy
Course Offered in: Fall 2026
Course Instructor: Yafeng Shan
Office Hours: 1 – 2 pm on Mondays (Room 3356)

Course Description:

This is an introductory course in analytic philosophy. It covers some central issues in analytic epistemology, metaphysics, philosophy of language, and philosophy of mind, including scepticism, personal identity, free will, and the mind-body problem. It also examines some key concepts in contemporary analytical philosophy, such as knowledge, truth, meaning, and causation. It provides students with the opportunity to read some classical works by leading analytic philosophers (e.g. Russell, Quine, Austin, Lewis, Parfit, Jackson, McDowell, and van Inwagen).

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs):

	Course ILOs
1	Evaluate the key philosophical accounts of many core topics in analytic philosophy, including knowledge, truth, personal identity, free will, and the mind-body problem.
2	Write philosophically cohesive essays, where philosophical theories are explained and arguments for them critically evaluated.
3	Discuss philosophical arguments systematically and present these to their peers.

Course Outline:

Week	Topics
1	Scepticism
2	Knowledge

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3	Justification
4	Truth
5	Meaning
6	The Mind-Body Problem
7	Perception
8	Personal Identity
9	Free Will and Determinism
10	Causation
11	Induction
12	Inference to the Best Explanation

Assessment and Grading

This course will be assessed using criterion-referencing and grades will not be assigned using a curve. Detailed rubrics for each assignment are provided below, outlining the criteria used for evaluation.

Assessments:

Summative essay	1,000 words essay	20%	28 October 2026
Final Examination	2 hours	80%	TBC

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*Late submissions of summative essay will be penalised. 10% deduction applies per delayed day. Missing submissions will lose all the grades.

**Using AI is not allowed at any stage of writing. Otherwise, 100% deduction applies.

Final Grade Descriptors:

Grades	Short Description	Elaboration on subject grading description
A	Excellent Performance	Shows an excellent understanding of key concepts and arguments. Shows some original thinking.
B	Good Performance	Shows a very good or sophisticated understanding of key concepts and arguments. Shows some critical thinking.
C	Satisfactory Performance	Shows a good understanding of key concepts and arguments.
D	Marginal Pass	Shows a fair understanding of key concepts and arguments.
F	Fail	Shows an inadequate understanding of key concepts and arguments. Shows limited ability to think critically.

Course AI Policy

Using AI is not allowed at any stage of writing. Otherwise, 100% deduction applies.

Communication and Feedback

Assessment marks for individual assessed tasks will be communicated via Canvas within two weeks of submission. Feedback on assignments will include comments on strengths and areas for improvement. Students who have further questions about the feedback including marks should consult the instructor and teaching assistants within five working days after the feedback is received.

Resubmission Policy

No resubmissions will be allowed.

Readings:

Week 1

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Topic: Scepticism

Required Reading

Descartes, *Meditations* (I-II).

Further Reading

DeRose, K. 1995. Solving the Skeptical Problem. *The Philosophical Review*, 104(1), 1–52.

Moore, G.E. 1939. Proof of an External World. *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 25(5): 273–300.

Pryor, J. 2000. The Skeptic and the Dogmatist. *Noûs*, 34(4), 517–549.

Week 2

Topic: Knowledge

Required Reading

Gettier, Edmund. 1963. “Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?” *Analysis* 23 (6): 121–23.

Zagzebski, Linda. 1994. “The Inescapability of Gettier Problems.” *Philological Quarterly* 44 (174): 65–73.

Further Reading

Goldman, A. I. 1967. A Causal Theory of Knowing. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 64(12), 357–372.

Greco, J. (2009). Knowledge and Success from Ability. *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition*, 142(1), 17–26.

Nozick, R. 1967. Knowledge. In *Philosophical Explanation* (pp. 172-196).

Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Week 3

Topic: Justification

Required Reading

Bonjour, Laurence. 1978. “Can Empirical Knowledge Have a Foundation?” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 15 (1): 1–13.

Further Reading

Bonjour, L. 1980. Externalist Theories of Empirical Knowledge. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, 5, 53–73.

Cohen, S. 1984. Justification and Truth. *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition*, 46(3), 279–295.

Goldman, A. I. 2009. Internalism, Externalism, and the Architecture of Justification. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 106(6), 309–338.

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Week 4

Topic: Truth

Required Reading

Austin, J. L. 1950. "Truth." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 24 (Supplementary): 111–28.

Further Reading

Haack, S. 1976. The Pragmatist Theory of Truth. *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, 27(3), 231–249.

Horwich, P. 1990. The Minimal Theory. In *Truth* (pp. 1-14). Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Thagard, P. 2007. Coherence, Truth, and the Development of Scientific Knowledge. *Philosophy of Science*, 74(1), 28–47.

Week 5

Topic: Meaning

Required Reading

Russell, Bertrand. 1905. "On Denoting." *Mind* 14 (56): 479–93.

Further Reading

Frege, G. 1948. Sense and Reference. *The Philosophical Review*, 57(3), 209–230.

Grice, H. P. 1957. Meaning. *The Philosophical Review* 66(3), 377-388.

Kripke, S. 1980. *Naming and Necessity*. Harvard University Press. (pp. 22-70.)

Week 6

Topic: The Mind-Body Problem

Required Reading

Jackson, Frank. 1982. "Epiphenomenal Qualia." *Philological Quarterly* 32: 127–36.

Further Reading

Nagel, T. 1974. What Is It Like to Be a Bat? *The Philosophical Review* 83(4), 435–450.

Kim, J. 2000. The Mind-Body Problem: Where We Now Are. In *Mind in a physical world* (pp. 1–27). MIT Press.

Shoemaker, Sydney. 1990. "Qualities and Qualia: What's in the Mind?" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 50 (Supplement): 109–30.

Smart, J. J. C. 1978. The Content of Physicalism. *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 28(113), 339–341.

Week 7

Topic: Perception

Required Reading

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McDowell, J. 1996. Non-conceptual content. In *Mind and World* (pp. 46–86). Harvard University Press.

Further Reading

Crane, T. 2009. Is Perception a Propositional Attitude? *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 59(236), 452–469.

Crowther, T. M. 2006. Two Conceptions of Conceptualism and Nonconceptualism. *Erkenntnis* 65 (2) (09): 245–276.

Logue, H. 2012. Why Naive Realism? *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 112, 211–237.

Week 8

Topic: Personal Identity

Required Reading

Parfit, Derek. 1971. Person Identity. *The Philosophical Review* 80 (1): 3–27.

Further Reading

Hudson, H. 2007. I am not an animal! In P. van Inwagen & D. Zimmerman (Eds.), *Persons: Human and Divine* (pp. 216–234). Oxford University Press.

Lewis, D. 1976. Survival and identity. In A. O. Rorty (Ed.), *The identities of persons* (pp. 17–40). University of California Press.

Shoemaker, S. 1970. Persons and Their Pasts. *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 7(4), 269–285.

Week 9

Topic: Free Will and Determinism

Required Reading

Inwagen, Peter van. 1975. “The Incompatibility of Free Will and Determinism.” *Philosophical Studies* 27 (3): 185–99.

Further Reading

List, C. 2014. Free Will Determinism, and the Possibility of Doing Otherwise. *Nous*, 48(1), 156–178.

Strawson, G. 1994. The Impossibility of Moral Responsibility. *Philosophical Studies*, 75(1/2), 5–24.

Vihvelin, K. 2004. Free Will Demystified: A Dispositional Account. *Philosophical Topics*, 32(1/2), 427–450.

Week 10

Topic: Causation

Required Reading

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Lewis, David. 1973. Causation. *Journal of Philosophy* 70: 556–67.

Further Reading

Glennan, S. 1996. Mechanisms and the Nature of Causation. *Erkenntnis*, 44, 49–71.

Salmon, W. C. 1984. Probabilistic causality. In *Scientific explanation and the causal structure of the world* (pp. 184–205). Princeton University Press.

Woodward, J. 2003. *Making Things Happen: A Theory of Causal Explanation*. Oxford University Press. (pp. 25-93.)

Week 11

Topic: Induction

Required Reading

Goodman, Nelson. 1983. *Fact, Fiction, and Forecast*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (pp. 59-83.)

Further Reading

Harman, G. H. 1968. Enumerative Induction as Inference to the Best Explanation. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 65(18), 529–533. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2024115>

Norton, J. D. 2021. *The material theory of induction*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press. (pp. 19-53.)

Popper, K. 1972. Science: Conjectures and Refutations. In *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge* (pp. 33–65). Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Week 12

Topic: Inference to the Best Explanation

Required Reading

Lipton, Peter. 2004. *Inference to the Best Explanation*. 2nd ed. London and New York: Routledge. (pp.55-70.)

Further Reading

Campos, D. G. 2011. On the Distinction Between Peirce's Abduction and Lipton's Inference to the Best Explanation. *Synthese*, 180, 419–442.

Harman, G. H. 1965. The Inference to the Best Explanation. *The Philosophical Review*, 74(1), 88–95.

Henderson, L. 2014. Bayesianism and inference to the best explanation. *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, 65(4), 687–715.