

# The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

## UG Course Syllabus

Introduction to Analytic Philosophy

HUMA1922

3 Credits

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**Office Hours:** Mondays 3-4 pm

### Course Description

This is an introductory course in analytic philosophy. It covers central issues in the analytic tradition, concerning language, logic, knowledge, action and justice. It also examines key methodologies, like conceptual analysis, logical analysis and thought experiments. It provides students with the opportunity to read some classical works by leading analytic philosophers (e.g. Russell, Moore, Frege, Strawson, Anscombe and Nussbaum). By the end of this course, the student will have the skills to engage with advanced texts in analytic philosophy by understanding the arguments in those texts and the potential avenues to evaluate them.

### Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Evaluate the key philosophical accounts of many core topics in analytic philosophy, including knowledge, meaning, reference, action and justice.
2. Use central methodological tools of the analytic tradition, like thought experiments, conceptual analysis, reflective equilibrium and logical analysis to understand and evaluate philosophical positions about language, action, ethics and knowledge.
3. Write philosophically cohesive essays, where philosophical theories are explained and arguments for them critically evaluated.

### 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:

- 1) Argumentative Essay

In this essay, students have to criticize or defend, on novel grounds, one of the positions discussed in Book I, II or III of Plato's Republic. To this end, they have to summarize that position first and then elaborate on their novel critique or defense of it. They are advised to use the methodological tools of conceptual/logical analysis introduced during the course.

Students will have the opportunity to get feedback on a draft of their argumentative essay.

## 2) Final examination

This is a written open book examination. Students can use all the texts and materials discussed in the course. They have to answer five questions which will test their ability to understand, apply and compare the methods and concepts discussed in the course. In preparation for this exam, students will be given example questions.

Students will have the opportunity to discuss application and comparisons of the discussed methods and concepts during the tutorials (five throughout the semester).

Assessment Task	Contribution to Overall Course grade (%)	Due date
Argumentative Essay	30%	17/05/2025*
Final Examination	70%	

\* Assessment marks for individual assessed tasks will be released within two weeks of the due date.

## Mapping of Course ILOs to Assessment Tasks

Assessed Task	Mapped ILOs	Explanation
Argumentative Essay	ILO 1, ILO 2, ILO 3	In this essay, students have to criticize or defend, on novel grounds, one of the positions discussed in Book I or II of Plato's Republic. To this end, they have summarize that position first and then elaborate on their novel critique or defense of it.  This task assesses students' ability to explain and apply core concepts from the analytic tradition, especially justice (ILO 1) and to use its methodological tools to critically evaluate philosophical positions. Moreover, students have to write their analysis in a cohesive essay.
Final Examination	ILO 1, ILO 2, ILO 3	This is a written open book examination. Students can use all the texts and materials discussed in the course. They have to answer five questions which will test their ability to understand, apply and compare the methods and concepts discussed in the course.

		In this examination, students have to show the ability to explain, compare and evaluate concepts and methods of the analytic tradition which were discussed in the course. They have to show the ability to convey their answers in cohesive writing.
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### Grading Rubrics

	Bad (0)	Insufficient (1)	Good (2)	Very Good (3)	Excellent (4)
<b>Content</b>					
Explanation of the position under discussion	There is no position discussed.	The original position is misrepresented.	The original position is only partially represented.	The original position in the text is fully represented with minor mistakes.	The original position in the text have been fully represented in a correct way.
Critique of the position under discussion / Solution to the position under discussion	There is no critique or solution in the paper.	The critique or solution in the paper is poorly developed and is not directed at the original position under discussion.	The critique or solution in the paper is directed at the position under discussion, but only partly addresses issues or only partly offers a solution. Or, the critique or solution are not novel.	The critique of solution in the papers is directed at the position under discussion. It is novel. However, some aspects of it is incomplete and fails to address the issues with the position discussed fully.	The critique of the original position identifies the problems with the position clearly and adds novel arguments to support them. Or, the novel defense of a position adequately addresses the raised criticism.
Philosophical cogency and strength	The novel argument is illegitimate or wrong.	The novel argument is incomplete and/or partly wrong.	The novel argument is incomplete. The argument however is strong and valid.	The novel argument is valid and complete. However, it lacks strength to be convincing.	The novel argument is valid, complete and strong.

Form					
Spelling	You need to go back to basics! (over 10)	Too many spelling issues (7-10)	Moderate spelling issues (3-6)	Minor spelling issues (1-3)	No spelling issues.
Cohesive Writing	There is no structure in the essay. All connective words are used in the wrong way.	There is confused structure in the essay. Many connective words are not properly used.	The structure in the essay is adequate, but still features some issues. Some connective words are not properly used.	The structure in the essay is fully coherent. However, some minor issues occur. Some connective words are not properly used.	The different sections of the paper are fully coherent. The connective words are used in the right way.

**Final Grade Descriptors:**

Grades	Short Description	Elaboration on subject grading description
A	Excellent Performance	Demonstrates a comprehensive grasp of analytic methods and concepts, expertise in problem-solving, and significant creativity in thinking. Exhibits a high capacity for scholarship and collaboration, going beyond core requirements to achieve learning goals.
B	Good Performance	Shows good knowledge and understanding of the main subject matter, competence in problem-solving, and the ability to analyze and evaluate issues.
C	Satisfactory Performance	Possesses adequate knowledge of core subject matter, competence in dealing with familiar problems, and some capacity for analysis and novel application of methods and concepts discussed. Shows persistence and effort to achieve broadly defined learning goals.
D	Marginal Pass	Has threshold knowledge of core subject matter, potential to achieve key professional skills, and the ability to make basic judgments. Benefits from the course and has the potential to develop in the discipline.
F	Fail	Demonstrates insufficient understanding of the subject matter and lacks the necessary problem-solving skills. Shows limited ability to think critically or analytically and exhibits minimal effort towards achieving learning goals. Does not meet the threshold requirements for professional practice or development in the discipline.

**Course AI Policy**

Students are **not** allowed to use generative AI to complete any of the tasks for this course. The application of generative AI in the process of mastering the material at the hand is at the student’s own risk. Generative AI does not possess the capacity for philosophical interpretation or analysis. The student is required to train such interpretation and analysis independently of the assistance of AI.

### Communication and Feedback

Assessment marks for individual assessed tasks will be communicated via Canvas within two weeks of submission. Students will have the opportunity to get feedback on drafts of their assignment. This feedback will include an assessment of the structure of the paper and a cogency of the developed argument. Students who have further questions about the feedback including marks should consult the instructor within five working days after the feedback is received.

### Required Texts and Materials

The required readings will be uploaded to Canvas

Week	Topics
(1) 7 Feb	What is Philosophy?
(2) 14 Feb	The Quest to Define Piety – Analysis in Classical Greece Plato’s <i>Euthyphro</i>
(3) 21 Feb	The Quest to Define Knowledge – Thought Experiments and Gettier Problems Edmund Gettier: “Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?” Nozick: “Conditions for Knowledge”
(4) 28 Feb	Conceptual Analysis –Problems in Evaluating an Analysis Roderick Chisholm: “The Problem of the Criterion”
(5) 7 Mar	Conceptual Analysis – Ultimate Terms in Analysis G.E. Moore: “The Subject-Matter of Ethics”
(6) 14 Mar	Logical Analysis – Frege’s search for a logically perfect language Frege: “Meaning and Reference”
(7) 21 Mar	Logical Analysis – Russell’s search for a logically perfect language Russell: “On Denoting”
(8) 28 Mar	Ordinary Language Analysis – Strawson against logicization Strawson: “On Referring”

<b>(9)</b> <b>11 Apr</b>	Ordinary Language Analysis – Philosophy of Action Anscombe: “Intention”
<b>(10)</b> <b>25 Apr</b>	Ordinary Language Analysis – Philosophy of Action Davidson: “Actions, Reasons, and Causes”
<b>(11)</b> <b>2 May</b>	Feminist Analytic Philosophy – Justice Nussbaum: “Human Functioning and Social Justice: In Defense of Aristotelian Essentialism”
<b>(12)</b> <b>9 May</b>	Feminist Analytic Philosophy – Gender and Race Hasslanger: “Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?”

### **Academic Integrity**

Students are expected to adhere to the university’s academic integrity policy. Students are expected to uphold HKUST’s Academic Honor Code and to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. The University has zero tolerance of academic misconduct. Please refer to [Academic Integrity | HKUST – Academic Registry](#) for the University’s definition of plagiarism and ways to avoid cheating and plagiarism.