



Philosophy 701R (Graduate Seminar) Selected Philosopher – Carnap

Fall 2014

Fridays 1:00pm–3:30pm in 374 Bartlett

Professor Kevin C. Klement (Call me “Kevin”).

Course description: A close examination of the philosophy of Rudolf Carnap (1891–1970), with special emphasis on his *Der Logische Aufbau der Welt* (*The Logical Structure of the World*, 1928). Topics include logical positivism, the significance and nature of philosophical problems (or pseudo-problems), empiricism, logic and language. *Prerequisite:* graduate student standing or consent of instructor.

Contact information: My office is 358 Bartlett. My office phone is 545-5784. My office hours for Fall 2014 are Mondays 4:00–5:00pm and Wednesdays 10:00–11:00am, and by appointment. My email address is klement@philos.umass.edu.

Webpages: First there is <http://courses.umass.edu/phil701c-klement>, but that is basically a public poster. More useful is our Moodle site:

<https://moodle.umass.edu>

There you can download readings, check grades or use discussion boards/chat rooms.

Texts/Readings: These will be made available in electronic format through Moodle, though you may consider purchasing your own copy of the works we shall be focusing on such as Carnap’s *The Logical Structure of the World*. See the schedule on the reverse.

Requirements: Your final course grade is based on the following requirements: in-class participation (15%), class presentation (15%), weekly reading assignments (25%), and a final term paper or book reviews (45%). These are described below.

Participation: You are expected to attend seminar meetings regularly, ask questions, raise points for discussion, and comment on points made by others.

Presentation: Early in the semester, each student will choose (or be assigned) one week in which he or she is expected to give a (roughly) 20–25 minute presentation at the beginning of the seminar meeting on the readings for that week. The presentation should (a) summarize the main points of the readings, though at his or her discretion the presenter may focus on certain issues he or she finds most interesting, (b) identify any questions or concerns the presenter has with understanding or interpreting the material, which he or she would like to discuss in class, (c) critically discuss one or more philosophical or logical issues raised in the readings, as a starting point for discussion.

Weekly reading assignments: You are expected to carefully read the selected texts for each session before the seminar meeting and come prepared to discuss them. To facilitate this, each week you are expected to write a 1–3 page essay in which you (1) summarize the required reading, (2) identify any criticisms or points of discussion (including points in need of clarification). These essays are due at the start of class on the day we will be discussing the relevant readings. (You need not do this for the week you will be presenting.)

Each will be graded on a 1–5 scale, with 1 representing a barely acceptable essay, 2 representing a deeply problematic essay that misrepresents the author’s views or commits other abuses of philosophical method, 3 representing an essay that is slightly lacking in some area, but generally acceptable, 4 representing a good essay that performs the desired tasks as expected, and 5 representing an essay with substantial and original insight. (You should never expect to receive anything above 4. A student receiving a 4 on every assignment should still expect a good grade for this portion. I will only award a 5 to an essay that *surpasses* my expectations.)

In determining your grade, I will take into account only your 8 highest scores of 11 possible essays. This means you may either drop your three lowest scores, or simply not write three essays (or combine the two options).

Term paper or book reviews: You are also to choose between the following two options:

Term paper (15–25 pages): The paper should constitute critical and original discussion either of the interpretation of Carnap’s works or the philosophical issues they raise. The amount of outside research done for the paper is left to your discretion, but a careful search of the relevant secondary material is strongly recommended.

– OR – *Book reviews:* Read TWO books written on or about Carnap’s philosophy (or closely related subjects such as the Vienna Circle or logical positivism generally), for each, prepare a lengthy academic-style book review (6–10 pages each) in which you first summarize the book, and evaluate it in terms of both the accuracy of its interpretation of Carnap, and its other philosophical merits. A selection of 5–6 scholarly articles closely related in topic might be substituted for a book where appropriate.

Incompletes: Per departmental policy, graduate students in philosophy taking incompletes must complete all course requirements by the first day of classes for Spring semester.

Rough and Tentative Reading Schedule: Subject to change and open for suggestions!

Sept 5: Course introduction
Sept 12: Background – Russell
Sept 19: Background – Wittgenstein
Sept 26: *Logical Structure*, parts I–II
Oct 3: *Logical Structure*, part III
Oct 10: *Logical Structure*, part IV
Oct 17: *Logical Structure*, part V
Oct 24: *Pseudoproblems*;
“The Scientific Conception of the World”

Oct 31: “The Old and the New Logic”;
“Elimination of Metaphysics”
Nov 7: *Logical Syntax*
Nov 14: *Logical Syntax*, continued
Nov 21: “Empiricism, Semantics and
Ontology”; Carnap/Quine debate
Nov 28: No class (Thanksgiving break)
Dec 5: (open)