Phil 702F: Selected Philosopher — Frege

Spring 2016 — Prof. Kevin C. Klement
Mondays 4:00–6:30pm in 374 Bartlett

Course description: A close examination of the philosophical and logical works of Gottlob Frege (1848–1925). Topics include the nature of logic, the nature of numbers, functions, classes and other abstract entities, arithmetical truth, the theory of meaning (the sense/reference and concept/object distinctions, etc.), the indefinability of truth, as well as Frege's arguments against views such as formalism and psychologism.

Contact info: My office is 358 Bartlett. My office phone is 545-5784. My office hours are Wednesdays and Fridays 11:00am–12:00pm, and by appointment. My email address is `klement@philos.umass.edu`.

Webpages: We have a "public" webpage at `http://courses.umass.edu/phil702-klement/` but most content is on our Moodle page at `https://moodle.umass.edu/`.

Readings: Frege's entire corpus will be made available to download through our Moodle page, along with selected secondary sources. If you enjoy having a physical book, you may wish to purchase Michael Beaney, ed., *The Frege Reader* (Blackwell 1997) through the online vendor of your choice.

Requirements: Your final grade is based on the following: (1) in-class participation (15%), (2) one in-class presentation (15%), (3) weekly reading assignments (25%), and (4) a term paper/book reviews (45%).

(1) *Participation:* You are expected to attend seminar meetings regularly, and participate by asking questions, raising points for discussion, and commenting on points made by others.

(2) *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) 20–30 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.

(3) *Weekly assignments:* You are expected to carefully read the selected texts for each session beforehand and come prepared to discuss them. To facilitate this, each week you are expected to write a 1–3 page essay in which you (a) summarize the required reading, and (b) identify any criticisms or points for discussion (including points in need of clarification). These are due at the start of class on the day we will be discussing the relevant readings. These are graded on a 1–5 scale, with 1 representing a barely acceptable essay, 2 representing a deeply problematic essay that misrepresents the views of Frege or other philosopher 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 4 on every assignment suffices for a good grade for this portion. I only award 5s to essays that *surpass* my expectations.) You need not complete a weekly assignment during the week you give a presentation. In determining your grade, I will take into account only your 9 highest scores of 11 possible essays. This means you may either drop your two lowest scores, or simply not write two essays (or combine the two options).

(4) *Term paper or book reviews.* You may choose between the following two options:

TERM PAPER (15–25 pages) – The paper should aim to constitute critical and original discussion of the interpretation of Frege's works and/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 Frege's philosophy or related issues (—if you have doubts about what is acceptable, please ask!—), and 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 the accuracy of its interpretation of Frege (if applicable), and/or its other philosophical merits or demerits.

(This is due either on the last day of finals week, Thurs., May 5th, if you don't take an incomplete, or the first day of Fall semester, Tues., Sept. 6th, if you do.)

$$\boxed{\text{Tentative Reading Schedule}}$$

The schedule is subject to change—in fact, I'd like input on alternative plans.

(*CN = Conceptual Notation and Related Articles*, *CP = Collected Papers on Mathematics, Logic and Philosophy*, *FR = The Frege Reader*, *PMC = Philosophical and Mathematical Correspondence*, *PW = Posthumous Writings*.)

Date	Readings
Jan. 25	Course introduction
Feb. 1	*Begriffsschrift*, excerpts (*FR, CN*)
Feb. 8	Letter to Marty, Aug. 1882 (*FR, PMC*); *Foundations of Arithmetic*, excerpts
Feb. 15	Presidents' day. Class moved to Tuesday.
Tu Feb. 16	*Foundations of Arithmetic*, continued
Feb. 22	"Function and Concept" (*CP, FR*); "On Concept and Object" (*CP, FR*)
Feb. 29	Letter to Husserl, May 1891 (*FR, PMC*); "On *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*" (*CP, FR*); "Comments on *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*" (*FR, PW*)
Mar. 7	*Basic Laws of Arithmetic*, excerpts
Mar. 14	Spring break. No class.
Mar. 21	*Basic Laws of Arithmetic*, continued
Mar. 28	Russell–Frege letters, June 1902 (*FR, PMC*); *Basic Laws of Arithmetic*, Appendix to Volume II
Apr. 4	Remainder of the Frege–Russell Correspondence (*PMC*)
Apr. 11	"On the Foundations of Geometry", excerpts (*CP*)
Apr. 18	Patriots' Day. Class moved to Wednesday.
W Apr. 20	"Logic" (*FR, PW*); "Thought" (*FR, CP*)
Apr. 25	"Compound Thoughts" (*CP*); "Introduction to Logic" (*FR, PW*); "A Brief Survey of My Logical Doctrines" (*FR, PW*); Letter to Jourdain, Jan. 1914 (*FR, PMC*); "Notes for Ludwig Darmstädter" (*FR, PW*)