BASED AND BASELESS TRUTHS

This seminar focuses on a novel distinction between truths “based” in the circumstances and “baseless” truths. The first part contrasts it with more familiar distinctions from semantics (analytic/synthetic), epistemology (apriori/aposteriori), and metaphysics (necessary/contingent). The second part develops its applications to logic, social metaphysics, and physicalism.

PREREQUISITES: PHIL203 + 3 units of philosophy, or permission.

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Mike Raven (raven@uvic.ca • raven.site)

OFFICE HOURS: Wednesdays 1:00-3:00 pm or by appointment on weekdays.

INSTRUCTION: Synchronous on-campus instruction (❖) with asynchronous components (❖).

❖ Class meetings held Wednesdays 3:30-6:20 pm in TBA.

LMS: bright.uvic.ca/d2l/home/147655 (Consult for updates and current course documents.)

TEXTS: NONE (all readings provided on LMS)

EVALUATION

RUBRIC: Grades (❖ UVic’s scale) you earn are determined by the philosophical craftsmanship of your work for this course according to the RUBRIC: raven.site/teaching/Rubric.pdf

WORK:
❖ ESSAY [V/4] On an approved topic (see SCHEDULE for due date).
❖ PROBLEM SETS [V/4] Sporadic problem sets on various topics.
❖ ENGAGEMENT [V/4] In-class contributions and presentations (❖) and online forum (❖).

GRACE POINTS: A grace point delays the essay’s due date by 1 day. May be used in any combination without justification. Students start with 5 and cannot reuse, trade, or earn any. To use # grace points, you must write ‘# grace points’ at the beginning of an assignment.

LATENESS: Work submitted after a due date will not be accepted (see ACCESSIBILITY for exceptions).

POLICIES

CONDUCT: Enrolling binds you to a social contract with your instructor and classmates:

• Be prepared. Consult course documents. Read assigned text before class.
• Be engaged. Attend class. Use office hours and tutorials.
• Be respectful. Don’t bully or distract others (mute mic, avoid excess chats).
• Be professional. Check sources first. Follow etiquette. Allow ≥1 day for replies.

ACCESSIBILITY: Arrange accommodations with CAL. Other accommodations (e.g. extra credit, extensions, alternate/makeup work) will not be considered, except by instructor’s discretion for extraordinary cases (e.g. not computer/wi-fi problems) and when the request and any needed documentation are received within 3 days of the due date.

GUESTS: Guests permitted only with instructor’s prior consent.

INTEGRITY: Plagiarism, cheating, and submitting others’ work is an academic integrity violation. Ignorance is no excuse. Familiarize yourself with what academic integrity is:

❖ www.uvic.ca/current-students/home/academics/academic-integrity/

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This syllabus is subject to revision, pending updates to UVic's COVID-19 response

SCHEDULE

Required texts (●) must be read before each class (including Sep 8); optional texts (○) are encouraged. Consult LMS for updates.

INTRO

● Sep 8
  • Hume, Kant, Frege, Ayer, selections

ANALYTIC, APRIORI, NECESSARY

● Sep 15
  Quine, “Carnap and Logical Truth”, selections
  Quine, “Two Dogmas of Empiricism”
  ○ Quine, “Truth by Convention”, selections
  ○ Russell, “The Analytic/Synthetic Distinction”
  ○ Russell, “Quine on the Analytic/Synthetic Distinction”

● Sep 22
  • Kripke, Naming and Necessity, selections
  ○ Burgess, “Kripke Models”

● Sep 29
  • Burgess, “Kripke on Modality”
  Burgess, “Modal Logic in the Modal Sense of Modality”

● Oct 6
  • Boghossian, “Analyticity Reconsidered”

● Oct 13
  • Russell, “Analyticity in Externalist Languages”
  • Russell, “Metaphysical Analyticity and the Epistemology of Logic”

● Oct 20
  • Fine, “Essence and Modality”
  • Mackie, “Essentialism and Modality”

BASALITY

● Oct 27
  • Fine, “Necessity and Non-existence”

● Nov 3
  • Raven, “The Bases of Truths”

● Nov 17
  • McSweeney, “Logic”
  • McSweeney, “Logical Realism and the Metaphysics of Logic”
  • Raven, “Is Logic Out of this World?”

● Nov 24
  • Mason, “Against Social Kind Anti-Realism”
  • Raven, “A Puzzle for Social Essences”

● Dec 1
  • Dasgupta, “The Possibility of Physicalism”
  • Raven, “The Physical Basis”

⇒ Dec 10 ⇒ ESSAY DUE