

**PHI 4396/5343**  
(January–April 2019)

**EPISODES FROM THE HISTORY OF ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY: RUSSELL AND  
CARNAP ON THE LOGICAL STRUCTURE OF THE WORLD**

Tuesday, 2:30–5:30, Morisset 252

**Instructor**

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**Course web-site:** <http://aix1.uottawa.ca/~prusnock/Aufbau.html>

**Description:** In this course, we will study some classics of early twentieth-century analytical philosophy, among them Russell's *Our Knowledge of the External World* and *Philosophy of Logical Atomism*, and Carnap's *The Logical Structure of the World*, often referred to as the *Aufbau*. Brilliant examples of the application of the then brand-new "new logic" to traditional philosophical problems, these works still have, for all their shortcomings, much to teach us today.

**Main Texts:**

- Rudolf Carnap, *The Logical Structure of the World and Pseudoproblems in Philosophy*, tr. R. A. George (Chicago: Open Court, 2003).
- Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy* (London, 1912, with several subsequent editions).
- B. Russell, *Our Knowledge of the External World* (Chicago, 1914; rev. ed. London, 1926).
- B. Russell, *Mysticism and Logic* (London, 1918, with several later editions).
- B. Russell, *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism* (originally published in the *Monist* in 1918 and 1919, with a couple of later editions).

I have ordered copies of Carnap's *Logical Structure* through the University Bookstore. When I last checked, they had not yet obtained any (one copy is apparently available at the Agora bookstore). The work is also available through various online merchants. Most of Russell's writings are available online, many of them here:

<https://users.drew.edu/jlenz/brtexts.html>

They are also available in good, inexpensive editions for those who like books.

**Workload:**

1. **Class participation and reflections papers:** 30%
2. **Final Paper:** 70%

**Reflections Papers:**

When writing reflections papers, you are asked to respond to the following two questions:

1. What is the most important unanswered question raised in or suggested by recent readings and class meetings, and why?
2. What is the most important unanswered question raised in or suggested by the assigned reading for this week, and why?

Each of your answers should be **at most one-half page** in length. Note that you are not supposed to *answer* the questions you state, but instead to give reasons that show why they are *important*.

The goal of these short papers is to develop your skill in discovering and stating philosophical problems. They are very short by design: the intention is to get you to focus precisely on a single question, and to be especially careful about the way you state and support your claims. They should be typed and carefully proofread.

I will ask each student to submit a total of **five** reflections papers, according to the following schedule:

- Last names beginning with A–K:  
15 January, 29 January, 12 February, 5 March, 26 March
- Last names beginning with L–Z:  
22 January, 5 February, 26 February, 12 March, 2 April

**Final Paper** (Length: undergrads 12–15 pages; grads 20–25 pages, not counting the bibliography; spacing 1.5 lines, 11 or 12 point font): You should choose a topic that engages a substantive issue connected to Russell’s and/or Carnap’s writings on logical construction and discuss it in light of the secondary literature. The final version will be due at the end of the exam period (**26 April**). I will also require a one-page paper proposal (due **19 March**); the goal at this point is to identify a topic, explain why it is both interesting and important, and suggest avenues for inquiry. You should include, on a second page, a preliminary bibliography.

I would be happy to discuss your papers with you at any point during the term.

## APPROXIMATE SCHEDULE OF READINGS

### 8 January

Russell, "Philosophy in the Twentieth Century," in *Sceptical Essays* (London, 1928).

Russell, "Current Tendencies," in *Our Knowledge of the External World* (Chicago, 1914). The text is available online through the University Library:

<https://books.scholarsportal.info/en/read?id=/ebooks/ebooks2/taylorandfrancis/2013-03-25/5/9780203875360>

Russell, "Logical Atomism" (1924), in *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism*; ; available online through the University Library:

<https://books.scholarsportal.info/en/read?id=/ebooks/ebooks2/taylorandfrancis/2013-03-25/4/9780203864777>

Carnap, "The Old and the New Logic," tr. I. Levi, in A. J. Ayer ed., *Logical Positivism* (New York, 1959).

### 15 January

"On Denoting" (1905)

<https://users.drew.edu/jlenz/br-on-denoting.html>

*The Problems of Philosophy* (1912), Chapters 1–5

<http://www.ditext.com/russell/russell.html>

### 22 January

"On Scientific Method in Philosophy" (1914)

<https://users.drew.edu/jlenz/br-ml-ch6.html>

"The Ultimate Constituents of Matter" (1915)

<https://users.drew.edu/jlenz/br-ml-ch7.html>

"The Relation of Sense-Data to Physics" (1914)

<https://users.drew.edu/jlenz/br-ml-ch8.html>

All three essays were included in *Mysticism and Logic* (London, 1918).

### 29 January

"The Theory of Continuity"

"The Problem of Infinity Considered Historically."

"The Positive Theory of Infinity."

These are, respectively, Chapters 5, 6, and 7 of *Our Knowledge of the External World* (Chicago, 1914). The text is available online through the University Library:

<https://books.scholarsportal.info/en/read?id=/ebooks/ebooks2/taylorandfrancis/2013-03-25/5/9780203875360>

**5 February**

“Logical Atomism” (1924); reprinted in *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism*;  
available online through the University Library:  
[https://books.scholarsportal.info/en/read?id=/ebooks/ebooks2/  
taylorandfrancis/2013-03-25/4/9780203864777](https://books.scholarsportal.info/en/read?id=/ebooks/ebooks2/taylorandfrancis/2013-03-25/4/9780203864777)

*The Philosophy of Logical Atomism*, Lectures 1–4; available through the library  
at the above link and also here:  
<https://users.drew.edu/jlenz/br-logical-atomism0.html>

**12 February**

*The Philosophy of Logical Atomism*, Lectures 5–8

**19 February: READING WEEK**

**26 February**

*The Logical Structure of the World*, pp. 5–44.

(additional, optional reading) “The Elimination of Metaphysics through the  
Logical Analysis of Language,” tr. A. Pap, in A. J. Ayer, ed., *Logical  
Positivism* (New York, 1959).

**5 March**

*The Logical Structure of the World*, pp. 47–97

**12 March**

*The Logical Structure of the World*, pp. 98–151

**19 March**

*The Logical Structure of the World*, pp. 152–213

**26 March**

*The Logical Structure of the World*, pp. 214–265

**2 April**

*The Logical Structure of the World*, pp. 266–343