Frege's Philosophy

Course Outline and Selected Reading

The main text for this course is:

Frege, Gottlob, (FR) The Frege Reader, ed. Michael Beaney (Blackwell, 1997)

This contains a selection of Frege's writings, including all his important articles and excerpts from all three of his major books. Of these books, the most accessible is:

- Frege, Gottlob, (FA) The Foundations of Arithmetic (Koebner, 1884), tr. J. L. Austin (Blackwell, 1950)
- I provide an introduction to Frege's philosophy, focusing on his notion of sense, in:

Beaney, Michael, (FMS) Frege: Making Sense (Duckworth, 1996)

A much shorter introduction can be found in FR, pp. 1-46; and for more recent introductions, see:

- Beaney, Michael, Chen Bo and Koji Nakatogawa, (FLP) 'Frege, his Logic and his Philosophy: Interview with Michael Beaney', World Philosophy, 3 (2010), tr. into Chinese. Also publ. in English in Journal of Graduate School of Letters, Hokkaido University, Japan, 2010, online at: let.hokudai.ac.jp/en/archive
- Beaney, Michael, (F) 'Frege', in Barry Lee, ed., Philosophy of Language: The Key Thinkers (Continuum, 2011), ch. 1

For other book-length introductions to Frege's philosophy, I recommend:

Textor, Mark, (FSR) Frege on Sense and Reference (Routledge, 2011)

Weiner, Joan, (FE) Frege Explained (Open Court, 2004)

The definitive collection of papers on Frege published from 1986 to 2005 is:

- Beaney, Michael and Reck, Erich H., eds., (GFCA) Gottlob Frege: Critical Assessments of Leading Philosophers, 4 vols. (Routledge, 2005)
- Further essays can be found in:
- Potter, Michael and Ricketts, Tom, eds., (*CCF*) The Cambridge Companion to Frege (Cambridge University Press, 2010)

Several useful papers on Frege are also contained in:

- Beaney, Michael, ed., (AT) The Analytic Turn: Analysis in Early Analytic Philosophy and Phenomenology (Routledge, 2007)
- Beaney, Michael, ed., (OHHAP) The Oxford Handbook of the History of Analytic Philosophy (Oxford University Press, forthcoming)

Further reading on each topic is provided in the relevant section below. I have starred the essential primary texts and my suggestions for what you might read first.

(1) Introduction

Topics

Frege's life and works; Frege's place in the history of philosophy; analytic philosophy and the linguistic turn

Reading

**FR*, 'Introduction', § 1 (pp. 1-10)

Beaney, Michael, FMS, 'Introduction'

*Beaney, Michael, Chen Bo and Koji Nakatogawa, FLP

- Burge, Tyler, 'Gottlob Frege: some forms of influence', in OHHAP
- Gabriel, Gottfried, 'Frege and the German background to analytic philosophy', in OHHAP
- Thiel, Christian and Beaney, Michael, 2005, 'Frege's Life and Work', in *GFCA*, I, pp. 23-39

(2) Frege's revolution in logic

Topics

Frege's use of function-argument analysis; invention of quantifier notation; treatment of generality; logical form and grammatical form; existential import

Reading

**FR*, 'Introduction', § 2 (pp. 10-14); '*Begriffsschrift*', Preface, §§ 3, 9 (pp. 48-52, 53-4, 65-8); App. 2

Beaney, Michael, FMS, chs. 1-2, esp. §§ 2.2, 2.4

*____, *F*, § 2

Textor, Mark, FSR, chs. 2-3

Weiner, Joan, FE, ch. 3

(3) Logic and conceptual content

Topics

relationship between logic and language; conceptual content and logical equivalence; interpretive analysis

Reading

*FR, 'Begriffsschrift', Preface, §§ 3, 8 (pp. 48-52, 53-4, 64-5); 'Logic', esp. pp. 239-44

Beaney, Michael, FMS, § 2.5

*____, *F*, § 4

Goldfarb, Warren, 2001, 'Frege's Conception of Logic', in *GFCA*, II, pp. 50-68; also in *CCF*, pp. 63-85

Textor, Mark, FSR, ch. 3

(4) Concept and object

Topics

objects/first-level concepts/second-level concepts; problem of the unity of the proposition; paradox of the concept *horse*; interpretive analysis

Reading

**FR*, 'Letter to Marty' (pp. 79-83); 'Function and Concept' (pp. 130-48); 'On Concept and Object' (pp. 181-93)

Beaney, Michael, FMS, §§ 7.1, 7.3

*____, *F*, § 3

Oliver, Alex, 2010, 'What is a predicate?', in CCF, pp. 118-48

Weiner, Joan, FE, ch. 5; ch. 6, pp. 103-14

Wright, Crispin, 1998, 'Why Frege Does Not Deserve His Grain of Salt: A Note on the Paradox of "The Concept Horse" and the Ascription of *Bedeutungen* to Predicates", in J. Brandl and P. Sullivan, eds., *New Essays on the Philosophy* of Michael Dummett, Grazer Philosophische Studien 55, pp. 239-63; repr. in GFCA, IV, pp. 177-96

(5) Frege's analysis of number statements

Topics

Frege's logicism; Frege's critique of alternative views; number statements as assertions about concepts; interpretive analysis

Reading

*FR, 'Introduction', § 3, pp. 14-20; 'The Foundations of Arithmetic', pp. 84-105

*FA, 'Introduction' and §§ 1-54 (pp. i-ix, 1-67)

Beaney, Michael, FMS, ch. 3; § 4.1

- *____, 2003, 'Russell and Frege', in Nicholas Griffin, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Bertrand Russell* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 128-70; repr. in a shortened and revised form as 'Frege, Russell and Logicism' in *GFCA*, I, pp. 213-40
- Beaney, Michael, 2011, 'Frege's Logicism and the Significance of Interpretive Analysis', in A. Arana and C. Alvarez, eds., *Analytic Philosophy and the Foundations of Mathematics* (Palgrave Macmillan)

Dummett, Michael, 1991, Frege: Philosophy of Mathematics (Duckworth), chs. 1-8

MacFarlane, John, 2002, 'Frege, Kant, and the logic in logicism', *Phil. Review*, 111, pp. 25-65; repr. in *GFCA*, I, pp. 71-108

Weiner, Joan, FE, chs. 2, 4

(6) The context principle and Russell's paradox

Topics

numbers as objects; context principle; contextual definition; abstraction principles; Russell's paradox; Platonism vs. eliminativism about abstract objects

Reading

*FR, 'Introduction', § 3, pp. 14-21; 'The Foundations of Arithmetic', pp. 105-129; 'Grundgesetze, I', Pref. (pp. 194-208); 'Letter to Russell, 22.6.1902' (pp. 253-4); 'Grundgesetze, II', §§ 146-7 and App. (pp. 277-89); 'Sources of Knowledge' and 'Numbers and Arithmetic' (pp. 368-73)

Beaney, Michael, FMS, §§ 4.2, 4.3, 7.2, 8.2

Dummett, Michael, 1991, Frege: Philosophy of Mathematics (Duckworth), chs. 9-18

- _____, 1995, 'The Context Principle: Centre of Frege's Philosophy', in *GFCA*, IV, pp. 245-61
- Levine, James, 2002, 'Analysis and Decomposition in Frege and Russell', *Phil. Quar.* 52, pp. 195-216; repr. in *GFCA*, IV, pp. 392-413
- _____, 2007, 'Analysis and Abstraction Principles in Russell and Frege', in *AT*, pp. 51-74
- Ricketts, Thomas, 2010, 'Concepts, objects and the Context Principle', in CCF, pp. 149-219

Weiner, Joan, FE, ch. 7

Wright, Crispin, 1997, 'On the Philosophical Significance of Frege's Theorem', in *GFCA*, III, pp. 349-86

(7) Analysis and definition

Topics

paradox of analysis; constructive vs. analytic definitions; idea of reconstruction

Reading

**FR*, '*The Foundations of Arithmetic*', § 88 (p. 122); 'Review of Husserl' (pp. 224-6); 'Logic in Mathematics', esp. pp. 313-21

Beaney, Michael, FMS, §§ 4.4, 4.5; ch. 5; § 8.5; App. 2

- *____, 2005, 'Sinn, Bedeutung and the Paradox of Analysis', in GFCA, IV, pp. 288-310
- _____, 2007, 'Conceptions of Analysis in the Early Analytic and Phenomenological Traditions: Some Comparisons and Relationships', in *AT*, §§ 1-2 (pp.197-204)
- _____, 2009, 'Analysis', in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, online at: plato.stanford.edu/ entries/analysis
- Dummett, Michael, 1987, 'Frege and the Paradox of Analysis', in Dummett, *Frege* and Other Philosophers (Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 17-52
- Reck, Erich, 2005, 'Frege's Natural Numbers: Motivations and Modifications', in *GFCA*, III, pp. 270-301
- *____, 2007, 'Frege-Russell Numbers: Analysis or Explication', in AT, pp. 33-50
- Tappenden, Jamie, 1995, 'Extending Knowledge and 'Fruitful Concepts': Fregean Themes in the Foundations of Mathematics', *Noûs* 29, pp. 427-67; repr. in *GFCA*, III, pp. 67-114

(8) The problem of identity statements

Topics

problems in the early notion of conceptual content; the informativeness of identity statements

Reading

**FR*, 'Introduction', § 3, pp. 21-30; '*Begriffsschrift*', § 8 (pp. 64-5); 'Function and Concept', esp. pp. 130-8; 'On Sinn and Bedeutung' (pp. 151-71)

Beaney, Michael, *FMS*, §§ 6.1, 6.2

_____, 2007, Frege's Use of Function-Argument Analysis and his Introduction of Truth-Values as Objects', in Dirk Greimann, ed., *Essays on Frege's Conception of Truth, Grazer Philosophische Studien*, 75, pp. 93-123

*____, *F*, § 5

Kremer, Michael, 2010, 'Sense and reference: the origins and development of the distinction', in *CCF*, §§ 1-5 (pp. 220-58)

Textor, Mark, FSR, ch. 4

(9) Sense and reference: sentences

Topics

application of the distinction to sentences; extensional and intensional contexts

- Reading
- **FR*, 'Introduction' § 4 (pp. 36-46; tr. into Chinese, *World Philosophy*, 2 (2008), pp. 14-24); 'Letter to Husserl, 24.5.1891' (pp. 149-50); 'On *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*'

(pp. 151-71); 'Letter to Russell, 28.12.1902' (pp. 255-7); 'Letter to Russell, 13.11.1904' (pp. 290-2); 'Introduction to Logic' (pp. 293-8)

Beaney, Michael, FMS, §§ 6.2, 6.5

*____, *F*, §§ 6, 9

Kremer, Michael, 2010, 'Sense and reference: the origins and development of the distinction', in *CCF*, §§ 7-8 (pp. 261-78)

Taschek, William W., 1992, 'Frege's Puzzle, Sense, and Information Content', *Mind* 101, pp. 767-91; repr. in *GFCA*, IV, pp. 217-44

Textor, Mark, FSR, ch. 6

Weiner, Joan, FE, ch. 6, pp. 89-103

(10) Sense and reference: singular terms

Topics

application of the distinction to singular terms; senses without referents; referential vs. descriptive theories of proper names

Reading

**FR*, 'On *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*' (pp. 151-71); 'Letter to Russell, 28.12.1902' (pp. 255-7); 'Letter to Russell, 13.11.1904' (pp. 290-2); 'Letter to Jourdain, Jan. 1914' (pp. 319-21); App. 2, p. 385

Beaney, Michael, FMS, §§ 6.3, 6.4

* , F, § 8

- Dummett, Michael, 1981, *Frege: Philosophy of Language*, 2nd ed. (Duckworth), chs. 5-6
- Hylton, Peter, 2005, 'Frege and Russell', in *Propositions, Functions, Analysis:* Selected Essays on Russell's Philosophy (Oxford University Press), pp. 153-84; also in CCF, pp. 509-49
- Kremer, Michael, 2010, 'Sense and reference: the origins and development of the distinction', in *CCF*, § 6 (pp. 258-61)
- Kripke, Saul, 2008, 'Frege's Theory of Sense and Reference: Some Exegetical Notes', *Theoria*, 74, pp. 181-218
- Russell, Bertrand, 1919, *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy* (George Allen and Unwin), chs. 15-16

Textor, Mark, FSR, ch. 5

(11) Sense and reference: concept words

Topics

application of the distinction to functional expressions

Reading

**FR*, 'Letter to Husserl, 24.5.1891' (pp. 149-50); '[Comments on *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*]' (pp. 172-80)

Beaney, Michael, FMS, § 7.1

*____, *F*, § 7

Textor, Mark, FSR, ch. 7

(12) Indexicality

Topics

criteria for sameness of thought; the problem of indexicals

Reading

**FR*, 'Introduction', § 3, pp. 30-6; 'Logic', esp. pp. 227-39; 'A Brief Survey of my Logical Doctrines' (pp. 299-300); 'Letters to Husserl, 1906' (pp. 301-7); 'Thought' (pp. 325-45)

*Beaney, Michael, *FMS*, §§ 7.4, 7.5, 8.1

____, *F*, § 9

- Perry, John, 'Frege on Demonstratives', in Palle Yourgrau, ed., *Demonstratives* (Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 50-70; orig. in *Phil. Rev.* 1977, pp. 474-97; repr. in Perry, *The Problem of the Essential Indexical and Other Essays* (Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 3-25
- , 'The Problem of the Essential Indexical', in Perry, *The Problem of the Essential Indexical and Other Essays*, pp. 26-49; orig. in *Noûs* 1979, pp. 3-21
- Evans, Gareth, 'Understanding Demonstratives', in Yourgrau, *Demonstratives*, pp. 71-96; also in Evans, *Collected Papers* (Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 291-321
- *Harcourt, Edward, 'Frege on 'I', 'Now', 'Today' and Some Other Linguistic Devices', *Synthese*, 1999, pp. 329-56; repr. in *GFCA*, IV, pp. 262-87

(13) Thought and objectivity

Topics

objectivity and communicability; Platonism about thoughts; compositionality

Reading

FR, 'Introduction', § 3, pp. 30-1; 'Logic', esp. pp. 227-39; 'My Basic Logical Insights' (pp. 322-4); 'Thought' (pp. 325-45)

Beaney, Michael, FMS, § 7.5; ch. 8

Bell, David, 1987, 'Thoughts', in GFCA, IV, pp. 313-29

- Burge, Tyler, 2005, 'Introduction' to *Truth, Thought, Reason: Essays on Frege* (Oxford University Press), pp. 1-73
- Dummett, Michael, 1989, 'More about Thoughts', in GFCA, IV, pp. 330-50
- Heck, Richard and May, Robert, forthcoming, 'The Composition of Thoughts', *Noûs*, available at:

http://frege.brown.edu/heck/pdf/unpublished/CompositionOfThoughts.pdf

- Kremer, Michael, 2010, 'Sense and reference: the origins and development of the distinction', in *CCF*, § 9 (pp. 278-92)
- Ricketts, Thomas, 1986, 'Objectivity and objecthood: Frege's metaphysics of judgment', in *GFCA*, I, pp. 313-39

Weiner, Joan, FE, ch. 9

(14) Frege and philosophy of language

Topics

Frege as philosopher of language

Reading

Beaney, Michael, FMS, ch. 6; §§ 7.4, 7.5; ch. 8

- Burge, Tyler, 1990, 'Frege on Sense and Linguistic Meaning', in David Bell and Neil Cooper, eds., *The Analytic Tradition* (Blackwell, 1990), pp. 30-60; repr. in Burge, *Truth, Thought, Reason: Essays on Frege* (Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 242-69; also repr. in *GFCA*, IV, pp. 37-67
- Heck. Richard, 2010, 'Frege and semantics', in Dirk Greimann, ed., *Essays on Frege's Conception of Truth, Grazer Philosophische Studien*, 75, pp. 27-63; also in *CCF*, pp. 342-78
- Ricketts, Thomas, 1986, 'Generality, Meaning, and Sense in Frege', *Pacific Phil. Quar.*, 67, pp. 172-95; repr. in *GFCA*, IV, pp. 13-36
- Taschek, William W., 2010, 'On sense and reference: a critical reception', in *CCF*, pp. 293-341
- Weiner, Joan, 1997, 'Has Frege a Philosophy of Language?', in William W. Tait, ed., Early Analytic Philosophy: Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein (Open Court), pp. 249-72; repr. in GFCA, IV, pp. 97-123

____, *FE*, ch. 10

Mike Beaney

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