Syllabus: Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* (Martin Lenz)

Monday 13-15, 06 February 2024 – 19 March 2024
Room: 3111.0326LL, Antonius Deusinglaan 2 (UMGC)

This is a long document introducing you to the approach of the course and to the passages we're reading. Please read it carefully. We'll roughly cover three topics in the first six meetings; the three last meetings are also devoted to questions of writing. We will focus on discussions of your ideas about the primary text: Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations (= PU)*, transl. by G. E. M. Anscombe, P. M. S. Hacker, and J. Schulte, revised fourth edition, Oxford: Blackwell 2009. I'll provide further advice on literature in the course of the course.

Introduction

Focusing on Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, this introduction to Wittgenstein's philosophy tries to (a) explore some of his central ideas and (b) zoom in on our ways of looking at philosophy (and history). Why would I pick out those two aspects? I think that a great part of philosophy consists in looking at what *we* do: how and why we do it; and whether we could do otherwise. This is why I'd like to encourage you to think as much about *your way* of approaching philosophy as well as the *problems* dealt with in the text. The goal of this is to enable you to acquire knowledge about (the history of) philosophy in a justified manner. This means to acquire an understanding of the limits and constraints of your knowledge as well as the knowledge itself. Does this sound obvious? Well, philosophers often give themselves a hard time in trying to both question and state the obvious.

The course will be conducted in seminar style and should allow for ample discussions. I don't expect you to have any chops yet, but you should learn to establish and articulate an understanding of texts along the following lines: What does the text say? What are arguments or crucial concepts? What does it not say? What are tacit assumptions? Why might things be said? Can they be translated into our contemporary ideas and context? If not, why not?

Don't think that discussions are a distraction from learning. Discussions should help you getting academic "fluency" in handling ideas, questions, arguments and terminology. Most things I tell you, you can read somewhere else. What you can't do somewhere else is have them come alive by talking them through. The text we discuss is about 70 years old. Despite that fact, this text has never been exposed to you. *That* confrontation is what makes things interesting! During our meetings, you should learn to appropriate the stuff I teach, make it your own by mingling it with your own points of views and interests. In this sense, I also hope to learn from you. The following syllabus is still quite open, because I'd like to get an idea of your interests and specialities before

finalising it. There are many ways to Rome, and to writing your final paper. In any case, here is what you should do:

1. Always read the *assigned passages* before class. Why? Simply because I'll presuppose them, and if you have not read them, you will have no clue what the discussion is about.
2. Always prepare at least *one question* about the text, in writing. See my piece about questions on details of how to structure a question: https://handlingideas.blog/2023/03/09/how-can-you-ask-and-structure-questions/ Don't hand them in, but try to bring them up in the course, with me or a fellow student.
   So write your question down and structure it as follows:

   - target/topic: say what the question is *about*
   - question: state the actual *question*
   - presupposition/motivation: give a brief *explanation* why the question arises
   - perhaps provide a brief anticipation of *possible answers* (in dicussions this is helpful to prepare follow-up questions)

3. Keep a notebook for your questions and insights so as to monitor your progress and ideas.

Course Schedule

Text: PU, § 1-67
06 February: Introduction & Part One (see below for more on content)
13 February: Part One

Text: PU, § 243-275
20 February: Part Two
27 February: Part Two

Text: PU, § 89-138
05 March: Part Three
12 March: Part Three

19 March: Recap
26 March: Exam Prep

Week 9 of the Quarter: Exam: Commentary

Assignments / Grading

In week 9, you will write a commentary on a chosen text passage in class. This will basically work like a regular two-hour exam and will be held in the Aletta Jacobshal. You will receive a text

passage and be asked to explain crucial ideas in that passage by relating them to the material discussed in the course.

Follow this link for further information on the genre of the commentary:
https://handlingideas.blog/2023/11/08/reviving-the-commentary-as-a-philosophical-genre/

The pieces are graded in view of the following criteria that are weighed individually as *good* (7,5-10)*, sufficient* (6-7) *or insufficient* (1-5) and balanced against one another:

Text / Style
• Coherence
• Structure
• Readability

Content / Analysis
• Explicit connection to (textual) evidence, points of contact
• Handling of terminology
• Outline of thesis, question
• Analysis / presentation of problems / arguments
• Presentation of evaluations (of arguments)
• Consideration of alternatives / objections

Understanding / Reflection
• Methodological awareness / reflection of (own) assumptions
• Dialectical awareness of one's position in the larger debate
• Aptness for audience
• Refinement of formulations (of one's own and other points)

Outline of the programme / readings

Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*: An Interactionist Approach to Language and to Almost Everything Else

Part I: Wittgenstein against Traditional Accounts of Language

- Topic: Focusing on one of the most influential philosophers of the 20th century, we will mainly explore the question of *intentionality*: How are our minds related to the world?
    - The general question is of course an on-going theme in the history of philosophy. A rough way to distinguish different periods is to look for the *starting points* from which explanations proceed: in ancient and medieval times explanations are often set out from a *metaphysical* point of view, i.e. by starting from assumptions about the world and then explaining what is required to cognize this world. Modern philosophy typically starts from an *epistemological* point of view, i.e. by assuming that our cognitive access crucially shapes or distorts our view of the world.
    - After the so-called *linguistic turn* in the 20th century, this question is mainly explored in the philosophy of language, i.e. by assuming that our cognition is crucially shaped or distorted by language.
    - Thus, language (and mind) becomes a *thematic centre* of investigation. At the same time, investigating language counts as a crucial *method* of approaching philosophical problems. That means, we don't ask, for instance, what knowledge or morality are; rather we ask how we talk about / conceptualise knowledge or morality.

- Approach: Starting out from the idea that philosophy is an on-going conversation, our crucial task is to enter that conversation. In this attempt, we do not deal with the phenomena themselves but with *claims* about phenomena. Thus, an important task is to identify and understand claims. Doing that requires us
    - (1) to explain *claims*,
    - (2) to reconstruct the *presuppositions and arguments* for them,
    - (3) to provide *evaluations* of the arguments, i.e. to see whether they actually support the claim, which counter-arguments can be advanced, and how arguments can be improved.

- Professional philosophers and historians of philosophy equally concentrate on discussing *problems*, but as historians we pay special attention to the *texts* themselves. That is, we also need to tackle the problems that textual genres present us with: bear in mind how a text is *produced*, how *reliable* the edition (and translation) is, how *context*, *terminology* and *style* might differ

from ours, and what the exact *points of contact* with our proposed analysis are. (These factors should of course also be acknowledged in contemporary discussions, but all too often they are just taken for granted.)
- An important rule of thump is this: start your analysis with a concrete quotation from a text and always make sure that you can back up your further steps with *textual evidence*!

Brief introduction to Wittgenstein's later philosophy

Ludwig Wittgenstein (born 1889 in Vienna – died 1951 in Cambridge) was one of the most influential thinkers of the 20th century, who shaped much of the current analytic and continental strands of philosophy as well as approaches in logic, linguistics and psychology. He is often portrayed as having developed two different trends in analytic philosophy:
- ideal language philosophy as developed in the *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* (1922), attempting to explain how we should (understand) our talk
- ordinary language philosophy as developed in the *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), attempting to explain how we actually talk

Guiding question of the course: *What is meaning?*

Basics

Wittgenstein's approach to language in the *PI* is characterized by thorough refutation of traditional views of language in general and linguistic meaning in particular:
- Traditional theories explain meaning through the *relation between language and objects*, i.e. by detailing how words and sentences correspond to things or states of affairs. The crucial units of analysis are words and propositions.
- Wittgenstein explains meaning through the *relation between language users*, i.e. by specifying how the behavioural patterns / interaction between humans grounds rules of language. The crucial units of investigation are "language games".
- Against the tradition and in revision of his earlier *picture theory of meaning* in the *TLP*, Wittgenstein now advances a *use theory of meaning*.

Zooming in on the *PI*

- Approaching the text, **§1-67**:
    - What is special about the *PI*? Style: progressing in questions, dialogical aphorisms, examples and analogies.
    - Difficulties: finding thematic unity or Wittgenstein's claims and arguments.
    - But the style is owing to his understanding of philosophy (no doctrines, but questions and therapy)
- Rough structure of the content of the *PI*:
    - Constant questioning and revision of presuppositions: the traditional picture theory is assumed and increasingly undermined and replaced

- Topics: Refutation of traditional (Augustine's) view of language: §1-32; objections, analysis of "to mean something", "pointing" - §36; correspondence between names and objects (simples) - §45; signifying simple and complex objects (relative ontology) - § 50; correspondence and criteria: family resemblance - §67

- Focus: problems of the traditional view:
  - §1: What is taken to be the "essence of human language"? Two theses: (a) every word has meaning, (b) the meaning is the object for which the word stands
  - How are these theses addressed? Discuss examples!
  - Why is (b) problematic? See §6-7
  - Why is (a) problematic? See § 13
  - What is the newly emerging view? See § 23 (see also § 65-67)
  - What was a crucial problem of the Augustinian view? See § 32

Suggested tasks for discussions and group sessions

(1) Re-read §1-67: try to identify topics and impose a structure on the text.
(2) Pay special attention to the passages mentioned below and try to analyse the texts before class.

Tasks in the upcoming seminar:

- First hour: Divide each seminar into three student groups. Reconstruct the focus elements. What are the problems raised by the traditional view? (Ca. 10-15 minutes preparation in groups, 10-15 minutes presentation to all, 10 minutes discussion)

  - GROUP I: §1: What is taken to be the "essence of human language": two theses: (a) every word has meaning, (b) the meaning is the object for which the word stands.
    Try to find historical examples of this view (b), e.g. in Locke etc. Explain why it's plausible.
  - GROUP II: Why is (b) problematic? See § 6-7 Why is (a) problematic? See § 13, What was a crucial problem of the Augustinian view? See § 31-32
  - GROUP III: What is the newly emerging interactive view? How does the idea of language games support this view? See esp. § 23 (see also § 65-67)

- Second hour: Student groups reconstruct special problems. (Ca. 10-15 minutes preparation in groups, 10-15 minutes presentation to all, 10 minutes discussion)

- GROUP I: Identify the general themes in § 1-67, decide then on a general story of (a) how the topics hang together and (b) how these generally address the question of meaning.
- GROUP II: What is the problem with explaining meaning in terms of analysis? How does the idea of "family resemblances" (§ 67) relate to the problem? See § 60-65.
- GROUP III: Think about the following specific question what is the problem with "ostensive definitions" and "pointing":
  - How are they are relevant to the traditional theory?
  - What does Wittgenstein criticize with regard to these notions?
  - Try to reconstruct the dialogical/argumentative steps in §28. What is the conclusion? How is the conclusion taken up in § 35-37

Part II: The Private Language Argument

Basics

The so-called private language argument is a number of considerations that speak against the possibility of a private language. The argument has received numerous different and controversial interpretations. However, the basic idea is that language does *not* get it's meaning by signifying inner (and thus private) sensations. Rather, language gets meaningful through *public* interaction. At first, this might seem to concern only a special class of utterances about pain etc. But the scope of the argument is more general. For many theories of language propose that our references to publicly observable objects, such as colours or tables, are *mediated* by inner sensations. Thus, the idea that language is basically an expression of (inner) thoughts or sensations might be implicitly committed to a private language. For example, referring to a colour would presuppose that you have an inner sensation of that colour. Considering this 'empiricist' basis of many theories of meaning, they seem to presuppose a private access to sensations, rendering the meaning of language private. Thus, in refuting the possibility of a language that gets meaningful by reference to private mental states, Wittgenstein refutes the possibility that language gets meaningful by reference to *objects*.

- Consider the following passage from John Locke's *Essay*: "*Words in their primary and immediate Signification, stand for nothing, but the* Ideas *in the Mind of him that uses them* …" (*Essay* III, ii, 2: 405)
- Closer to home, here is Bertrand Russell's *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism* (1918/19): "In a logically perfect language, there will be one word and no more for every simple object, and everything that is not simple will be expressed by a combination of words, by a combination derived, of course, from the words for the simple things that enter in, one word for each simple

component. A language of that sort will be completely analytic, and will show at a glance the logical structure of the facts asserted or denied. … … A name, in the narrow logical sense of a word whose meaning is a particular, can only be applied to a particular with which the speaker is acquainted, because you cannot name anything you are not acquainted with. … One can use 'this' as a name to stand for a particular with which one is acquainted at the moment. We say 'This is white'. … But if you try to apprehend the proposition that I am expressing when I say 'This is white', you cannot do it. If you mean this piece of chalk as a physical object, then you are not using a proper name. It is only when you use 'this' quite strictly, to stand for an actual object of sense [i.e., a sense-datum], that it is really a proper name."

- But even in 1975 and after, authors like Jerry Fodor (*The Language of Thought*) are committed to the idea that language is an expression of thought.

- Ask yourself how you think about language.

- Discuss whether every theory that renders language an expression of thought would be committed to the idea of a private language.

Approaching the text **§ 243-275**

These sections contain the most important passages of what is known as the PLA. But bear in mind that much is anticipated and recurs in other sections.

- Rough structure:
    - introduction of the idea of a private language and *two notions of privacy* §243;
    - *referring to sensations* questioned and rendered as related to learning names of sensations, meaning of "pain" as a *replacement of pain-behaviour* (crying) §244;
    - *"*Only I know whether I'm really in pain*"* exposed as *false and nonsensical* -§252;
    - identity through ostension rejected §253;
    - philosophy as therapy -§ 255;
    - conclusion: no private use §256;
    - S-Diary Analogy unpacked §258-275.

Zooming in: *"*Only I know whether I'm really in pain.*"*

- What is this statement analogous to? (Cartesian cogito, other minds problem)
- Analysis:
    - Why is it (1) *false and* (2) *nonsensical*?

    - Consider: Do you think you know whether others have pain? What does that mean for the claim?
    - What does the normal use of "to know" presuppose? Why might the word be misapplied in this case? (Can I doubt whether I am in pain?)
- S-Diary:
    - Conclusion: Why would I have no criterion of correctness? (And what would that mean?)
        - No definition
        - No ostensive definition
        - Why is "concentrating the attention" problematic?
        - What would be the function of that concentrating?
        - Why would reliance on memory problematic?

- S-Diary expanded:
    - § 261: What is the problem? Obviously, calling "S" a sensation is already relying on a category in our public language: What does the presupposed public language add? Why is that problematic for the assumption of privacy?
    - § 261: In what sense would a dictionary be an independent authority?
    - § 268: Why can't my right hand give money to my left? What's the point of this example? Can you think of other examples that make the same point?
    - § 269: What are such criteria in someone's behaviour? Aren't these *mental* activities?
    - § 270: Why does the connection to the rising blood pressure make my recognition of "S" as correct superfluous?

- Questions and Critique
    - What does this mean for language?
    - But would the community better off than the individual?
    - Can a whole community be wrong?

Part III: Philosophy and Logical Analysis

Basics

The *PI* offer not only a new view of language but an explicit revision and critique of the *TLP.* Like in the *TLP*, the *PI* focus on language. But while the early work proposes an analysis of the idealised form of language (by trying to lay bare the propositions that are isomorphic to states of affairs), the later Wittgenstein rejects the idea that there is one ideal or determinate form.

But paying attention to (ordinary) language in such a way leads to a paradox. On the one hand, this attention leads us into a sphere that is rarely considered. We simply do not always pay attention to the media or (linguistic) units etc. through which we speak: that is, we rarely use meta-language or focus on words, sentences, propositions etc. In this sense they appear very special. On the other hand, given that speaking is the most ordinary thing, it must turn out that the media we use for that are just as ordinary as the table and chairs in our kitchen. But what becomes of logic, then, and its supposed rigour? Logic does not disappear, but instead of being an ideal, it is held together by family resemblances.

- Consider some passages from the *Tractatus:*

> "3 A logical picture of facts is a thought."
>
> "4 A thought is a proposition with a sense."
>
> "4.012 It is obvious that a proposition of the form 'aRb' strikes us as a picture. In this case the sign is obviously a likeness of what is signified."
>
> "4.014 A gramophone record, the musical idea, the written notes, and the sound-waves, all stand to one another in the same internal relation of depicting that holds between language and the world. They are all constructed according to a common logical pattern."
>
> "4.024 To understand a proposition means to know what is the case if it is true. (One can understand it, therefore, without knowing whether it is true.) It is understood by anyone who understands its constituents."

- What does this view suggest about the relation between language and reality?
- What might be problematic from the perspective of the later view?
- What might possibly be retained from this view?

Approaching the text **§ 89-138**

- Rough structure:
  - revising the status of logic to family resemblances §89-111;
  - critique of the *TLP* – §115;
  - critique of metaphysical pseudo-problems arising out of the philosophical consideration of language - §117;
  - self-critique (Doesn't philosophy disappear?) -121;
  - the role of philosophy and our lack of an overview (of grammar) - §133;
  - revising the understanding of propositions (continued) - § 138

- Zooming in:

    - What are the two ways of understanding logic? – In what sense is it taken to be universal? §89 And in what sense is it not?
    - What do we, and what does Wittgenstein mean by "grammar"? Try to find examples?
    - § 99: Why would sentences need to have a determinate sense? And how is this questioned in §99-108
    - What is a proposition?
- Zooming out: The understanding of philosophy as a mark of continuity between TLP and PI.
- Questions.

WRITING GUIDE

HOW TO PLAN YOUR ABSTRACT, ESSAY OR THESIS

First steps: the ingredients of philosophical work

Planning philosophical work might feel overwhelming. The following breakdown is intended to soften the worries by suggesting some crucial steps and ingredients. It is a brief and at times somewhat densely formulated guide to writing. Additionally, you might consult pieces from my *blog on (writing) philosophy*, where I suggest ways of dealing with obstacles or worries. You can pick pertinent posts by clicking on the tag "writing": https://handlingideas.blog/tag/writing/

Generally speaking, philosophy is a huge and ongoing *conversation* that you are about to enter. Thus, philosophy is not directly about phenomena; rather it deals with *claims* about phenomena. So you won't ask "What is thinking, justice etc.?"; rather you will deal with what you or other people *say* about thinking, about justice etc. Identifying, discussing or defending a philosophical position, then, typically involves five things:

- Identifying a **claim**: Every philosophical work (book, essay, thesis etc.) can be reduced to a single claim. Finding that claim is not a matter of right or wrong but of interests and background. Now, how do you find the crucial claim? Try to say what the piece of work attempts to *explain*, then you've got the main thesis! You (or the text you are looking at) might assume, for instance, that *thinking is explained in virtue of (its dependence on) language*. If so, then the italicized bit is one formulation of the claim.
- Questions and **research questions**: Fixing the claim or explanatory goal of a text determines almost all the other steps; it fixes what counts as an argument or justification (is this passage a support of the claim?); it fixes the terms of evaluating the arguments (do they support the claim well?); and what's more: a claim is an answer to a question; thus, in fixing the claim you implicitly formulate *the question that the claim is an answer to*! – Now you have an interpretation of the text. The next thing to do is to step back and look at your perspective on that interpretation. How do you see the relation between question and answer? That leads to your research question. So, to determine your *research question* you should now ask what it is that you find interesting about that claim. Is the claim well supported? No claim is sufficiently defended against all possible objections! Is the claim intelligible as it stands? Perhaps you want to find a suitable reformulation! – Now, *narrow down* your question as much as possible! Since philosophy is a conversation, many people have looked at many aspects. Find the issue that irritates or stimulates you most, and that you might feel confident in improving on.

- Picking out **arguments**: Once you've determined the claim, everything else will be an argument or a support (example, analogy, illustration etc.) of the claim. Pick the arguments you find crucial with regard to your question and find out how exactly they aim at supporting the claim. – Here are some steps you can take: Remember that arguments are part of a larger conversation, i.e. in view of previous arguments, counter-arguments and changes of emphasis. This way you begin to see a *debate or context*, be it diachronically (historically) or synchronically between more or less contemporary discussants. Now, look for *points of contact*: Is there a specific term or sub-claim that some or many arguments focus on? Or one that arguments and counter-arguments focus on?
- **Evaluation**: It seems difficult to evaluate a position. We simply never know enough. But you already made your judgment, at least implicitly. Look back at the *relation between the claim and the argument(s)*! Was it a good argument? Did it support the claim or did it need further support? And look at the debate again: Was it fair? Were there shifts in strategies, emphasis or even topics? Did the points of contact remain stable or were they shifted around?
- **Methodological evaluation**: Remember that by fixing the claim/explanatory goal, you determine the *standard of evaluation*. That is, by saying that a text is about (a), you might rule out that it is about (b). In other words: you determine or find the *limits or constraints* of a claim or discussion. This might entail that certain types of argument or method (e.g. empirical methods) are privileged. Thus, you can deepen your evaluation by *making explicit such limits.* First, you might want to look at the debate again. Were the points of contact or shifts in emphasis owing to certain *presuppositions*? Second, you might want to question your own perspective, which by now is a further contribution to the discussion. Were you guided in presuppositions? Did you ignore alternatives? Why?

Now, thinking about these steps is *not* the same as structuring your essay or thesis; and you can't do all of these things in your work – just think about them and see what interests you most. Keep in mind that by *fixing the claim* you already take the crucial step that *informs all the other steps*: looking for arguments and evaluating their relation to the claim. You can apply these steps equally to historical positions (claims about claims, or interpretative claims) and systematic works.

Nevertheless, in thinking through these steps, you also fix the starting point for structuring your work, which ultimately is, again, *your claim about a claim*. That claim could be your starting point or hypothesis. In any case, it might provide you with a working title under which you begin to structure your own work. However, in a paper, you will often *focus on one step only* (be it on an argument or the point of contact in a debate or the evaluative standards of a discussion). Yet, the other steps will inform your work and might be addressed in the introduction or conclusion.

Remember that you are taking part in a conversation – many people already have made contributions from their points of view. See your engagement with the "secondary literature" as a way of taking their views into account! And as an opportunity to narrow down your own perspective.

Finally, the difference between a "historical approach" and a contemporary or systematic approach is often just a matter of degree or emphasis. If you want to work historically, you do not need to find a 'historical figure' to attribute your problem to (although you're of course free to do so if you want). – To use an historical approach means *to apply historical methods* to reconstruct the problem you want to address. So if you want to address a systematic / contemporary issue that's fine. To do so "with an historical approach" could then mean to ask, for instance: What are the points of contact in given exchanges between arguments and counter-arguments? Which models or presuppositions are salient in the (current) debate of the problem? What is the debate in which my view evolved? Etc. It does not mean that you have to find someone sufficiently 'old or dead' to count as historical.

Planning the writing: abstracts

The writing process is informed by the aspects named above. However, the structure of written work needs added attention! It should not simply follow the order of your discoveries or insights, but be presented as a didactically clear argument. When you begin to think about the elements of a thesis or a paper, the best thing to do is to write a brief abstract (no more than one page). It should comprise:

- a (working) title,
- an outline of:
    - the topic
    - a crucial problem (perhaps as discussed in the literature)
    - the claim you want to defend with regard to the problem
    - the research question you need to answer to support your claim
- a statement explaining why the problem is relevant / merits discussion
- your main argument and perhaps a possible conclusion,
- if possible, a tentative structure and literature.

So the kind of abstract I have in mind is a bit like an *introduction* to a paper. Please note: The distinction between topic, (general) problem, claim, research question should help you in narrowing down your claim. While the *topic* may be fairly broad, your *claim and question* should be as **narrow** in focus as possible! If your claim sounds still a bit broad, you should assume that the claim is the topic and find an even narrower claim. Defend no more than *one idea per paper!* Planning your abstract, you also might want to consult this general piece on writing philosophy papers: https://handlingideas.blog/2018/09/02/how-do-you-turn-a-half-baked-idea-into-a-paper/

When writing, make sure that the claim and question becomes the *red thread* of your paper. Always ask yourself: *how does this section or paragraph relate to (supporting or explaining) my claim?* State the answer to that question explicitly at the beginning of your paragraph. That helps taking the reader by the hand.

Some notes concerning the structure of an essay or a thesis

The following notes are *just suggestions*. Depending on the length of your work, you do not have to include *all* of them. Just make sure to take them into account when structuring your work. Ideally, your essay or thesis shouldn't just be structured in accordance with the development of your successive insights, but present an apt and also didactically clear argument.

1. Introduction: ***formulation of the central claim / question***

- introduction to the topic (e.g. by using a daily life example)
- precise formulation of the problem
- motivation of the problem with regard to a general guiding question
- possible (opposing) views on the problem (in the secondary literature)
  narrowing the focus of the precise claim you want to defend
- the research question of your essay
- your methodological approach to the question / structure of the essay (and
  exclusion of related questions) in accordance with sub-questions to your research question
- a tentative formulation of the result / solution

2. Main Part: ***analysis and evaluation of arguments for and against the claim***

- detailed analysis in accordance with the proposed structure (try to focus on *one* single
  problem / argument / passage)
- illustrate your theses / stance with examples and counterfactual reflections ("What
  would happen if p were not the case?")
- refine your conclusions by discussing possible objections
- provide a brief summary or evaluation after each part, and motivate why the next
  step is required

3. Conclusion: ***summary and evaluation in context***

- provide a brief summary (note what you stated at the endings of the individual chapters of the main part)
- place the results / conclusions in the larger historical or systematic context (referring to the general guiding question in the introduction)
- state your position / evaluate the result (perhaps with regard to the prior placement)
- provide an outlook (on possible questions that follow from your conclusion)