

Exact Thinking in Demented Times

PHIL 293 – Advanced Seminar in Logical Theory

Fall 2025

Mondays 6 – 8:45 PM

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The world seems to be spinning out of control. Every day new outrages are reported in the news, new strikes against those things we once took to be ‘unalienable rights’. And, everyday it may seem harder to focus on philosophy. What use are questions about fundamental ontologies when the world is burning? Why care about whether abstracta are real when we hardly know whether what our leaders are saying is real?

In this class, we will look at another moment in history when the world appeared to fall apart – the early 20th Century. We will examine one of the philosophical movements that moment in history spawned: *analytic philosophy*. We will study the way those early analytic philosophers responded to the chaos and irrationalism of their times by drawing on the new mathematical logic, and modern science. We will consider the ultimate fate of their movement, and what it can teach us about responding philosophically to our own times.

Note: no background in logic will be assumed in this class.