George Mason University
Graduate Course Approval/Inventory Form

Please complete this form and attach a copy of the syllabus for new courses. Forward it as an email attachment to the Secretary of the Graduate Council. A printed copy of the form with signatures should be brought to the Graduate Council Meeting. Complete the Coordinator Form on page 2, if changes in this course will affect other units.

Please indicate:  __X__ NEW  ____ MODIFY  ____ DELETE

Local Unit:  PHIL/RELI  Graduate Council Approval Date:

Course Abbreviation:  PHIL  Course Number:  632

Full Course Title:  Twentieth Century Logical Positivism

Abbreviated Course Title (24 characters max.):  LOGICAL POSITIVISM

Credit hours:  3  Program of Record:  Master of Arts in Philosophy

Repeatable for Credit?  
___ D=Yes, not within same term  Up to hours 
___ T=Yes, within the same term  Up to  hours 
_X__ N=Cannot be repeated for credit

Activity Code (please indicate):  ____ Lecture (LEC)  ____ Lab (LAB)  ____ Recitation (RCT) 
___ Studio (STU)  ___ Internship (INT)  ___ Independent Study (IND)  ____X__ Seminar (SEM)

Catalog Credit Format  3 : 3 : 0  Course Level:  GF(500-600)  __X__ GA(700+)  ____

Maximum Enrollment:  20  For NEW courses, first term to be offered:  F06

Prerequisites or corequisites:  Graduate Standing

Catalog Description (35 words or less):  Please use catalog format and attach a copy of the syllabus for new courses. Examination of 20th century logical positivism and its place in the history of philosophy. Topics covered will include Russell’s logical atomism and theory of descriptions, the program of the Vienna Circle, attempts to formulate empiricist criteria of meaning, and the legacy left by the movement.

For MODIFIED or DELETED courses as appropriate:
Last term offered:  Previous Course Abbreviation:  Previous number:

Description of modification:

APPROVAL SIGNATURES:
Submitted by:  _____Emmett Holman________email:  _eholman@gmu.edu_______

Department/Program:  _____Theodore Kinnaman_________Date:  __12/15/04__________

College Committee:  ________________________________Date:  __________________
Graduate Council Representative:  ________________________________Date:  __________________
### Approval from other units:

Please list those units outside of your own who may be affected by this new, modified, or deleted course. Each of these units must approve this change prior to its being submitted to the Graduate Council for approval.

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Graduate Council approval: ___________________________  Date: __________

Graduate Council representative: ________________________  Date: __________

Provost Office representative: ____________________________  Date: __________
PHILOSOPHY 632
TWENTIETH CENTURY LOGICAL POSITIVISM

Your friendly Master of Ceremonies (Instructor): Emmett Holman
Holding court (office hours): varies with semester
B459 Robinson Hall
993-1329 (mine), 993-1290 (Dept.)
eholman@gmu.edu

REQUIRED BOOKS (Available at GMU Bookstore)
1. Robert Ammerman (ed.), Classics of Analytic Philosophy
2. A. J. Ayer (ed.), Logical Positivism
3. Philosophy 632 Reader

COURSE OBJECTIVES
The objective of this course is to provide students with an in-depth understanding of 20th century logical positivism and its place in the history of Western philosophy. This will include a careful examination of the aims of the movement, the ambitious and revolutionary program the positivists undertook to achieve these aims, and why this program ultimately failed.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Your grade will be based on take-home critical discussion papers, three in all, each one 6 to 10 pages (1800 to 3000 words) in length. Each paper will count 1/3 of your final grade. I have a policy of allowing rewrites on papers.

CLASS SCHEDULE
Following is the material to be covered in this course, together with an approximate time schedule.

I. PRECURSORS OF LOGICAL POSITIVISM: MOORE'S "PHILOSOPHY OF COMMON SENSE" AND RUSSELL'S LOGICAL ATOMISM (Weeks 1 & 2)

2. Editor's (Roderick Chisholm's) Introduction to Realism and the Background of Phenomenology, Phil. 632 Reader

II. SPRINGTIME FOR POSITIVISM (Weeks 3-6)

1. Editor's Introduction to Ayer, Sections I & II.
III. TROUBLE IN PARADISE: DIFFICULTIES WITH THE LOGICAL POSITIVIST PROGRAM (Weeks 7-10)

1. Chisholm, "Problems of Phenomenalism", Phil. 332 Reader
   Carnap, "Testability and Meaning" (excerpts) pp. 130-195 of Ammerman
   Carnap, "The Methodological Character of Theoretical Concepts", Phil. 632 Reader

IV. METAPHYSICS UNCHAINED, MEANINGS RELATIVIZED, AND EPISTEMOLOGY NATURALIZED: THE UNRAVELING OF LOGICAL POSITIVISM (Weeks 11-14)

1. Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism", pp. 196-213 of Ammerman
   Strawson & Grice, "In Defence of a Dogma", pp. 340-352 of Ammerman
2. Quinton, "The Foundations of Knowledge", Sections I-VIII, Phil. 632 Reader
3. Feyerabend, "Explanation, Reduction and Empiricism", excerpts, Phil. 632 Reader
4. Quine, "Epistemology Naturalized", Phil. 632 Reader

V. ONE PERSON'S POST-MORTEM: RICHARD RORTY ON THE DEATH OF LOGICAL POSITIVISM (AND OF PHILOSOPHY IN GENERAL) (Week 14)

1. Rorty, excerpt from Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature, Phil. 632 Reader