

## **Verificationism, Part IA: *Meaning*.** Lecture Outline & Readings.

Christopher J. Masterman (cm789@cam.ac.uk, [christophermasterman.com](http://christophermasterman.com))

### **1. Summary**

Verificationism was an influential view which held that there is an intimate connection between meaning and verification. Roughly, a sentence is meaningful if and only if it is verifiable. Here, we look at some consequences of this verificationism, how verificationists have thought about *a priori*, *analytic*, and necessary truths, as well as influential criticisms of verificationism from Quine, culminating in a discussion of Quine's famous 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism' paper.

*Four lectures, one on each Friday in Weeks 5–8, 2pm–3pm, Room 4 in Sidgwick Site Lecture Block.*

### **2. Lecture Outlines & Reading List**

Ideally, you should do the reading before the lecture and familiarise yourself with the topic that week. Lectures will build on previous weeks and so familiarity with already covered material is ideal. Handouts will be posted online after the lecture.

#### **Lecture I. A. J. Ayer on Verification, 3rd November.**

Ayer, A. J. (1936). *Language, Truth, and Logic*. Chapter 1: The Elimination of Metaphysics.

*This is available online, see the Part IA Paper 3: Meaning Reading List.*

#### **Lecture II. More Detail on Verificationism, 10th November.**

Soames, S. (2003). *Philosophical Analysis in the Twentieth Century, Volume 1: The Dawn of Analysis.*, Chapter 13: The Rise and Fall of The Empiricist Criterion of Meaning, Princeton University Press

*This is available online, see the Part IA Paper 3: Meaning Reading List.*

#### **Lecture III. Verificationism, A Priori and Analyticity, 17th November.**

Quine, W. V. (1976 [1935]). Truth by Convention. In *The Ways of Paradox and Other Essays*, pp. 77–106

*This is reprinted in Quine's collection The Ways of Paradox and Other Essays.*

#### **Lecture IV. Quine's Two Dogmas of Empiricism, 24th November.**

Quine, W. V. O. (1951). Two Dogmas of Empiricism. *Philosophical Review* 60, 20–43.

Russell, G. (2014), Quine on the Analytic/Synthetic Distinction, in *A Companion to Quine*, (eds.) Harman & Lepore

*Both available online. For Russell, see Part IA Paper 3: Meaning Reading List. For Quine: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2181906>.*