

Philosophy 50110: Meaning

Fall 2010

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Off: Stuart 214; Hours: Monday 3-4 and by appointment

This seminar will be an intensive introduction for graduate students in Philosophy, Linguistics, and related disciplines to the truth-conditional tradition of linguistic meaning. The course will not presume any prior familiarity with the subject matter but it will be geared toward the level of sophistication of graduate students and proceed at their pace. Readings will include, among others, Frege, Carnap, Quine, Davidson, Chomsky, D. Lewis, Burge, Lepore and Ludwig, and Higginbotham.

Note: The first meeting of the seminar will be on Monday October 4 (Monday of the second week of the quarter) and the last meeting will be on Monday December 6 (Monday of the eleventh week).

The following books have been ordered at the Seminary Coop Bookstore:

Required:

Rudolph Carnap, Meaning and Necessity

Noam Chomsky, Knowledge of Language

Donald Davidson, Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation

_____, Truth and Predication

W.V.O. Quine, From a Logical Point of View (FLPV) (BC57.Q7/Q701)

_____, Word and Object (WO) (BC57.Q703)

Recommended:

Noam Chomsky, New Horizons in the Study of Language and Mind

W.V.O. Quine, Philosophy of Logic

_____, Ways of Paradox (WP)

_____, Ontological Relativity and Other Essays

Not Ordered but Recommended:

E. Lepore and B. Smith, Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Language (OHPL)

Peter Hylton, Quine (Routledge)

Ernest Lepore and Kirk Ludwig, Donald Davidson: Meaning, Truth, Language, and Reality (Oxford)

All of the above books as well as the following are on reserve at Regenstein:

W.P. Alston and G. Nakhnikian, Eds., Readings in Twentieth-Century Philosophy (B804.A1A4)

Rudolph Carnap, Meaning and Necessity (M&N) (BC 57.C284)

Noam Chomsky, Language and Mind (P106.C55)

_____, Semantics of Natural Language (D&H2) (P106.S46)

D. Davidson and J. Hintikka, Eds., Words and Objections (B945.Q7Z702)

M. Dummett, Frege: Philosophy of Language (P106.D9)

M. Dummett, Truth and Other Enigmas

- G. Frege, Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege (BC135.F801)
 Samuel Guttenplan, ed., Mind and Language (P106.G95)
 Bob Hale and Crispin Wright, ed. A Companion to the Philosophy of Language
 Leonard Linsky, Semantics and the Philosophy of Language (BC57.L75)
 Hilary Putnam, Mind, Language, and Reality (MLR) (BC57.P95)
 W.V.O., Quine, Philosophy of Logic (PL) (BC51.Q7)
 _____, Ontological Relativity (OR) (BC57.Q702)
 _____, Ways of Paradox (WP) (B945.Q7W36)
 J. Rosenberg and C. Travis, Eds., Readings in the Philosophy of Language (R&T)
 (BC57.R68)
 P.A. Schilpp, Ed., The Philosophy of Rudolph Carnap (B945.C26Z7S34)
 P.A. Schilpp, Ed., The Philosophy of W.V.O. Quine
 Alfred Tarski, Logic, Semantics, Metamathematics (BC135.T225 1983)

Requirements: Participation in class, two short in-class papers, and a term paper (10-15 pp. doublespaced). Topics for the final paper should be discussed with the instructor. The short papers will be explained at the first meeting.

All single papers are on the Chalk site for the course except for those marked JSTOR. Papers marked with star are in Course Documents. Papers marked with two stars are on Library ereserve, also accessible through Chalk.

Tentative Syllabus:

I. Meaning and Sense

Primary

*Frege, "On Sense and Meaning" (first 22 paragraphs only)

*_____, "The Thought"

Secondary

*Burge, T. "Sinning Against Frege" and Postscript, in Truth, Thought, Reason: Essays on Frege

*_____, "Frege on Sense and Linguistic Meaning", *ibid.*

Background

*Segal, "Truth and Meaning," in OHPL, §9.1

*Wiggins, "Meaning and Truth-conditions: From Frege's Grand Design to Davidson's," in Hale and Wright

*Heck and May, "Frege's Contribution to Philosophy of Language," in OHPL

II. Semantics and Meaning

Primary

**Tarski, "Semantic Conception of Truth and the Foundations of Semantics"

*Quine, "Truth," PL, Ch. 3, pp. 35-46

Carnap, Meaning and Necessity (MN), ch. I

Secondary

*Segal, "Truth and Meaning," in OHPL, §9.2

*King, "Formal Semantics," in OHPL

Hylton, Quine, ch. 2 32-50

III. Meaning Skepticism: Quine's Thesis of the Indeterminacy of Translation

Primary

Quine, WO, chs. 1-2; ch. 3, §§17-21 (pp. 80-105)

_____, "On the Reasons for Indeterminacy of Translation," J. Philosophy 67 (1970): 178-183 (JSTOR)

* _____, "Facts of the Matter," in Robert Shahan and Kenneth Merrill, Eds., American Philosophy from Edwards to Quine

_____, "Indeterminacy of Translation Again," J. Philosophy 84 (1987):5-11 (JSTOR)

* _____, "Ontological Relativity," in Quine, Ontological Relativity

Secondary:

Hylton, Quine, Selections from ch. 5, 6, 7, and 8

Evans, Gareth (1975). "Identity and Predication," Journal of Philosophy (72,13): 343-363 (JSTOR)

*Weir, "Indeterminacy of Translation," in OHPL

*Kirk, "Indeterminacy of Translation," in Cambridge Companion to Quine

*De Rosa and Lepore, "Quine's Meaning Holism," *ibid.*

Background Reading:

Carnap, "Empiricism, Semantics, and Ontology," appendix to MN

Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism," in FLPV

_____, "The Problem of Meaning in Linguistics," in FLPV

IV. Davidsonian Semantics: Truth-Theoretic Semantics

Primary:

Davidson, "Truth and Meaning"

_____, "Semantics for Natural Languages"

_____, "Reply to Foster"

Secondary:

Lepore and Ludwig, Davidson, Selections from chs. 3-4, 6-7-8-9

Soames, Scott, Selection to be announced

*Larson and Segal, "Theories of Meaning and Knowledge of Truth."

V. Davidson: Theory of Radical Interpretation

Primary:

"Radical Interpretation"

Truth and Predication

Secondary:

Lepore and Ludwig, Davidson, Selections from chs.11-12-13

*Lewis, "Radical Interpretation"

VI. Propositional Attitudes: Comparative Truth-Conditional Approaches

Primary:

Frege, "Sense and Reference"

Carnap, MN, ch. 1

Scheffler, Israel (1954). "An Inscrptional Approach to Indirect Quotation," Analysis 14: 83-90. JSTOR

Quine, WO, Ch. 4, §§30-32 (pp. 141-156); ch. 5, §§33-35 (pp. 157-169); ch. 6, §§ 40-45 (pp. 191-221); ch. 7, §50 (pp. 243-80)

Quine, PL, Ch. 2

Davidson, "On Saying That"

Davidson, "Quotation"

Secondary:

Lepore and Ludwig, Selection to be announced

VII. Logical Form:

*Davidson, "Logical Form of Action Sentences"

*Evans, "Semantic Structure and Logical Form"

Higginbotham, Linguistic Theory and Davidson's Program in Semantics." Ernest Lepore (ed.), Truth and Interpretation: Perspectives on the Philosophy of Donald Davidson. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986. pp. 29-48

*Pietrowski, "Logical Form and LF, in OHPL

VIII. The Idea of a Language

Chomsky, Knowledge of Language, 1-50

Davidson, "Nice Derangement of Epitaphs"

Wiggins, "Languages as Social Objects," Philosophy (1997) 72: 499-524. JSOR

Lepore and Ludwig, Davidson, Selections from chs.15, 20, 21

*Higginbotham, "Languages and Idiolects: Their Language and Ours," in OHPL

**Putnam, "Meaning of 'Meaning'"

IX. Chomskian Critiques of and Approaches to Semantics

Chomsky, New Horizons in the Study of Language, Selections to be announced

Higginbotham, "Knowledge of Reference." Alexander George (ed.), Reflections on Chomsky. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988. pp. 153-174.

_____, "Truth and Understanding." Iyyun 40 (1991). pp. 271-288. Abridged version in Philosophical Studies 65 (1992), pp. 3-16.

Pietrowski, "Meaning before Truth," in Contextualism in Philosophy, ed. G. Preyer and G. Peters, OUP 2005).

*Pietrowski, "Character of Natural Language Semantics," in OHPL

*Bezuidenhout, "Languages as Internal," in OHPL

*Stainton, "Meaning and Reference: Some Chomskian Themes," in OHPL

Chris Kennedy and Jason Stanley (2009). "On Average," Mind 118, 471: 583-646. JSOR

X. Lewis, Intensional Semantics, and the Semantics-Pragmatics Interface

Lewis, "General Semantics"

Stalnaker, "Pragmatics"

_____, "Assertion"

*Szabo, "The Distinction between Semantics and Pragmatics"

Further Reading:

On Quine's Indeterminacy thesis:

Miriam Solomon, "Quine's Point of View," J. Philosophy 86 (1989):113-136

- Peter Hylton, "Translation, Meaning, and Self-Knowledge," Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society 1990/1: 269-290 (X)
- Michael Friedman, "Physicalism and the Indeterminacy of Translation," Nous 9 (Nov. 1975): 353-74
- Gilbert Harman, "An Introduction to 'Translation and Meaning,' Chapter Two of Word and Object," in Davidson and Hintikka (pp. 14-26)
- Richard Rorty, "Indeterminacy of Translation and of Truth," Synthese 23 (March 1972): 443-62.
- Thomas Ricketts, "Rationality, Translation, and Epistemology Naturalized," J. Philosophy 79 (1982): 117-136.
- Roger Gibson, "Translation, Physics, and Facts of the Matter," with Reply by Quine," in P. A. Schilpp, ed., The Philosophy of W.V. Quine, 139-158

On Semantics and Theories of Meaning after Quine:

- Quine, "The Nature of Natural Knowledge," in Guttenplan
 _____, "Mind and Verbal Dispositions," in Guttenplan