

PHILOSOPHY 34

Philosophy of Language

FALL 2005

Class Period 12

(MWF 12:30-1:35PM, X-hour Tues. 1PM)

104 Thornton Hall

Samuel Levey

309 Thornton Hall, 646-2543

Office hours: M 8:30-9:30AM, and by appointment

Course description: This class is a study of some issues in the philosophy of language that are foundational to much of contemporary philosophy. The focus will be on theories of reference and meaning as they were developed in the twentieth century. We shall also consider some special topics such as semantics for conditionals, modality, past-tense statements, fiction, indexicals and vagueness.

Texts:

W.V.O. Quine, *From A Logical Point Of View*, 2nd Ed., rev. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981). [Q]

Saul Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980).

Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 3rd Ed., (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1958)

Philosophy 34 Course Reader

All texts and the course reader are available at Wheelock Books.

Course Format & Requirements. The course format is lecture-discussion. Please arrive well-prepared to discuss the current material. There will be two course papers and a number of worksheets and announced quizzes. No late papers will be accepted. Grades for the course are based on quality of the papers (80%) and scores on the worksheets and quizzes (20%).

If anyone in this class has need for note-taking or quiz-taking accommodation, please see me before the end of the second week of classes.

Tentative Course Calendar. All of what follows is subject to change based on the progress of the course; almost certainly some readings will be deleted, others added. Daily reading assignments, exercises and quizzes will be announced in class.

Week 1 (9/21-23): Introduction, logic, names, Frege's puzzle

Quine, "Quantification"

Frege, "On Sense and Reference"

Week 2 (9/26-30): Frege continued, Russell on descriptions

Frege, "Letter to Jourdain," "Thought"

Russell, "On Denoting,"

Week 3 (10/3-7): Russell continued, ontological commitments, fiction

Russell, "Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description," "Descriptions"

Quine, "On What There Is" [Q]

Lewis, "Truth in Fiction"

Week 4 (10/10-14): Modal contexts, opacity, substitutivity

Quine, "Reference and Modality" [Q]

Kripke, "Identity and Necessity"

X-hour meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 11.

No Class on Friday, Oct. 14.

Weeks 5-6 (10/17-28): Names, descriptions and the "new theory of reference"

Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*

Dummett, "A Note on an Attempted Refutation of Frege," "Kripke on Proper Names as Rigid Designators"

Putnam, "Meaning and Reference"

X-hour meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 18.

No Class on Monday, Oct. 17.

Week 7 (10/31-11/4): Vagueness

Mehlberg, "Truth and Vagueness"

Cargile, "The Sorites Paradox"

Evans, "Can There Be Vague Objects?"

Lewis, "Vague Identity: Evans Misunderstood"

Week 8 (11/7-11): Conditionals, demonstratives

Goodman, "The Problem of Counterfactual Conditionals"

Lewis, selections from *Counterfactuals*

Loux, selection from "Introduction" in *The Actual and the Possible*

Perry, "The Problem of the Essential Indexical," "Frege on Demonstratives"

Weeks 9-10 (11/14-25): Wittgenstein

Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*

No class Wednesday 11/23 or Friday 11/25: Thanksgiving Break.

Week 11 (11/28-30). Verificationism
Dummett, "The Reality of the Past"

Paper due dates. Monday, October 10. Monday, November 7. Tuesday, December 6.

In each case, papers are due no later than 4PM at my mailbox in 202 Thornton.