

PHILOSOPHY PROSEMINAR

Philosophy 710
Fall 2008
M 7:00pm – 8:50pm
Room: C 104

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Description

The seminar is usually restricted to first-year graduate student at Yale. (Since we are just starting this, in 2008 the seminar will be open to second-year students as well.) The topic this year is “special” truth: analyticity, necessity, and apriority.

Required texts

Weekly reading assignments will be posted on the course web-site. You also need the following volumes.

Frege, *Foundations of Arithmetic* (tr. J. L. Austin)
Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*
Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*

Since many of you probably own some of these, we did not order them; you can get them very cheap on Amazon. None of the books will not be needed until the fourth class.

Course requirements

10% of your grade will be based on class participation. The remaining 90% will be based on the following:

Short assignments: There will be six short (about 3 pages) written assignments to be done in conjunction with the readings.

Presentation: Two short (10 – 15 minutes) presentations are required. The presenters will prepare handouts and discuss the material before the presentations with one of the instructors.

Short term paper: There will be no more short assignments after the first week of November. At the November 10 class we will distribute suggested paper topics. During the week that follows you will be expected to meet with one of the instructors and propose a paper topic. The paper should be short (10 – 12 pages) and it is due before December 5.

Provisional course calendar

This is subject to further adjustments, especially regarding the readings.

Part I: Three views on meaning: Frege, Grice, Davidson

Readings

- Week 1: 09/08 Frege, 'On sense and meaning', 'Thoughts', 'Concept and object'
Week 2: 09/15 Grice, 'Logic and conversation', 'Meaning'
Week 3: 09/22 Davidson, 'Truth and meaning', 'Theories of truth and learnable languages'

Part II: Analyticity

- Week 4: 09/29 Frege, *Foundations of Arithmetic*
Week 5: 10/06 Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*
Week 6: 10/13 Quine, 'Truth by convention', Quine, 'Two dogmas of empiricism', Grice and Strawson, 'In defense of a dogma'

Part III: Necessity and apriority

- Week 7: 10/20 Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* Lectures 1&2
Week 8: 10/27 Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* Lectures 2&3
Week 9: 11/03 Putnam, 'The meaning of meaning'; Burge, 'Individualism and the mental'

Part IV: Contemporary views

- Week 10: 11/10 Boghossian, 'Analyticity'; Williamson, 'Conceptual truth'
Week 11: 11/17 Fine, 'Essence and modality'; Shoemaker, 'Causal and metaphysical necessity'

Thanksgiving Break

- Week 12: 12/01 Hawthorne, 'Deeply contingent *apriori* knowledge'; Bealer, 'The incoherence of empiricism'