

Philosophy of Language and Logic

Syllabus – Academic year 2012/13

Basic information

Credits: 15

Module Tutor: Mark Textor

Office: Chesham 3c

Consultation time: TBA

Semester: 2

Lecture time and venue:

Module description (plus aims and objectives)

This course will introduce fundamental concepts involved in all conceptual thought such truth, identity, sense, reference and necessity.

Assessment methods and deadlines

- *Formative assessment:* two 1500 word essays.
- *Summative assessment:* one two hour exam.

Outline of lecture topics (plus suggested readings)

Miniterm 1: From Truth to Meaning

1: Aristotle and the Roots of the Semantic Conception of Truth

2: From Aristotle to Tarski

3: From Tarski to Davidson

4: Problems for Davidson

5: Roundup: Theories of Meaning and their Scope

Readings Week 1-5:

Davidson, D.:

1967: Truth and Meaning. *Synthese*, 17. Reprinted in his 2001.

1973: Radical Interpretation. *Dialectica*, 27. Reprinted in his 2001.

1976: Reply to Foster. In Evans/McDowell (eds). Reprinted in his 2001.

2001. *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*, 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Foster, J.A. 1976: Meaning and Truth-Theory. In G. Evans and J. McDowell (eds) *Truth and Meaning. Essays in Semantics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Künne, W. 2003: *Conceptions of Truth*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter 3.2 and 4.1.

McGinn, C. 2003. *Logical Properties*. Oxford, Clarendon. Chapter 5.

Sainsbury, M. Understanding and theories of meaning. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 80, 1979, 127–44. Reprinted in his *Departing from Frege*, London: Routledge 2002.

Segal G. 1999. How a Theory of Truth can do Duty as a Theory of Meaning. In U. Zeglen (ed) *Donald Davidson: Truth Meaning and Knowledge*, 1999.

Strawson, P.F. Meaning and Truth. In his *Logico-Linguistic Papers*.

Tarski, A.

1944: The Semantic Conception of Truth and the Foundations of Semantics. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 4, 341–376.

1969: Truth and Proof. *Scientific American* 220, 63-77.

1983: The Concept of Truth in Formalized Languages. Translation of Tarski 1935 by J.H. Woodger in *Logic, Semantics, Metamathematics*, second edition, ed. by J. Corcoran. Indianapolis: Hackett, 152–278.

Wiggins, David. 1997. Meaning and truth conditions: from Frege's grand design to Davidson's. In: Hale, Bob, Wright, Crispin (eds.), *A Companion to the Philosophy of Language*, Blackwell, Oxford, 3-29.

Outline of lecture topics (plus suggested readings) – continued if necessary

Miniterm 2: 'Equality gives rise to challenging questions'

6: Frege on Identity, Sense and Reference.

7: Identity and Necessity

8: The Modal Argument

9: Response to the Modal Argument

10: Roundup

Week 6-10

Frege, G, 1892. On Sense and Reference. In Frege, G. *Collected Papers*, Oxford 1984 or M. Beaney (ed) *The Frege Reader*, Oxford. 1997.

Kripke, S. Identity and Necessity. Reprinted in his *Philosophical Troubles*, Oxford 2011

Kripke, S. *Naming and Necessity*. Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press 1980.

McGinn, C. 2003. *Logical Properties*. Oxford, Clarendon. Chapter 1.

Suggested essay questions

1. Does Tarski define the concept of truth? If not, what does he achieve in his 'definitions'?
2. Which notion is conceptually prior, truth or meaning? (Read: Strawson 's 'Meaning & Truth', and compare to Davidson 'Truth & Meaning'.)
3. Can a theory of truth serve as a theory of meaning? If not, why not?
4. How should a theory of meaning treat context-dependent expressions such as indexicals?
5. Is identity a relation?
6. What is Frege's argument for the sense/reference distinction?
8. What are Kripke's arguments against the Frege/Russell picture of reference? Are they successful?

Suggested additional readings