

Philosophy 246
Topics in the Philosophy of Language
Fall 1997

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Course Requirements

The sole formal requirement for the course is a term paper. However, grades for the course will also be based on participation in discussions in class. The due date for the paper is the last day of reading period, which is 13 January 1998. I shall try to grade papers submitted after that date in time for a grade to be submitted, but be warned that the result may well be an incomplete. (For undergraduates, should any enroll, 13 January is an *absolute* deadline, as incomplete grades are not permitted.)

Texts and Other Reading

At the moment, the only textbook I have ordered for the course is Saul Kripke's *Naming and Necessity*, which is available at the Harvard University Press Display Room, in Holyoke Arcade. Most of the other reading will consist of articles and the occasional chapter of a book: xeroxed copies of these will be put on reserve in Robbins Library; you should make your own copies *from the xeroxed copies*, not from journals or books, so as not to subject their spines to needless abuse. Depending on how the course develops, we may also be reading substantial portions of Gareth Evans's *Varieties of Reference* and, in any event, this is a book which I would heartily recommend that everyone have. I have not ordered copies, however, as I should be able to obtain copies, at a reduced rate, through Oxford University Press. Everyone should consider whether they would like to order a copy, and I will take names, and collect payment, in a couple weeks.

General Outline of the Course

The purpose of this course is to consider issues related to Frege's notion of sense, in particular as it applies to proper names. The notion, as Frege employs it, has a number of distinct, but related, facets. The sense of a name is, first and foremost, part of the sense of any complete sentence in which that name occurs, which Frege calls the *thought* expressed by that sentence. In effect, thoughts are so-called because they are, says Frege, the objective contents of acts of thinking: or again, as people would put it nowadays, thoughts are the contents of propositional attitudes, such as belief and desire. Since the sense of a name is part of the thought expressed by a sentence containing it, then, the sense of a name, or the sense a given speaker attaches to a given name, will partially determine the contents of propositional attitudes the speaker might express by using that name.

The notion of sense thus is partly psychological (though not in the sense of that term, as Frege used it). It is, however, as my language above will have indicated, also supposed to be a partly *linguistic* notion, for

we are supposed to be licensed to speak of the sense *of the name*, that is, of the sense it bears in the language spoken by a given person. It is thus implicit in the way Frege uses the notion of sense that there is a significant, and important, connection between what beliefs and other attitudes a speaker might express by means of a given sentence and what that sentence means. The nature of this connection will be one of the topics we discuss in this course.

That, however, does not exhaust the role of the notion of sense in Frege's philosophy, for it also has what we might call a *meta-semantic* aspect: the sense of a name, according to Frege, is what determines to what object (if any) it refers. Thus, it is supposed to be in virtue of the fact that the name 'Richard Heck' has the sense that it does that it refers to me. It is this aspect of the notion of sense which has, in the last thirty years or so, been subjected to intense scrutiny, and it is safe to say, I think, that few philosophers now think that this aspect of the notion of sense can be salvaged. The second, large question we shall take up is whether there might be some way to rejuvenate the meta-semantic claim.

In effect, this part of the course will amount to a detailed examination of the 'non-modal' arguments in Saul Kripke's seminal book *Naming and Necessity*. Unfortunately, there is not a great deal of literature on this topic, as most discussion of Kripke's book has focused upon the 'modal' arguments presented earlier in the book, which have themselves been thought to undermine Frege's claim that proper names so much as *have* sense. We shall, therefore, spend some time discussing these arguments, too.

Preliminary Syllabus

What follows is, indeed, very preliminary. We shall begin by reading some classic papers, setting up the necessary background for what is to follow. As time goes on, I hope and expect to get a better idea for what course we might then pursue, so the syllabus may change in various respects: thus, the main purpose of this syllabus is to let you know what we will be doing over the next few weeks, and to give you *some* idea what we will be doing over the course of the semester.

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| 18 September | Introductory Meeting: General Outline of Course |
| 25 September | Gottlob Frege, "On Sense and Meaning", in his <i>Collected Papers</i> ; "Comments on Sense and Meaning", in <i>Posthumous Writings</i> ; Bertrand Russell, "On Denoting", in his <i>Essays on Analysis</i> (and elsewhere)
Optional Reading: Michael Dummett, <i>Frege: Philosophy of Language</i> , Chs. 5-6 |
| 2 October | Stephen Neale, <i>Descriptions</i> , Chs. 1-2; Bertrand Russell, "Knowledge By Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description", in his <i>Mysticism and Logic</i> (and elsewhere)
Optional Reading: The rest of <i>Descriptions</i> ; Gareth Evans, <i>Varieties of Reference</i> , Ch. 2; P.F. Strawson, "On Referring", in his <i>Logico-Linguistic Papers</i> ; Keith Donnellan, "Reference and Definite Descriptions", <i>Philosophical Review</i> 75 (1966), pp. 281-304; Saul Kripke, "Speaker's Reference and Semantic Reference", in <i>Midwest Studies in Philosophy</i> 2 (1977) |
| 9 October | Saul Kripke, <i>Naming and Necessity</i> , pp. 22-78 (this is all of Lecture 1 and part of Lecture 2); Jason Stanley, "Names and Rigid Designation", in B. Hale and C. Wright, eds., <i>Blackwells Companion to the Philosophy of</i> |

Language

Optional Reading: Ruth Barcan Marcus, “Modalities and Intensional Languages”, in her *Modalities*; W.V.O. Quine, “Three Grades of Modal Involvement”, “Reply to Prof. Marcus”, and “Quantifiers and Propositional Attitudes”, in his *The Ways of Paradox*; David Kaplan, “Quantifying In”, in D. Davidson and J. Hintikka, eds., *Words and Objections*; “Opacity”, in E. Hahn and P. Schilpp, eds., *The Philosophy of W.V. Quine*, and “Dthat”, in P. Cole, ed., *Pragmatics*

16 October

Gareth Evans, “Reference and Contingency”, in his *Collected Papers*; Jason Stanley, “Rigidity and Content”, in R. Heck, ed., *Logic, Language, and Thought: Essays in Honour of Michael Dummett*; Saul Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, preface; Robert Stalnaker, “Reference and Necessity”, in the *Blackwells Companion to the Philosophy of Language*

Optional reading: Keith Donnellan, “The Contingent *A Priori* and Rigid Designators”, *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 2 (1977); Michael Dummett, *Frege: Philosophy of Language*, Appendix to Ch. 5; *The Interpretation of Frege’s Philosophy*, Appendix 3; Martin Davies and Lloyd Humberstone, “Two Concepts of Necessity”, *Philosophical Studies* 38 (1980), pp. 1-30; Scott Soames, “The Modal Argument: Wide Scope and Rigidified Descriptions” (draft); Christopher Peacocke, “Proper Names, Reference, and Rigid Designation”, in S. Blackburn, ed., *Meaning, Reference, and Designation*

23 October

Saul Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, pp. 78-155 (we will only really be discussing pp. 78-97, but you should read the rest of the book, if you have not done so before); Keith Donnellan, “Proper Names and Identifying Descriptions”, in D. Davidson and G. Harman, eds., *Semantics of Natural Language*

Optional Reading: Saul Kripke, “A Puzzle about Belief”, in A. Margalit, ed., *Meaning and Use*

30 October

Hilary Putnam, “The Meaning of ‘Meaning’”, in *Mind, Language, and Reality*, *Philosophical Papers*, vol. 2, pp. 215-71, esp. pp. 215-45; Tyler Burge, “Individualism and the Mental”, in *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 4 (1979), pp. 73-121; Robert Stalnaker, “On What’s In the Head”, in...

Optional Reading: P.F. Strawson, *Individuals*, Ch. 1; Jerry Fodor, “Methodological Solipsism Considered as a Research Strategy in Cognitive Psychology”, in *Representations*, pp. 225-53 and *The Elm and the Expert*; Gabriel Segal, “The Return of the Individual”, *Mind* 98 (1989), pp. 40-57; Tyler Burge, “Individualism and Psychology”, *Philosophical Review* 95 (1986), pp. 3-45 (many of Burge’s other papers contain relevant material, too)

6 November

Gottlob Frege, “Thoughts”, in his *Collected Papers*; David Kaplan, “Demonstratives”, in J. Almog, et al., eds., *Themes From Kaplan*, pp. 481-563 (we will mostly be discussing pp. 489-540); John Perry, “Frege on Demonstratives”, in *The Problem of the Essential Indexical*; Gareth Evans, “Understanding Demonstratives”, in *Collected Papers*

	Optional Reading: Gareth Evans, <i>Varieties of Reference</i> , Chs. 3-6; Christopher Peacocke, <i>Sense and Content</i> , Chs. 5-6; Michael Dummett, "The Relative Priority of Thought and Language", in his <i>Frege and Other Philosophers</i> ; Graeme Forbes, article on indexicals in the <i>Handbook of Philosophical Logic</i> , v. 4; John Perry, paper in the <i>Blackwells Companion</i>
13 November	David Wiggins, "Frege's Problem of the Morning Star and the Evening Star", in M. Schirn, ed., <i>Studien zu Frege/Studies on Frege</i> v. 2; Nathan Salmon, <i>Frege's Puzzle</i> , Chs. 4-6 Optional Reading: Brian Loar, "Social Content and Psychological Content", in R. Grimm and D. Merrill, eds., <i>Contents of Thought</i> ; Graeme Forbes, "The Indispensibility of Sinn", <i>Philosophical Review</i> 89 (1990), pp. 535-63
20 November	John McDowell, "On the Sense and Reference of a Proper Name", <i>Mind</i> 76 (1977), pp. 159-85; Michael Dummett, "Frege's Distinction Between Sense and Reference", in his <i>Truth and Other Enigmas</i> Optional Reading: John McDowell, "De Re Senses", <i>Philosophical Quarterly</i> 34 (1984), pp. 283-94; Michael Dummett, "Frege's Myth of the Third Realm", in his <i>Frege and Other Philosophers</i> , pp. 249-62, and <i>Frege: Philosophy of Language</i> , Ch. 5
27 November	<i>Thanksgiving Holiday</i>
4 December	Richard G. Heck, Jr., "The Sense of Communication", <i>Mind</i> 104 (1995), pp. 79-106; Alex Byrne and Michael Thau, "In Defense of the Hybrid View", and Richard G. Heck, Jr., "Communication and Knowledge: Rejoinder to Byrne and Thau", <i>Mind</i> 107 (1996), pp. 139-50 and 151-6; Timothy Williamson, "Knowing and Asserting", <i>Philosophical Quarterly</i> (1997), pp.
11 December	TBA
16 December	<i>Last Day of Classes</i>
13 January	<i>Paper Due</i>