TOPICS LIST FOR FINAL EXAM REVIEW

Performatives and Speech Acts

Locutionary Act, Illocutionary Act, Perlocutionary Act

Illocutionary Force vs. propositional content

Grice on non-natural meaning and intentions

Speaker-meaning vs. conventional meaning

Semantic-value (what it is generally and what different kinds of semantic-values are had by different kinds of linguistic expressions, and what semantic-value is important for)

Compositionality—both of semantic-value and of meaning more broadly

Ideational Theory of meaning (e.g., Locke’s view) and worries about it

Referentialism

Frege’s distinction between sense and reference—what they are in general, how they are related, and what the sense and reference are for different kinds of linguistic expressions, including whole sentences.

The linguistic puzzles that motivate Frege to posit sense as a dimension of meaning in addition to reference

Compositionality of sense

Customary sense becoming the (indirect) reference in contexts like “believes that…”

Semantic innocence

Worries about Fregean sense (both metaphysical/epistemological and from giving up semantic innocence)

Definite descriptions—Russell’s analysis

Meinong’s “semantically simple but metaphysically complex” referentialism
Problems for Meinong’s view

Russell’s 3-claim “underlying logical form” analysis of sentences employing definite descriptions

How Russell’s analysis address the linguistic puzzles he considers (Note: these overlap with Frege’s puzzles)

Russell as a referentialist, but of a complicated sort

How Russell’s analysis eliminates nominal expressions (nouns) in favor of combinations of predicates and quantifiers (and variables)

Russell on “common” names

First-level functions as the semantic values of predicates

Second-level functions as the semantic-values of quantifiers

Challenges to Russell’s view from the identity of functions with the same input-output mappings

Descriptivism vs. direct reference theory

How Frege and Russell are Descriptivists

Searle’s Cluster Theory version of Descriptivism

Kripke’s modal and epistemological objections to Descriptivism

Rigid designators vs. non-rigid designators

Kripke’s explanations of necessity/contingency and a priori/a posteriori, and how they can be combined in unexpected ways (such as a posteriori necessities)

Kripke’s causal-historical account of the way that names get their referents

Internalism vs. Externalism in semantics

How Kripke’s account of name reference is a direct reference, externalist account

Putnam on how natural kind terms get their reference—how meaning “ain’t in the head”

Why XYZ is not water, even if people on Twin Earth call it “water”.

Division of linguistic labor—deference to experts within one’s linguistic community
Verificationism about meaningfulness and meaning vs. truth-conditional account (Frege’s version)

Verificationist criterion for a sentence being literally meaningful (VCM)

Verifiability as weak and in principle vs. conclusive and in practice

Consequences of VCM for philosophy (especially metaphysics)

VCM and philosophy as linguistic analysis

Verificationist understandings of various fragments of discourse (e.g., math and logic, ordinary object talk, truth-talk, ethical discourse)

Why Verificationism wants to let more than just observation statements be factually meaningful, and how it attempts to extend the notion of verifiability

Problems for VCM—self-application problem and over-liberality problem

Quine’s argument against the analytic/synthetic distinction (First Dogma of Empiricism)

Quine’s rejection of Reductionism (Second Dogma)--including its connection to the a/s distinction

Quinean holism about meaning—especially the pragmatism it involves

Davidson’s notion of a Theory of Meaning for a language and the 3 conditions such a theory must meet.

Getting from an intensional account of meaning (including one appealing to meaning entities) to an extensional account (using the extensional connective “iff”, i.e., “if, and only if”).

How using a Tarski truth-definition for a language performs a kind of “filtering” among true biconditionals, ruling out “‘Snow is white’ is true-in-English iff grass is green” as a meaning specification while allowing “‘Snow is white’ is true-in-English iff snow is white”, even though they are both true biconditionals. How this involves holism.

Problem presented by the “‘Snow is white’ is true-in-English iff snow is white and 2+2=4” case and Davidson’s appeal to interpretation and its constraints to resolve it.

Kripkenstein’s skeptical paradox, puzzles about following a rule, and the normative aspect of meaning

Constitutive Skepticism (“there is no fact of the matter”) vs. Epistemological Skepticism (“we can’t ever know”)