PHILOSOPHY PROSEMINAR

Philosophy 710    Keith DeRose    Zoltán Gendler Szabó
Fall 2008        410 Connecticut Hall  302 Connecticut Hall
M 7:00pm – 8:50pm 203.432.1674  203.432.1669
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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 forth 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

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 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’