

Final Exam Review

The final exam will consist of three parts. Answer five questions from each of the first two parts, for a total of ten responses. You may substitute up to three questions from part three for questions in parts one and two. Your responses should be organized, approximately one-to-three paragraphs long. Each response will be worth ten points.

The exam will consist of at least eight of the following questions in Parts I and II and four of the following questions in Part III.

Part I

1. How does Locke argue that words stand for ideas in our minds?
2. Provide an example of a non-linguistic reply to the ontological argument. Why is it not a linguistic solution? Provide an example of a linguistic reply to the ontological argument. Why is it linguistic?
3. What is the problem of empty reference? How does Meinong solve it?
4. For Frege, what is a thought/proposition? How do thoughts/propositions exist in a third realm? That is, how are they distinct from both psychological objects (ideas) and physical objects?
5. What is intensionalism? Why do we call Frege an intensionalist?
6. Describe Frege's three motivations for the sense/reference distinction. How does the distinction between sense and reference solve these three problems?
7. How does Russell solve Frege's puzzle without positing senses?
8. How do Frege and Russell differ in their analysis of 'the king of France is wise'? How do their analyses differ on their attributions of a truth value to that sentence?
9. What is the difference between referring and asserting or ascribing? According to Strawson, how does this difference indicate a problem with Russell's theory of definite descriptions?
10. How does 'the purple platypus on my left has no teeth' suffer from a failure of presupposition? How would Strawson's analysis of this sentence differ from that of Russell? From that of Frege?
11. Consider, "The Dean of Faculty is well-educated." Provide an attributive interpretation and a referential interpretation of that sentence.
12. Show that whether a speaker believes that a description of a person actually holds of the person is independent of whether a speaker uses that description referentially or attributively.
13. What's wrong with the simple descriptivism of Frege and Russell? Explain the Aristotle objection.
14. How are the Gödel/Schmidt and Jonah cases counter-examples to cluster descriptivism?
15. What is a rigid designator? Distinguish rigid from non-rigid designators. What does Kripke's claim that names are rigid designators mean?
16. What is externalism about meaning? How does Putnam's Twin Earth example support externalism?

Part II

1. What is the verifiability criterion of meaning? How might the verifiability criterion of meaning be circular?
2. What are the two dogmas of empiricism? How are they related?
3. What is the connection between the analytic/synthetic distinction and the problem of radical translation?
4. Distinguish underdetermination, indeterminacy of translation, and inscrutability of reference. Is reference inscrutable? Explain.
5. How do the terms 'five' 'red' and 'apples' differ in their meaning? How does Wittgenstein use these terms to oppose the Augustine/Locke theory of meaning?
6. According to Wittgenstein, what is a private language? Why can't we have one?
7. Describe Kripke's quus/plus problem. Why does the problem arise?
8. Distinguish skeptical solutions from straight solutions. How does Kripke depict Wittgenstein as providing a skeptical solution to the rule-following paradox?
9. How is IBS a reductionist program? How is IBS a two-step reductionist program?
10. Describe at least one counter-example to Grice's analysis of speaker meaning based on deception.
11. What is Schiffer's account of mutual knowledge*? How does it help avoid the counter-examples to a Gricean account of meaning?
12. What is the liar sentence? What problem does the liar present for a theory of truth? How does Tarski avoid the problem of the liar?
13. How does Davidson propose to use Tarski's work to explain meaning? Is Davidson's proposal successful? Explain.
14. How does Katz's new intensionalism differ from Fregean intensionalism? Describe the autonomous theory of sense, and its related version of analyticity.

Part III

1. What is Chomsky's poverty of the stimulus argument? How does it support both nativism and the existence of a universal grammar?
2. Distinguish E-language from I-language. How does Chomsky argue that we should understand language as I-language?
3. Characterize and distinguish linguistic nominalism, linguistic conceptualism, and linguistic platonism.
4. Why is infinity in linguistics incompatible with concretism in the foundations of linguistics?
5. How does Devitt attempt to make linguistic reality, with its use of linguistic types, compatible with nominalism?