Scott Soames PHIL 565: Spring 2019  
Toward a Realistic Theory of Meaning, Language Use, and Representational Cognition

Books on Reserve  
Kit Fine, *Semantic Relationism*  
Geach and Black, *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege*  
King, Soames, and Speaks, *New Thinking About Propositions (NTAB)*  
Saul Kripke, *Philosophical Troubles (PT)*  
John Perry, *Knowledge, Possibility, and Consciousness*  
Bertrand Russell, *Principles of Mathematics*  
____, *Problems of Philosophy*  
Scott Soames, *The Analytic Tradition in Philosophy, Volumes 1 and 2 (ATP 1 and 2)*  
____, *Philosophical Essays, Volumes 1 and 2 (PE 1 and 2)*  
____, *What is Meaning?*  
____, *Rethinking Language, Mind, and Meaning (RLMM)*

Week 1: The Critical Nexus: Truth, Meaning, Assertion, Belief, and Propositions  
1. Overview  
2. Frege, Russell, and the Prehistory of Propositions  

Reading  
Soames, chapters 1-2 of *What is Meaning?*  
Frege, "On Concept and Object" in Geach and Black  
Russell, Sections 46-54 of *The Principles of Mathematics* (available online)

Week 2: Lost Opportunities  
1. The Priority of the Mental: Propositions Represent Because Minds Do  
2. Propositions as Uses of Sentences  

Reading  
Russell, "On Truth and Falsehood" *Problems of Philosophy*  
Soames, *ATP 1*, pp. 438-450 and *ATP 2*, chapter 2, "the Single Great Problem of the Tractatus."

Week 3: Why Neither Truth Conditions nor Structured Complexes of Objects and Properties Will Do  
1. Non-modal truth conditions  
2. Semantic Theories as Theories of Truth at World-States  
3. Propositions as complexes of objects and properties  

Reading  
Soames, pp. 33-42 of chapter 3 of *What is Meaning?*, section 3.1 of *Philosophy of Language*, section 2 of chapter 3 of *New Thinking about Propositions*, chapters 4,5 of *What is Meaning?*

Weeks 4-5: The Metaphysics and Epistemology of Information: A Cognitive Theory of Propositions  
1. Foundations of a Cognitive Theory of Propositions  
2. Some Refinements  
3. Why the Structure of Cognitive Propositions ≠ Frege/Russell Propositional Structure and is not always Isomorphic to Sentence Structure: Although disjunction, conjunction, and negation are real operations, the property being red or being red = the property being red = the property not being red, and the proposition that S or S = the proposition that S & S = the proposition that ¬ ¬ S = the proposition that S. Might some purely representational, truth evaluable, but redundant cognitive acts be meanings of certain sentences that are representationally identical to certain propositions, without being propositions themselves?  

Reading  
Soames, Chapter 2 of *RLMM*  
____, "Yes, the Search for Explanation is All We Have."
Weeks 6-7: Propositions of Limited Accessibility
1. Actually, Me, Now
2. Demystifying and Resolving Puzzles about the Contingent A Priori: Can a proposition be knowable apriori if it is false at some epistemologically possible world-states? Might apriority fail to be closed under apriori consequence?

Reading
Soames, chapter 3 of RLMM; "Actually," in PE 2
Saul Kripke, "The First Person," in PT
Soames, RLMM pp. 165-180 (on Perry), pp. 187-194 (on Lewis), pp. 201-207 (on Kripke)

Weeks 8: Meaning, Understanding, and the Role of Language in Individuating Propositions
1. Linguistic and Non-linguistic Propositions
2. Necessary, aposteriori, Millian identities
3. Understanding words and sentences
5. Two kinds of pragmatic enrichment
4. Unraveling the Puzzles of Kripke and Perry

Reading
Soames, chapter 4 of RLMM; Soames "The Gap Between Meaning and Assertion" in PE 1
Kripke, "A Puzzle About Belief" in PT

Week 9: Propositions, Perceptual Cognition, and Non-demonstrative Thought
1. Perceptual versions of Fregé’s Puzzle
2. Why Some Propositions Resist Communication: A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words
3. Are Visual Qualia Millian Modes of Presentation?
4. In what sense can we know, and in what sense can’t we know, what it’s like to be a bat?

Reading
Soames, chapter 5 of RLMM
Frank Jackson, "Phenomenal Qualia" Phil Quarterly 1982, "What Mary Didn’t Know" Journal of Phil. 1986

Week 10-11: The Cognitive Significance of Recognition of Recurrence
1. Semantic Relationism
2. Critique
3. Partial Accommodation

Reading
Kit Fine, selections from Semantic Relationism
Soames, "Two Versions of Millianism," web site, also chapters 6 - 8 of RLMM

Weeks 12-13: Objections to, Problems and Puzzles for, and Extensions of Cognitive Propositions
1. The sources of the illusion that propositions couldn’t be cognitive acts.
2. Why we shouldn’t take predication to be inherently committing.
3. Fregean vs. Carnapian attitudes?
4. Do sentences containing genuinely empty names express cognitive propositions?
5. If propositions are cognitive acts, shouldn’t questions (expressed by interrogatives) and directives (expressed by imperatives) also be?

Reading
Soames, chapters 10, 11 of RLMM

Weeks 14-15: Relations to Other Views
Goodman, "Reality isn’t Structured"
Goodman and Lederman, "Sense, Reference, and Leibniz’s Law"
Goodman, Lederman, and Caie, "Classical Opacity"