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The metaphysics of truth in contemporary analytic philosophy

Monday h. 14-16 (room C422)
Wednesday h. 14-16 (room H243)

The seminar will provide a survey of metaphysical theories of truth in contemporary analytic philosophy and of issues related to them. Readings will include selections from the writings of major contributors to the field.

I will use a lecture/discussion method. Class participation (questioning, commenting, arguing) is not only encouraged but also expected. Each student is asked to read the papers relevant for the topic of each session (see the list below) *before* each session.

Each student should focus on *one* of the topics (see below) and write a 3/4-page essay consisting in a critical review of *one* paper from the reading list. In addition, each student has to give a 20-40 minute presentation based on his/her essay. The essay/presentation should consist of three parts: (1) formulation of the topic of the paper that is presented, (2) discussion of the author's view and arguments, (3) in the conclusion, the student should give his/her own view. The essay must be submitted to me one week after the presentation.

The essay should not be a mere summary of a read paper. The student has to make an effort to demonstrate that he/she understands the problems by interpreting and evaluating the information he/she presents. Although each essay will focus on one paper from the reading list, the student should use other papers from the same list to develop his/her own view.

For further advice about how to read a philosophical paper and how to write an essay in philosophy, all students are invited to read carefully the Ch. 1 of *The London Philosophy Study Guide*. In particular, Sect. 1: "Reading Philosophy", Sect 2: "Writing Philosophy", and Sect 4: "Plagiarism".

A free copy of the *Guide* can be downloaded at: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/philosophy/studyguide.htm>

An excellent general introduction to the topics of this seminar is R. L. Kirkham, *Theories of truth*.

The topics

1. *Introduction: truth and related matters:*

'Truth' in J. Kim (ed.), *Companion to Metaphysics*, Blackwell.
S. Haack, *Philosophy of logics*, Ch. 7.

2. *Realism and correspondence theory of truth (1)*

B. Russell, "Truth and Falsehood", in his *The Problems of Philosophy*.
J. L. Austin, "Truth", in M. P. Lynch, *The nature of truth*.

3. *Realism and correspondence theory of truth (2)*

H. Putnam, the last chapter of his *Meaning and the Moral Science*.

T. Horgan, "Contextual Semantics and Metaphysical Realism: Truth as Indirect Correspondence", in M. P. Lynch, *The nature of truth*.

4. *Coherentism (1)*

B. Blanshard, "Coherence as the nature of truth", in M. P. Lynch, *The nature of truth*.

R. C. S. Walker, "The Coherence theory", in M. P. Lynch, *The nature of truth*.

5. *Coherentism (2)*

R. L. Kirkham, *Theories of truth*, Ch. 3.

C. Wright, *Truth and Objectivity*, pp. 37-48.

6. *Pragmatist and neo-pragmatist theories of truth (1)*

H. Putnam, "James' Theory of Truth" in *Cambridge Companion to William James*.

C. J. Hookway. "Truth and Reality: Putnam and the Pragmatist Conception of Truth". Manuscript

7. *Pragmatist and neo-pragmatist theories of truth (2)*

R. Rorty, "The world well lost" in his *Consequences of Pragmatism*.

S. Stich, *The Fragmentation of Reason*, Ch. 5.

8. *Tarski's theory of truth (1)*

A. Tarski, "The semantic conception of truth and the foundations of semantics", in M. P. Lynch, *The nature of truth*.

H. Field, "Tarski's theory of truth", in M. P. Lynch, *The nature of truth*.

9. *Tarski's theory of truth (2)*

S. Soames, "What is a theory of truth", in M. P. Lynch, *The nature of truth*.

R. L. Kirkham, *Theories of truth*, Ch. 6.

10. *The realism/anti-realism debate (1)*

M. Dummett, "Truth", in M. P. Lynch, *The nature of truth*.

H. Putnam, *Reason, truth and History*, pp. 49-56.

11. *The realism/anti-realism debate (2)*

A. Miller, "What is the Manifestation Argument", *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*.

M. J. Loux, *Metaphysics* (second edition). Ch. 7.

12. *The realism/anti-realism debate (3)*

D. Lewis, "Putnam's Paradox", *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*.

P. Horwich, "Realism and truth", *Philosophical Perspectives*, 30, 1996

13. *The realism/anti-realism debate (4)*

M. Devitt, the chapter on Dummett and the chapter on Putnam in his *Realism and Truth*.

A. Miller, "The significance of semantic realism", *Synthese*.

14. *Deflationism and minimalism (1)*

F. P. Ramsey, "The nature of truth", in M. P. Lynch, *The nature of truth*.

H. Field, "Correspondence truth, Disquotational truth, and deflationism", in M. P. Lynch, *The nature of truth*.

15. *Deflationism and minimalism (2)*

A. Gupta, "A critique of deflationism", in M. P. Lynch, *The nature of truth*.

P. Horwich, "A defense of minimalism", in M. P. Lynch, *The nature of truth*

16. *Further perspectives on truth*

J. Hornsby, "Truth: the identity theory", in M. P. Lynch, *The nature of truth*.

C. Wright, "Minimalism, deflationism, pragmatism, pluralism", in M. P. Lynch, *The nature of truth*.