PHIL 4233: Philosophy of Language  
Prof. Funkhouser  
5/3/06  
Final Exam Questions

The final exam is Tuesday, May 9th, from 10:00 a.m. till noon. It will be held in our normal classroom. Bring paper. The exam will consist of 4 questions selected from the list below. At least 1 question will be selected from each of the 3 sections. The exam will be the same for both undergraduates and graduates, but the grading standards might differ. No books or notes will be allowed. This exam accounts for 25% of your course grade.

**Meaning and Truth**

1. Explain how Quine’s attack on the analytic/synthetic distinction can be seen as an attack on meaning itself. Grice and Strawson offer a way of saving analyticity on the assumption of verificationism. Explain this proposal. Finally, how do Grice and Strawson think that analyticity is compatible with the Quinean thesis that “no statement is immune from revision”?

2. Quine thinks that the 2 dogmas of empiricism are, at root, 1. Explain how Quine thinks that the denial of the second dogma follows from his denial of the first dogma. What positive theory does Quine offer in place of reductionism? What specific methodological consequences (e.g., consequences for belief acceptance and revision) does Quine think follows from his denial of the second dogma? How does Quine’s position here differ from that of the Logical Positivists who preceded him?

3. In “Meaning”, Grice concludes by offering the following account of non-natural meaning:

   Shortly, perhaps, we may say that “A meant$_{NN}$ something by $x$” is roughly equivalent to “A uttered $x$ with the intention of inducing a belief by means of the recognition of this intention.”

Explain, through a discussion of one of Grice’s examples, why Grice thinks that an intention to produce a belief by means of the recognition of this intention is essential to non-natural meaning. Explain how this is a reductive theory of semantics. What consequences does this account have for the nature of language (here, think of Strawson’s “Meaning and Truth” as well)?
Speech Acts

4. Speech act theorists point out that we do many things with language besides describe reality. So, our statements can be evaluated along more dimensions than just truth or falsity. Take a speech act like promising. Explain 3 ways in which a promise can be defective. Do this by providing preparatory and/or sincerity conditions that a promiser could violate. Along the way, explain the concepts preparatory condition and sincerity condition (this is Searle’s terminology in his earlier article).

5. Explain the following concepts, as introduced by Searle: illocutionary point, direction of fit, and sincerity. Then, apply these 3 dimensions to characterize (and contrast) the speech acts asserting and begging.

6. Provide an example of an implicature, in Grice’s sense. (Provide some details concerning the context of this utterance.) Use this example to illustrate the distinction between what is said and what is implicated. Explain the conversational maxim that your speaker flouts, and how s/he is flouting it. Finally, what is the Cooperative Principle and why think that it is still respected in your example?

Propositional Attitudes

7. Explain what is meant by “quantifying into” a modal or propositional attitude context. Quine raises objections to quantifying into either context. Utilize his examples involving the number nine and Ortcutt to present Quine’s objections to such quantification. Then, summarize Quine’s objections in layman’s terms.

8. Explain the Millian and Fregean theories on propositional attitude statements containing ordinary names, as discussed in Kripke’s “A Puzzle about Belief”. Kripke argues that each theory has problems in propositional attitude contexts. Provide the specific problems that Kripke raises for each.

9. Present Kripke’s puzzle about Pierre, using the Strengthened Disquotational Principle and the Principle of Translation. What are the 4 possibilities for characterizing Pierre’s relevant beliefs after living in London and learning English? Kripke objects to each possibility. Provide these objections.