

PHIL 4233: Philosophy of Language  
Prof. Funkhouser  
4/29/08  
Final Exam Questions

The final exam is Wednesday, May 7th, from 12:30 – 2:30 p.m. It will be held in our normal classroom. Bring paper. The exam will consist of 5 questions selected from the list below. At least 1 question will be selected from each of the 3 sections. No books or notes will be allowed. This exam accounts for 25% of your course grade (250 points; 50 points each).

### Meaning and Truth

1. As Hempel explains contemporary empiricism, what are the two ways in which a sentence can be meaningful? Verifiability and falsifiability are two different attempts at accounting for empirical meaning. Explain (do not merely provide) two of Hempel's objections to each criterion for empirical meaning. Explain how Hempel's conclusion about the prospects for a criterion of empirical meaningfulness resembles claims Quine makes in his "Two Dogmas of Empiricism".
2. Provide some of Quine's objections to attempts to account for analyticity in terms of synonymy. Then, explain why Quine's critique of the analytic/synthetic distinction can be seen as an attack on *meaning* itself.
3. Grice and Strawson, in response to Quine, offer a way of saving analyticity on the assumption of verificationism. Explain this proposal. Also, how do Grice and Strawson think that analyticity is compatible with the Quinean thesis that "no statement is immune from revision"?
4. Quine thinks that the two dogmas of empiricism are, at root, one. 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?
5. Provide an example of natural meaning and non-natural meaning, as Grice understands the distinction. In "Meaning", Grice concludes by offering the following account of non-natural meaning:

Shortly, perhaps, we may say that “*A* meant<sub>NN</sub> 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.

### Speech Acts

6. 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 three 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).

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

8. Provide Searle’s five categories of illocutionary acts and explain the illocutionary point of each, as explained in his “A Taxonomy of Illocutionary Acts”. Then, provide an example of a speech act falling under each category.

9. Provide an example of an *implicature*, in Grice’s sense. (Provide some details concerning the context of your example.) 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.

### Propositional Attitudes

10. Explain what is meant by “quantifying into” a modal or propositional attitude context. Quine raises objections to quantifying into either context. Utilize his example involving Ortcutt to present Quine’s objections to

such quantification. Then, summarize Quine's objections in layman's terms.

11. Explain the Millian and Fregean theories on propositional attitude statements containing ordinary names. The standard naive Russellian view, as the term is used in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy article, is in the Millian tradition. How does this view treat a sentence like 'Lois believes that Clark Kent is strong'? Explain, in particular, the role that pragmatics can play here.

12. Provide Frege's Puzzle about names and propositional attitudes. Then, present Kripke's puzzle about Pierre, using the Strengthened Disquotational Principle and the Principle of Translation. Be sure to explain what is supposed to be problematic about each puzzle.

13. What are the four possibilities for characterizing Pierre's relevant beliefs after living in London and learning English? Kripke objects to each possibility. Provide these objections.