

# Philosophy 135: Theory of Meaning

## Study Guide for Final Exam

May 8, 2007

The final exam will be held Wednesday, May 16, from 8–11 AM in 126 Barrows. You will be asked to answer three essay questions out of a list of four. All four choices will be drawn from the following list:

1. Compare and contrast Grice's and Searle's accounts of speaker meaning. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each approach?
2. Putnam holds that even if the ancient Sumerians had no way of distinguishing gold from fool's gold, they could still have had a word that meant gold. How does Putnam think this is possible? In virtue of what facts about their use of the word does it get to be about gold, and not (also) fool's gold?
3. What is "stimulus meaning"? What role does it play in Quine's account of language? Compare stimulus meaning with meaning in the ordinary, intuitive sense. Is sameness of stimulus meaning necessary for sameness of meaning in the ordinary sense? Is it sufficient? Why or why not?
4. Quine uses observations about radical translation to make some very general points about translation and meaning. Given that most translation isn't radical translation, why does Quine think this methodology is justified? Even if radical translation is underdetermined by the evidence, why should we think that non-radical translation is indeterminate?
5. Compare and contrast Quine's and Davidson's views on meaning.
6. In what sense are Quine's, Davidson's, and Dennett's approaches to intentionality "behaviorist"? What do you think is the best objection to this kind of behaviorism, and how might these philosophers respond to it?
7. Burge, Davidson, Dretske and Fodor are all externalists about mental content. Pick three of them and compare and contrast their reasons for being externalists, pointing out differences in the kinds of externalism these reasons support.
8. Searle, Burge, Davidson, and Dretske all have something to say about the relation of language to thought. Pick three of them and compare and contrast their views on the relation of language to thought.
9. Compare and contrast Dretske's and Fodor's views on representation.
10. (a) Describe Dretske's teleofunctional account of representation. (b) What is Fodor's main criticism of this account? (c) Is Fodor's criticism cogent? Why or why not? (d) What does Dennett think about this debate?
11. Describe Fodor's asymmetric dependence theory of representational content. In what sense is it "naturalistic"? What do you think is the best objection to Fodor's account?