

Philosophy of Logic and Language Reading List

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This is James Read's reading list for the Finals paper on Philosophy of Logic and Language.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please email me at the above address.

Vacation Reading

Over the vacation, please read:

- William G. Lycan, *Philosophy of Language: A Contemporary Introduction*, third edition, London: Routledge, 2019.

Students might wish to supplement this list with the reading list from the Philosophy Faculty, which contains additional suggestions for readings.

1 Definite descriptions

What is Russell's analysis of definite descriptions, and what are its main problems? Can these problems be overcome?

Background

1. William G. Lycan, *Philosophy of Language: A Contemporary Introduction*, third edition, London: Routledge, 2019. **Ch. 2.**
2. Peter Ludlow, "Definite Descriptions", in E. N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2022.

Core reading

1. Bertrand Russell, "On Denoting", *Mind* 14(56), pp. 479–93, 1905.
2. Peter Strawson, "On Referring", *Mind* 59, pp. 320–44, 1950.
3. Keith S. Donnellan, "Reference and Definite Descriptions", *The Philosophical Review* 75(3), pp. 281–304, 1966).
4. Saul Kripke, "Speaker's Reference And Semantic Reference", *Midwest Studies In Philosophy* 2(1), pp. 255–76, 1977.

Further reading

1. Paul D. Elbourne, *Definite Descriptions*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
2. Stephen Neale, *Descriptions*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 1990.
3. John Hawthorne and David Manley, *The Reference Book*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. **Ch. 5.**
4. H. K. Wettstein, "Demonstrative Reference and Definite Descriptions", *Philosophical Studies* 40, pp. 241–257, 1981.

2 Vagueness

What is the sorites paradox, and how is it best resolved?

Core reading

1. Roy Sorensen, "Vagueness", in E. N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2022.
2. Dominic Hyde and Diana Raffman, "Sorites Paradox", in E. N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2022.
3. Timothy Williamson, *Vagueness*, New York: Routledge, 1996.

Further reading

1. Timothy Williamson, "Alternative Logics and Applied Mathematics", *Philosophical Issues* 28, pp. 399–424, 2018.
2. Stephen Kearns and Ofra Magidor, "Epistemicism About Vagueness and Meta-linguistic Safety", *Philosophical Perspectives* 22(1), pp. 277–304, 2008.
3. Rosanna Keefe, "Vagueness: Supervaluationism", *Philosophy Compass* 3(2), pp. 315–24, 2008.
4. David Lewis, "Many, But Almost One", in his *Papers in Metaphysics and Epistemology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 164–82, 1999.
5. R. M. Sainsbury, "Concepts Without Boundaries", in R. Keefe and P. Smith (eds.), *Vagueness: A Reader*, pp. 251–64, 1996.
6. Kit Fine, "Vagueness, Truth and Logic", *Synthese* 30(3), pp. 265–300, 1975.
7. Dorothy Edgington, "Vagueness by Degrees", in R. Keefe and P. Smith, *Vagueness: A Reader*, Cambridge, Mass.; London: MIT, 1996.
8. Delia Graff, "Shifting Sands: An Interest-Relative Theory of Vagueness", *Philosophical Topics* 28(1), pp. 45–81, 2000.
9. Jason Stanley, "Context, Interest Relativity and the Sorites", *Analysis* 63(4), pp. 269–80, 2003.

See also §5 of the Philosophy Faculty reading list.

3 Meaning

What kind of thing is the meaning of a sentence?

Core reading

1. William G. Lycan, *Philosophy of Language: A Contemporary Introduction*, third edition, London: Routledge, 2019. **Part II.**
2. Jeff Speaks, "Theories of Meaning", in E. N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2024.

Some important papers

1. H. P. Grice, "Meaning", *Philosophical Review* 66, pp. 377–88, 1957.
2. David Lewis, "General Semantics", *Synthese* 22(1), pp. 18–67, 1970. (Especially Sections I, III, V, and VIII.)
3. Donald Davidson, "Truth and Meaning", in his *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*, second edition, Oxford: New York: Clarendon; Oxford University Press, 2001.

Further reading

1. David Papineau, "Naturalist Theories of Meaning", in Lepore and Smith (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Language*, 2009.
2. Jon Barwise and John Perry, "Situations and Attitudes", *The Journal of Philosophy* 78(11), pp. 668–91, 1981.
3. Mark Greenberg and Gilbert Harman, "Conceptual Role Semantics", in Lepore and Smith (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Language*, 2009.
4. Paul Horwich, *Meaning*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998.
5. M. D. Platts, *Ways of Meaning: An Introduction to Philosophy of Language*, Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1997.
6. Saul Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language: An Elementary Exposition*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1982.
7. W. V. Quine, *Word and Object*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 1960.

4 Semantic internalism and externalism

“Cut the pie any way you like, ‘meanings’ just ain’t in the *head*!” — PUTNAM. Discuss.

Core reading

1. Hilary Putnam, “The Meaning of ‘Meaning’”, in K. Gunderson (ed.), *Language, Mind, and Knowledge*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, pp. 131–93, 1975. Also in Hilary Putnam, *Mind, Language, and Reality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975.
2. Noam Chomsky, “Language and Nature”, *Mind* 104(413), pp. 1–61, 1995.
3. Tyler Burge, “Individualism and the Mental”, *Midwest Studies In Philosophy* 4(1), pp. 73–121, 1979.
4. Steven Davis and Brendan Gillon, “Internalist and Externalist Semantic Theories”, in *Semantics: A Reader*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.
5. Katalin Farkas, “Semantic Internalism and Externalism” in Lepore and Smith (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Language*, 2009.

Further reading

1. Gabriel Segal, *A Slim Book about Narrow Content*, Cambridge, Mass.; London: MIT, 2000.
2. Tim Crane, “All the Difference in the World”, *The Philosophical Quarterly* 41(162), pp. 1–25, 1991.

5 Truth

What is it for a proposition to be true?

Useful collections and background

1. Simon Blackburn and Keith Simmons, *Truth*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
2. Frederick F. Schmitt, *Theories of Truth*, Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell, 2004.
3. R. Kirkham, *Theories of Truth: A Critical Introduction*, Cambridge MA: MIT, 1995.
4. Ralph Walker, "Theories of Truth", in B. Hale, C. Wright and A. Millier (eds.), *A Companion to the Philosophy of Language*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.
5. Scott Soames, *Understanding Truth*, New York; Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999.

Core reading

1. Michael Glanzberg, "Truth", in E. N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2018.
2. William James, "Pragmatism's Conception of Truth" in his *Pragmatism*, New York: Dover Publications, 1995.
3. Frank Ramsey, "On Facts and Propositions", in Blackburn & Simmons (eds.).
4. Bertrand Russell, "On the Nature of Truth", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 7, pp. 28–49, 1906.
5. Alfred Tarski, "The Semantic Conception of Truth: And the Foundations of Semantics", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 4(3), pp. 341–76, 1944.

Further reading

1. Bradley Armour-Garb, Daniel Stoljar and James Woodbridge, "Deflationism About Truth", in E. N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2021.
2. Marian David, "The Correspondence Theory of Truth", in E. N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2015.
3. Hartry Field, "Deflationist Views of Meaning and Content", *Mind* 103, pp. 249–85, 1994.
4. Gottlob Frege, "The Thought: A Logical Inquiry", *Mind* 65(259), pp. 289–311, 1956.
5. Crispin Wright, "Truth: A Traditional Debate Revisited", *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 28, pp. 31–74, 1998.
6. Ian Rumfitt, "Truth Wronged: Crispin Wright's Truth and Objectivity", *Ratio* 8(1), pp. 100–7, 1995.

See also §7 of the Philosophy Faculty reading list.

6 The liar

“This sentence is false.” Discuss.

Core reading

1. J. C. Beall, Michael Glanzberg and David Ripley, “The Liar Paradox”, in E. N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2018.
2. Richard L. Kirkham, *Theories of Truth: A Critical Introduction*, Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1995. **Ch. 9.**
3. Alfred Tarski, “The Semantic Conception of Truth”, in H. Feigl and W. Sellars, *Readings in Philosophical Analysis*, New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1949.
4. Scott Soames, *Understanding Truth*, New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. **Ch. 5.**
5. Graham Priest, “The Structure of the Paradoxes of Self-Reference”, *Mind* 103(409), pp. 25–34, 1994.
6. Saul Kripke, “Outline of a Theory of Truth”, *Journal of Philosophy* 72(19), pp. 690–715, 1975.

Further reading

1. Jared Warren, “The Liar Paradox and “Meaningless” Revenge”, *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 53, pp. 49–78. 2023.
2. Graham Priest, Francesco Berto and Zach Weber, “Dialetheism”, in E. N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2018.
3. Philip Kremer and Edoardo Rivello, “The Revision Theory of Truth”, in E. N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2023.
4. Terence Parsons, “True Contradictions.” *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 20(3), pp. 335–53, 1990.

See also other entries in §13 of the Philosophy Faculty reading list.

7 Indexicals

What is the best theory of the content of indexicals?

Core reading

1. David Braun, "Indexicals", in E. N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2015.
2. David Kaplan, "Demonstratives" in J. Almog, D. Kaplan, J. Perry, and H. K. Wettstein (eds.), *Themes from Kaplan*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.
3. David Lewis, "Index, Context, and Content" in D. Lewis, *Papers in Philosophical Logic*, Cambridge, 1997.
4. Geoffrey Nunberg, "Indexicality and Deixis", *Linguistics and Philosophy: An International Journal* 16(1), pp. 1–43, 1993.
5. John Perry, "Frege on Demonstratives", *The Philosophical Review*, pp. 474–97, 1997.

Further reading

1. Geoffrey Nunberg, "Descriptive Indexicals, and Indexical Descriptions" in M. Reimer and A. Bezuidenhout, *Descriptions and Beyond*, Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

See other entries in §10 of the Philosophy Faculty reading list.

8 Conditionals

Is the natural language ‘if’ a truth functional connective?

Useful background

1. Jonathan Bennett, *A Philosophical Guide to Conditionals*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
2. Kai von Fintel, “Conditionals”, in C. Maienborn, K. Von Heusinger, and P. Portner (eds.), *Semantics: An International Handbook of Natural Language Meaning*, Berlin, pp. 1515–37, 2011.
3. Frank Jackson, *Conditionals*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Core reading

1. Dorothy Edgington, “Indicative Conditionals”, in E. N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2020.
2. David Lewis, “Adverbs of Quantification”, in E. L. Keenan (ed.), *Formal Semantics of Natural Language: Papers from a Colloquium Sponsored by the King’s College Research Centre*, Cambridge, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 3–15, 1975.
3. David Lewis, *Counterfactuals*, Malden, Mass.; Oxford: Blackwell, 2001. **Ch. 1.**
4. Robert Stalnaker, “Indicative Conditionals”, *Philosophia* 5, pp. 269–86, 1975.
5. Robert Stalnaker, “A Theory of Conditionals” in J. W. Cornman (ed.), *Studies in Logical Theory: Essays*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, pp. 98–112. 1968: 98-112.
6. Dorothy Edgington, “On Conditionals”, *Mind: A Quarterly Review of Philosophy* 104(414), pp. 235–329, 1995.
7. H. P. Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991. **Pp. 58–85.**

Further reading

1. Ian Rumfitt, “Old Adams Buried”, *Analytic Philosophy* 54, pp. 157–88, 2013.
2. Angelika Kratzer, “Conditionals”, *Chicago Linguistics Society* 22, pp. 1–15, 1986.