

Philosophy of Language Paper Topics #1

Here are two generic paper topics. Essentially, I'd like you to attack/ defend a theory we've considered in class, or to compare two theories with respect to how they stack up against problems we've considered in class.

Topics:

Identify what you think are the 2 or 3 strongest arguments against the Idea Theory/ Verificationism/ the Definition Theory/ the Causal-Historical Theory/ the Use Theory [**pick just one**]. Explain the arguments and then defend the theory you chose from those arguments. Alternatively, you can choose to reject the theory you chose—please note, however, that you should add something more to the objections we've already considered (new objections, stronger versions of the objections) if you opt to reject a theory.

Identify 1 or 2 difficulties that are each a challenge to two of these theories: the Idea Theory/ Verificationism/ the Definition Theory/ the Causal-Historical Theory/ the Use Theory [**pick two**]. For example, the Idea Theory and Verificationism both have a problem with terms denoting theoretical entities, and they both have problems with the principle of compositionality. How are the difficulties similar for both theories and how are they different? Is one of the theories better equipped to respond to the difficulties? Given these difficulties, explain what we need to add to (or remove from) our theory of meaning to fix things.