

In-Class Presentations

You are required to do an in-class presentation, with powerpoint or some other slideshow medium.

These presentations can be group work or solo work.

If exactly 1 student is in the group, he or she will present for 15 minutes of class time.

If exactly 2 students are in the group, they will present for 30 minutes of class time.

For a group of n students, they will present for 15 x n minutes of class time.

No group can exceed 7 members, because that would require more minutes than we have.

You're welcome to take more time in your presentation than the 15 minutes per person.

All group members will receive the same grade on the assignment. Do not join a group with someone who will not do any work.

Each group may choose who presents the material. For example, for a group of 4, 1 student can present all the material (the other students obviously should do work in preparing the presentation).

Here's what you must do by 28 September (yes this is a holiday and no I do not care). **Send me an email** (michael.dracula.johnson@gmail.com) stating the following information: which day you would like to present, if you know it; which topic you would like to present on, if you know it. If you don't know those things, tell me what you're interested in: Philosophy of mind? Philosophy of language? Linguistics? Psychology? Neuroscience? Hard things? Easy things? Radical philosophical positions? Tell me who is in your group, if you know and if they have agreed to work with you. If you don't have anyone in your group, tell me if you are OK being in a group—I may put you in a group with people who have similar interests.

5 October Definitions & Descriptions

Topics: circular definitions, definitions as meanings, the description theory of proper names, problems with definition/ description theory (various problems depending on your interest: psychological studies, linguistic examples, or philosophical arguments)

19 October Behaviorism

Topics: introspectionism in psychology, Pavlov's studies on dogs, operant conditioning, psychological behaviorism, Chomsky vs. Skinner, philosophical behaviorism, arguments against philosophical behaviorism: your dispositions depend on the totality of your mental states, behaviorism can't explain rational thought,

26 October The Identity Theory

Topics: types and tokens, type identity vs. token identity, neural correlates of mental processes and states (fun stuff to learn about), selective impairment due to brain damage (also fun), objections to the identity theory based on Leibniz's Law (many objections, good for a group of 2 or 3), the argument from multiple realizability

2 November Functionalism

Topics: functional types, what is the function of pain?, what is the function of beliefs and desires?, famous arguments against functionalism (all of these are pretty fun): Blockhead, Searle's China Brain, inverted spectra

9 November The Use Theory of Meaning

Topics: motivations for a use theory, Grice's theory of natural meaning, Horwich's use theory (broad topic suitable for large group), Wittgenstein's use theory (warning: hard topic!), implicit definitions, how translation works, theoretical disagreement

16 November The Causal-Historical Theory of Meaning

Topics: causal theories in philosophy (epistemology, philosophy of action, philosophy of perception), motivations for a causal theory of reference, Kripke's arguments against description theory of names: ignorance and error, Kripke's causal-historical theory, Putnam's Twin Earth thought experiment, Evans' objections to Kripke, experimental philosophy: Machery, Mallon, Nichols & Stich "Semantics, Cross-Cultural Style" (some experimental findings that Hong Kong students have different intuitions than American ones)

23 November Naturalizing Content

Topics: the disjunction problem, the qua problem, Dretske's causal theory, teleological theories, the asymmetric dependence theory, objections

30 November Eliminativism and Deflationism

Topics: the argument against the existence of mental states, what is the alternative?, redundancy theory of truth and deflationary truth, living in a world without meaning (very hard!)