Philosophy 615
The Analysis, Representation, and Ascription of Belief

Thursdays, 3–5 pm
1164 Angell Hall

Instructor

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Aims of the course

We will discuss (1) the analysis of belief, (2) the representation of belief states, (3) the semantics and pragmatics of belief ascriptions, and (4) the interactions between (1)–(3).

Very, very briefly, I think that techniques used in (2) let us think about some problems in (3) in new and interesting ways. And I’d like to think about what upshots that has for (1).

Course web site

Go to http://ctools.umich.edu, click ‘Sites’ and scroll down to ‘Phil of Language.’ All readings will be posted there.

Requirements

• Short weekly writeups in response to questions distributed the week before. Email them to me by Wednesday at 3 pm. You can skip as many as three of these without penalty.

• A meeting with me to discuss your final paper. This should happen by the end of November at the very latest.

• A 15 page paper, due January 18, 2007. If you prefer you can write two short papers—just ask.
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Section</th>
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<td>9/7</td>
<td>Background</td>
<td>Some roles for propositions. Lowest common denominator strategies.</td>
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| 9/14 | The analysis of belief: theories that attribute structure | FIELD 1978, “Mental Representation”
FODOR 1987, *Psychosemantics*, chapter 1 and appendix |
| 9/21 | The analysis of belief: theories that do not attribute structure | STALNAKER 1984, *Inquiry*, chapters 1 and 2
LEWIS 1986, *On the Plurality of Worlds*, sections 1.4 and 1.5
| 9/28 | The representation of belief: statics | ADAMS 1998, chapters 1–4 |
| 10/5 | The representation of belief: dynamics | ADAMS 1998, chapters 5–8, appendix A3 |
| 10/12 | The representation of conversational context | STALNAKER 1974, “Pragmatic Presupposition”
STALNAKER 2002, “Common Ground” |
| 10/19 | The semantics and pragmatics of belief ascription | Kripke 1979, “A Puzzle about Belief”
SOAMES 1987, “Direct Reference, Propositional Attitudes, and Semantic Content”
LARSON & LUDLOW 1993, “Interpreted Logical Forms” |
STALNAKER 1988, “Belief Attribution and Context”
Swanson, “Frege’s Puzzle and Pragmatic Presupposition” |
Swanson, “The Language of Subjective Uncertainty” |
| 11/9  | Interactions: Conditionals | KRATZER 1986, “Conditionals”
GIBBARD 1981, “Two Recent Theories of Conditionals”
| 11/16 | Interactions: Belief *de se* | PERRY 1979, “The Problem of the Essential Indexical”
LEWIS 1979, “Attitudes *De Dicto* and *De Se*” |
| 11/30 | Wrap up | No additional reading |
References


