Meaning & Communication (PH130)

Topic 1: Grice on Meaning (for first seminar)

Essential reading

Grice, H. P. "Meaning", and "Meaning Revisited", chapters 14 and 18 in his *Studies in the Way of Words*.
Strawson, P. F. "Intention and Convention in Speech Acts", (1964). pp.439–60, Philosophical Review vol.73.

Further reading (optional)

Neale, Stephen "Paul Grice and the Philosophy of Language" (1992), §§4-5, pp. 509-541, Linguistics and Philosophy vol. 15
Schiffer, Stephen *Meaning* (1972) Oxford: Clarendon Press, especially ch.2.

Essay question (for first seminar)

What is Grice's analysis of non-natural meaning? Does the analysis provide sufficient conditions for non-natural meaning? Does it provide necessary conditions for non-natural meaning?

Your essay should consist in a single, flowing text with an introduction and conclusion which answers the above question. In answering this question your essay should tackle the following tasks. Re-read your essay carefully before submitting it.

1. What are the intuitive marks of non-natural meaning, according to Grice?

2. What are the stages through which Grice reaches his final analysis? Is it possible to avoid Grice's final analysis by stopping at an earlier stage, or do Grice's counter-examples force one to proceed to the final stage?

3. What apparent counter-examples are there to the claim that Grice's analysis provides *sufficient* conditions for non-natural meaning? Are they genuine counter-examples, or can we explain away the appearance that they are counter-examples?

4. What apparent counter-examples are there to the claim that Grice's analysis provides *necessary* conditions for non-natural meaning? Are they genuine counter-examples, or can we explain away the appearance that they are counter-examples?

Topic 2: Meaning and Implicature (second seminar)

Essential reading

Grice, H. Paul "Prolegomena", "Logic and Conversation" and "Retrospective Epilogue", which are chapters 1,2 and 20 of 'Logic and Conversation' in his *Studies in the Way of Words*.

Neale, Stephen "Paul Grice and the Philosophy of Language" (1992), §§1-3, pp. 509-541, <u>Linguistics and Philosophy</u> vol. 15

This might help if you're stuck

Davis, Wayne "Implicature", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2003 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.) http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/implicature/

Further reading (optional)

Bach, Kent. "Conversational implicature" <u>Mind and Language</u>, 9, 124–62 (1994)

Saul, Jennifer "Speaker meaning, what is said, and what is implicated" <u>Noûs</u>, 36, 228–48 (2002)

Travis, Charles "Annals of Analysis" (1991) <u>Mind</u> vol. 100, no. 387 (this article is a review of *Studies in the Way of Words*)

Essay question (for second seminar)

What obstacles arise from differences between formal and natural languages to the use of formal languages such as FOL for investigating logical validity? To what extent does Grice's theory of conversational implicature remove these obstacles?

Your essay should consist in a single, flowing text with an introduction and conclusion which answers the above question. In answering this question your essay should tackle the following tasks. Re-read your essay carefully before submitting it.

1. What is conversational implicature? Illustrate your answer with an example of your own.

2. State Grice's Cooperative Principle and Maxims. In what sense, if any, do the Principle and Maxims apply to conversations?

3. **Elucidate the role of the Cooperative Principle and Maxims in explaining how conversational implicature arises. Apply your elucidation to explaining the example you gave in (1).**

4. **According to some textbooks, the second sentence below is a correct translation of the first sentence. Is this translation in fact correct?**

   i. "Either Ayesha had a haircut or Ashwin had a haircut"

   ii. A∨B
   where A = Ayesha had a haircut and B = Ashwin had a haircut

5. **The first argument below is not logically valid. Does it follow that the second argument is not logically valid?**

   > **A**
   > **B**
   > **¬(A∨B)**

   > **Ayesha had a haircut**
   > **Ashwin had a haircut**
   > **It's not true that either Ayesha had a haircut or Ashwin had a haircut**