Meaning & Communication (PH130)

Seminar 1: Grice on Meaning

Essential reading:
Grice, H. P. "Meaning", chapter 14 in his *Studies in the Way of Words.*

Seminar 2: Grice on Meaning – critical discussion
Essential reading:
Schiffer, Stephen *Meaning* (1972) Oxford: Clarendon Press, ch.2.

Essay question for Seminar 2
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?

Further reading on Grice on Meaning

Grice, H. P. "Utterers Meaning and Intentions", "Meaning Revisited", chapters 5 and 14 in his *Studies in the Way of Words.*

Hornsby, J. and Longworth, G. eds. *Reading Philosophy of Language*, chapter 2, *Speech and Action.*

Neale, Stephen "Paul Grice and the Philosophy of Language" (1992), §§4–5, *Linguistics and Philosophy* vol. 15

Strawson, P. F. "Intention and Convention in Speech Acts", (1964). pp.439–60, *Philosophical Review* vol.73.

Seminar 3: Meaning and Implicature

Essential reading:
Grice, H. P. "Logic and Conversation" chapter 2 in his *Studies in the Way of Words.*

Neale, Stephen "Paul Grice and the Philosophy of Language" (1992), §§1–3, *Linguistics and Philosophy* vol. 15

Seminar 4: Meaning and Implicature – critical discussion
Essential reading:
Davis, Wayne "Implicature", §§5–9, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2003 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.)
http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/implicature/
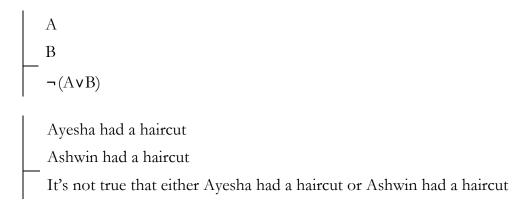
Essay question for Seminar 4:
What is Grice's account of conversational implicature? What difficulties is it designed to deal with? To what extent does it successfully deal with those difficulties?

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

6. What are some objections that have been raised against Grice's account? What, if anything, might a defender of Grice try to say in response to those objections?

Further reading on Meaning and Implicature:

Grice, H. P. "Prolegomena", and "Retrospective Epilogue", which are chapters 1 and 20 in his *Studies in the Way of Words.*

Bach, Kent. "Conversational impliciture" *Mind and Language*, 9, 124–62 (1994)

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

Hornsby, J. and Longworth, G. eds. *Reading Philosophy of Language*, chapter 5, *Meaning and Compositionality*, and chapter 6, especially Bach, "Speaking Loosely: Sentence Non-literality" and commentary on Bach.

Longworth, G. "Semantics and Pragmatics" forthcoming in Wright, Hale, and Miller eds. *The Blackwell Companion to the Philosophy of Language.*

Saul, Jennifer "Speaker meaning, what is said, and what is implicated" *Noûs*, 36, 228–48 (2002)

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