

PAPER 2

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Phil Language

Final paper assignment, due in class on the last day of class, Thursday, May 5.

Choose one of the articles listed below, and write a 4–7 page paper about it. (I'm in principle open to other topics, but you must clear it with me in advance.)

Your paper should be very focused. You should read the whole article, but your paper should be on just one issue—perhaps the author's main argument, or perhaps the author's main theory.

The paper should first explain very clearly—in a way that someone who has never read the article could understand—the relevant material in the paper you're discussing. You don't have to summarize the whole paper. Just provide enough background for what you plan to discuss.

Second, the paper should include some contribution of your own. You might, for example, make an objection to the author's main argument. Or you might make an objection to the author's main theory. Or, you might defend the author's theory against an objection (perhaps an objection you think that someone might make, or perhaps an objection the author already addresses). Or you might clarify something that is unclear in the paper.

In some cases I mention optional further papers. You could look at one of those further papers if you'd like, to give you some ideas. (If you draw on the further paper, you must of course cite it.) But this really is optional, and you don't need to do it to get a good grade.

Since this paper is open-ended, it is especially important to give yourself plenty of time to do a good job, and you are strongly encouraged to discuss a detailed outline with one of us, no later than Tuesday, May 3rd.

1. Keith Donnellan, "Speaking of Nothing" (*The Philosophical Review*, vol. 83 (1974): pp. 3-31. This gives a theory of names that lack referents. (Optional further paper: David Braun, "Empty Names", *Noûs* Vol. 27

(1993) pp. 449–69.)

2. Keith Donnellan, “Reference and Definite Descriptions” (in Martinich). This gives an objection to Russell’s theory of descriptions. (Optional further paper: Saul Kripke, “Speaker’s Reference and Semantic Reference”, in *Midwest Studies in Philosophy II: Contemporary Perspectives in the Philosophy of Language*, ed. Peter French, Theodore Uehling, Jr., and Howard Wettstein, 1977, pp. 255–76.)
3. David Lewis, “Attitudes *De Dicto* and Attitudes *De Se*”, *Philosophical Review* vol. 88 (1979): pp. 513–543. A different approach to the issues in Perry’s “Problem of the Essential Indexical”.
4. Robert Stalnaker, “Semantics for Belief”, in Martinich. This extends the theory in “Assertion” to propositional attitude sentences.
5. Robert Stalnaker, “Indicative Conditionals”, *Philosophia* vol. 5 (1975): pp. 269–86. Also reprinted in his *Context and Content*, and in Frank Jackson’s *Conditionals*. About the semantics and pragmatics of “if...then” statements.
6. Scott Soames, “Truth, Meaning, and Understanding”, *Philosophical Studies* vol 65 (1992): pp. 17–35. Also reprinted in his *Philosophical Essays, Volume 1: Natural Language: What It Means and How We Use It*. Criticizes Davidson’s “Truth and Meaning”.
7. Paul Boghossian, “The Rule Following Considerations”, *Mind* vol. 98 (1989): pp. 507–49. On the topics of Kripke’s “On Rules and Private Language”.