

# MIDTERM STUDY GUIDE

Ted Sider  
Phil Language

1. Intro to the philosophy of language—difference between syntax, semantics, pragmatics, etc.
2. Intro to semantics: what it's about; the two main questions of semantics.
3. Know the use-mention distinction—e.g., the difference between writing:  

‘Chicago’

and

Chicago
4. Syntactic and semantic concepts: subject, predicate,  $n$ -tuple, extension...
5. Propositions: what they are, what is generally assumed about them
6. The Naïve Theory: be able to state it.
7. Present, explain, and evaluate (P.E.E.) Frege's "argument from analyticity and a priority" against the Naïve Theory. Present: write out the argument line-by-line. Doesn't have to be word-for-word the way I had it, but it needs to be basically the same, and it needs to be logically valid, so be careful if you start paraphrasing! Explain: give the justifications for the premises—why the author of the argument thinks they're true; and also define any technical terms. Evaluate: is the argument sound? What are some objections one could make to the premises, and are they any good?
8. P.E.E. the argument against the naive theory based on substitution (of 'the author of *Waverley*' for 'Scott'.)
9. Be able to explain Frege's theory. Explain the notion of sense, and the difference between sense and reference. Sense determines reference. Senses are objective (the third realm). Frege's principles of compositionality, both for sense and reference. The types of senses and reference for different parts of language: names and descriptions (subject terms), predicates, sentences. Be able to construct and explain Frege diagrams.

10. Explain why Frege thinks that the referent of a sentence is its truth value.
11. Explain Frege's theory of indirect discourse (propositional attitude sentences). Explain how this solves the problem of George IV and the author of *Waverley*.
12. Explain how Frege's theory solves the problem of identity sentences (how  $a=b$ , when true, can differ in meaning from ' $a=a$ ').
13. Know in general the various problems that "empty descriptions" (i.e., definite descriptions with no referent) pose for the Naïve Theory.
14. P.E.E. Russell's argument from the LEM.
15. What is Frege's view about empty descriptions? P.E.E. Russell's argument from aboutness, and Russell's argument from conditionals, against Frege's theory.
16. What does Meinong say about empty descriptions, and what are Russell's criticisms of Meinong?
17. Propositional functions: what are they, and how does Russell use them to analyze sentences like "Someone is happy" and "Everyone is happy"?
18. State Russell's theory of descriptions (i.e., his analysis of sentences of the form "The  $F$  is  $G$ ").
19. How does Russell's theory solve the problem of the meaningfulness of empty descriptions? The problem of the truth of assertions of nonexistence? The problem of conditionals for Frege's view? The problem of substitution of co-referential expressions? The problem with the LEM? The triviality puzzle? (I.e., the difference in meaning between ' $a=a$ ' and ' $a=b$ ').
20. What is Mill's theory of proper names? What is the Frege/Russell theory of proper names?
21. State and explain the theses Kripke uses to formulate descriptivism. Explain any technical terms or distinctions presupposed by descriptivism (such as 'necessary' vs. 'contingent', and 'a priori').
22. P.E.E. Kripke's modal objection to descriptivism.

23. Explain Kripke's knowledge objection to descriptivism.
24. P.E.E. Kripke's semantic argument against descriptivism.
25. State and explain (with an illustration) Kripke's theory of reference. Kripke chains and initial baptisms. Show using an example or two how there's still work to be done in formulating a satisfactory Kripkean theory.
26. What is the difference between a theory of meaning and a theory of reference? What kind of theory (of names) is given by Frege and Russell? By Kripke?
27. What does Kripke mean by saying that names are rigid designators? What does this imply about the status of true identity sentences between proper names? What light does this shed on the relationship between the notions of necessity and a prioricity? Be able to explain Kripke's examples of necessary a posteriori statements, and of contingent a priori statements.
28. Be able to state and intuitively explain the strong and weak disquotation principles, and the logic principle. Present and explain the anti-Mill argument. Know how the premises may be supported using the principles.
29. Know the Pierre example, and be able to explain how Kripke uses it to cast doubt on the anti-Mill argument.
30. What is the main puzzle about demonstratives that Kaplan addresses?
31. Explain direct reference, and distinguish it from rigid designation.
32. What is the difference between circumstances of evaluation and contexts of utterance?
33. What is the difference between content and character?
34. How does Kaplan resolve the puzzle about demonstratives?
35. Know Perry's example of the messy shopper, and the basic challenge it poses.
36. Know the various ideas about what changed in the shopper's beliefs, and what Perry says against these ideas: singular propositions, Fregean thoughts, characters.

37. Know Perry's own solution: that only the shopper's belief state, and not his beliefs, changed.