

# Philosophy 24025/34025

## Reference and Description

Autumn 2014

TR 10:30-11:50

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

The question how thought and speech refers, and in particular what role descriptions play in a comprehensive philosophical analysis of referring expressions, has played an outstanding role in 20th century philosophy and remains influential until today. In this class we will trace the discussion about the relation between reference and description from Fregean beginnings to the most recent two-dimensionalist attempts to overcome Kripke's seminal arguments against descriptive analyses of referring expressions. Throughout, we will try to reach a better understanding of why questions about reference and description are of foundational importance for a range of topics that are central to philosophical theorizing, including the analysis of propositional attitudes such as belief and knowledge, the nature of possibility and necessity, the question of whether there is a level of mental experience that is epistemically transparent, the relation between thought and language, the role of the principle of compositionality in semantics, and the intersection between semantics and pragmatics.

### BOOKS

The following books are required for the course, available for purchase at the Seminary Coop Bookstore (5751 S Woodlawn Ave.):

- Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, Oxford: Blackwell (1980)
- Soames, *Reference and Description*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press (2005)

All of the above books as well as some other useful material are on reserve at Regenstein. The remaining course readings will be available through the course's Chalk website.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Undergraduates are required to write two short paper assignments (4-5 pages each) and one final paper (7-8 pages). All papers are due by 5pm on the assigned day in Professor Willer's mailbox in Stuart 202.

First paper	due October 28 <sup>th</sup>	worth 25%
Second paper	due November 18 <sup>th</sup>	worth 35%
Final Paper	due December 12 <sup>th</sup>	worth 40%

Paper topics will be uploaded to the Chalk site in advance of the due dates. Students may, if they wish, design their own paper topics after consultation with the instructor. Late papers will be docked a grade per day (e.g., B+ to B) unless you have received approval ahead of time. There will be no final exam.

Graduate students are required to complete the two short paper assignments (worth 25% each) and write a substantial term paper (15+ pages, due December 12<sup>th</sup>, worth 50%). Topics must be approved ahead of time, concern an issue discussed in the class, and make significant use of course readings as well as additional recommended material.

Attendance of lectures and discussion sections is expected. Class participation will play a decisive role in determining the final grade of borderline cases.

## ROADMAP

The following schedule provides an overview over the topics that we will address during this semester as well as the assigned readings. Additional recommended readings will be announced in class. Readings may change as the semester goes on. Updated versions of this syllabus will be posted on Chalk as changes are made.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>
Week 1	Sense and Reference	Mill, "Of Names" Frege, "Sense and Reference"
Week 2	Frege's Project Continued	Frege, "On Concept and Object" Frege, "The Thought"
Week 3	Definite Descriptions	Russell, "On Denoting" Strawson, "On Referring"
Week 4	Names and Descriptions	Kripke, <i>Naming and Necessity</i> , Lectures I-II
Week 5	Natural Kind Terms	Kripke, <i>Naming and Necessity</i> , Lecture III Putnam, "Meaning and Reference"
Week 6	Kaplan on Demonstratives	Kaplan, "Demonstratives" (selections)
Week 7	Two-Dimensionalism	Stalnaker, "Assertion" Chalmers, "On Sense and Intension"
Week 8	Soames on Two-Dimensionalism	Soames, <i>Reference and Description</i> (selections)
Week 9	The Way Ahead	Dever, "Low-Grade Two-Dimensionalism"
Week 10	Conclusion & Outlook	(no reading)