

Philosophy 52015 // Linguistics 52015

Indexicals

Spring 2016

T 3:00–5:50

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Indexical expressions—those whose reference and content can shift from context to context, such as ‘I’, ‘now’, ‘here’, ‘she’, and ‘today’—and indexical attitudes have played a prominent role in theoretical reflections on language and the mind. In this class, we will consider the philosophical and linguistic implications of indexicality, starting with Frege and Kaplan’s theory of indexicals and then taking a close look at Perry’s and Lewis’s seminal arguments that indexicals and indexical thoughts pose exciting problems for traditional views about propositions and attitudes. We will then ask to what extent their observations have important consequences for epistemology, ethics, and other areas of philosophy outside of philosophy of language and mind, but also consider critical perspectives on the Perry-Lewis tradition. Throughout the quarter we will keep an eye on the relation between perspectival thought and talk and the more general phenomenon of subjectivity.

BOOKS

The relevant literature is massive and it is unavoidable to omit a lot of interesting discussions. The following book is required and available for purchase at the Seminary Coop Bookstore (5751 S. Woodlawn Avenue):

— Cappelen and Dever, *The Inessential Indexical*, Oxford University Press (2013)

The book is also on reserve at Regenstein. All of the remaining course readings will be available through the course’s Chalk website.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

There will be a substantial research paper (15+ pages) due on June 7th, in Professor Willer’s mailbox in the Philosophy Dept. Office (Stuart 202). The topic must be approved ahead of time. Topics must concern an issue discussed in the class and papers must make significant use of course readings.

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.

Date	Topic	Readings
Week 1	Fregean Beginnings	Frege, “Sense and Reference” Frege, “On Concept and Object” Frege, “The Thought”
Week 2	Kaplan on Demonstratives	Kaplan, “Demonstratives”
Week 3	The Essential Indexical	Perry, “Frege on Demonstratives” Perry, “The Problem of the Essential Indexical” Lewis, “Attitudes <i>De Dicto</i> and <i>De Se</i> ”

Date	Topic	Readings
Week 4	Reactions	Evans, "Understanding Demonstratives" Kripke, "Frege's Theory of Sense and Reference" Kripke, "The First Person"
Week 5	<i>De Se</i> Ascription	Chierchia, "Anaphora and Attitudes <i>De Se</i> " Anand and Nevins, "Shifty Operators in Changing Contexts" Anand, "Dream Report Pronouns, Local Binding, and Attitudes <i>De Se</i> " Ninan, " <i>De Se</i> Attitudes: Ascription and Communication," §§1–2
Week 6	<i>De Se</i> Communication	Egan, "Epistemic Modals, Relativism and Assertion" Moss, "Updating as Communication" Ninan, " <i>De Se</i> Attitudes: Ascription and Communication," §3 Weber, "Centered Communication" Kindermann, "Varieties of Centering and <i>De se</i> Communication"
Week 7	<i>De Se</i> Semantics	Roberts, "Indexicality: <i>De Se</i> Semantics and Pragmatics"
Week 8	The Inessential Indexical I	Millikan, "The Myth of the Essential Indexical" Magidor, "The Myth of the <i>De Se</i> " Cappelen and Dever, <i>The Inessential Indexical</i> , Chs. 1–4
Week 9	The Inessential Indexical II	Cappelen and Dever, <i>The Inessential Indexical</i> , Chs. 5–9 Yalcin, Stanley on the <i>De Se</i>
Week 10	Conclusion and Outlook	Cappelen and Dever, <i>The Inessential Indexical</i> , Ch. 10 Babb, "The Essential Indexicality of Intentional Action" Ninan, "What is the Problem of <i>De Se</i> Attitudes?"